Rizzoli, Isles and Kate

by briwd

Summary

An alternate universe crossover, based largely on the second seasons of NCIS and Rizzoli & Isles. Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles travel to Washington, seeking help from NCIS Special Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs. Rogue Mossad agent Ari Haswari has been harassing Maura and other women who resemble one of Gibbs's team members; now, he's threatening the lives of Maura and Jane.
Chapter 1

Washington, D.C. was a long ways from Boston, Massachusetts.

The two Bostonian women would rather have been in Beantown, and yet their impromptu trip to D.C. was a necessity.

One was being stalked by a terrorist, and was completely freaked out over the matter. The other - her best friend, along with her friends and colleagues in the Boston Police Department - was just as freaked out.

A friend in the FBI put them onto someone in NCIS who was taking the matter as serious as Boston PD was. Even though the Chief of Police may have already contacted NCIS directly, Jane Rizzoli didn't want to wait; she wanted to meet this person directly, and find out what the hell was going on.

So, she and her friend - Maura Isles, the stalkee - hopped a flight from Logan International Airport in Boston to Reagan National Airport in D.C., and from there drove a rental directly to the Washington Navy Yard. Somehow - later Jane would find out how they got in from her colleague, Detective Vince Korsak - NCIS security let the two women into the building, and took them to the floor where this agent Rizzoli wanted to talk with worked.

At 6:45 a.m., Rizzoli and Isles walked off the elevator onto the third floor, and walked 20 feet to the bullpen where they were supposed to wait for Special Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs.

"It's really quiet in here," said Maura Isles, as she looked at the empty desks, four in all, surrounding a large monitor.

"Well duh, Maura," Jane Rizzoli said. "I don't think even the early birds are awake at this hour."

"The 'early birds' have probably been awake for some time," Maura stated, only for Jane to raise her hand to quiet her.

"Don't start, Maurapedia," Jane said.

"We did get here a bit early, it looks like," Maura replied. "Let's sit down...I'll take this desk, you take the other."

"Fine by me," Jane said.

The two desks they chose were the ones closest to the windows; Maura went behind the one next to the middle desk across from the monitor, while Jane went to the desk opposite Maura, next to the monitor.

Maura went to sit down when she noticed that someone was sleeping on the floor, behind the desk, and that she had almost stepped on the young woman's jaw.

"Jane," Maura whispered.

"What," Jane said.

"Shhhhhhhhh!"

"Shhhhh what? Sit down."
"I can't," Maura whispered. "Someone is asleep down there."

"Where? On the floor?"

"Yes, on the floor, and don't talk. You'll wake her up. Whisper."

Jane got out of her chair behind the other desk, walked over to Maura, and saw a young woman, asleep on the floor, a jacket over her shoulders, her head resting on her arms.

"Good thing you didn't step on her," Jane said; Maura's response was to shush her - again - and step out in front of the sleeping woman's desk.

"Jane?" Maura whispered.

"Yes, Maura?" Jane's voice was at a whisper, as well.

"You know...studies show that 64 percent of people sleep on their side, 19 percent on their backs, 17 percent on their stomachs," Maura said, looking at the young woman, her voice still at a whisper. "But she is not in an optimal sleep position. For one thing, she really needs a head pillow, and probably could use a body pillow as well. Of course, the ideal position would be on her side, on a firm mattress, and not on a floor."

"What are you, an infomercial?" Jane answered. "Come over here...you'll wake her up."

"Shhhhh! Be quiet! You'll wake her up."

"You'll wake her up," Jane said, motioning to the desk across from the monitor. "I'm not the one spouting off sleep statistics-"

"Statistics backed by scientific studies from the University of."

"Maura. Shhhhhhh."

"Shhhhhhh back."

"Shhhhhhhh, and sit over there," Jane pointed to the desk adjacent to the one the young woman was asleep behind. Maura tiptoed over - in heels - and took a chair behind that desk.

"Now what do we do?" Maura whispered, loudly so Jane could hear.

"We wait," Jane whispered back.

By now, the young woman had been awake for a few moments, her hand on the gun underneath her arms, hearing strange voices.

"Who's there?"

The young woman abruptly sat up, her hair a mess, and jumped up. She saw the two strange-to-her women sitting near her, where they perhaps shouldn't be, and whipped out her gun and her NCIS badge.

"Who are you," she said, showing her badge in her left hand and her gun in her right, "and why are you here?"

Maura's eyes grew wide in response to the woman's actions.
Jane whipped out her own badge - even as her own eyes grew wide, in recognition of who the young woman looked like.

Then Maura realized who the young woman looked like, and her jaw dropped to the floor.

*A younger me,* Maura thought.

"Whoa whoa whoa," Jane said, gesturing, and trying to calm the situation before the woman could shoot or jump at her or Maura or both. "Jane Rizzoli, Detective, Homicide Unit, Boston Police Department. That's Maura Isles, Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

Jane looked over at Maura, still in shock over her younger doppelganger just a few feet away, pointing a gun at Jane.

"Maura...*Maura!* Close your mouth and say hello!"

"Hello," Maura said, closing her mouth but still not quite sure of who - or what - she was seeing.

"Kate Todd, Special Agent, NCIS," said the young woman, looking directly at Jane. "Why are you here?"

"We're here to see Agent Gibbs," Jane said. "Maura - over there" - pointing to Maura, who waved back at Kate - "is being stalked by a guy FBI says is a terrorist and we're told Gibbs knows of this...guy."

Kate kept her eyes, and gun, on Rizzoli.

"That's Maura," Jane said, pointing her thumb towards Maura, now standing behind Gibbs' desk. "You might want to take a look."

Kate Todd, unsure of what was going on, kept her gun pointed at Rizzoli, and looked over at Isles, who waved again.

Kate took the measure of the other woman sitting at Gibbs' desk, and realized just who she resembled.

*Herself.*

Kate lowered her gun and put it in her holster, while her own jaw hit the floor.

"You...you look just like me," Kate said.

Just then, the elevator dinged, and a middle-aged, silver-haired man with a large paper cup full of coffee stepped onto the floor. He walked 20 feet to the bullpen, saw the scene in front of him, and stopped.

"Don't shoot, Kate," Gibbs said as he walked past Kate's desk. "Looks like I got here just in time."
Out of nowhere, there he was.

The man who Maura and Jane flew down from Boston in the middle of the night to see: Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Special Agent in Charge of the Major Case Response Team based here in Washington, D.C., at NCIS headquarters.

Kate Todd - the just-awoke agent who pulled a gun on Jane - was one of Gibbs' team members, and the other team members would arrive shortly.

"Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Special Agent, NCIS," said Gibbs, now standing in front of Kate's desk.

"Jane Rizzoli, Detective, Homicide, Boston PD," Jane said. "That's Dr. Maura Isles-

"Medical Examiner, Commonwealth of Massachusetts," Gibbs said, walking over to his own desk. "Pleased to meet you both. Stay seated, Dr. Isles. Detective. That's DiNozzo's desk."

"I can move if you'd like-" Jane said.

"Stay there," Gibbs replied. "DiNozzo can stand."

Just then, the elevator dinged, and two more members of Gibbs' team stepped off: Special Agent Tony DiNozzo and Probationary Agent Tim McGee.

"Probie," DiNozzo said, slapping McGee's back with some force, briefly knocking the wind out of him. "Listen to me, be my wingman, you'll get yourself a girl, yes you will. Of course, it'll be the friend of the hot chick who obviously will go for me-

"DiNozzo," Kate said to Jane, rolling her eyes, as the two men approached the bullpen.

"-but it'll be a helluva lot better than what you're doing now, which is sitting on your couch," DiNozzo continued. "Let me find you a woman-whoa."

DiNozzo stopped bantering with McGee, and noticed the tall black-haired detective sitting behind his desk.

"Whoa whoa whoa whoa whoa...well hello there. Very Special Agent Tony DiNozzo at your service."

DiNozzo smiled, trying to put on the charm for Jane, who already didn't seem very impressed by 'Very Special Agent' DiNozzo. "You are?"

"DiNozzo?" Jane said to Kate.

"Unfortunately, yes," Kate answered.

"I see my charm and reputation has preceded me," DiNozzo said, still smiling at Rizzoli. "You are-

"Here to see me," said Gibbs, walking up right behind DiNozzo, whose grin disappeared. "And here as part of the case we're working on involving Ari."

"Sorry boss," DiNozzo said, by reflex, then realizing what Gibbs had just said. "You mean...is she" - pointing to Rizzoli - "on the list?"
Detective Jane Rizzoli isn't," Gibbs said, looking over at his desk, "but Dr. Maura Isles is."

DiNozzo looked over at Gibbs' desk, seeing McGee standing next to a woman who looked a lot like Kate. An awful lot like Kate.

So Tony blurted out the obvious.

"Whoa," DiNozzo said, as Maura made her way over to his desk. "You look a lot like Kate."

"Great detective work, Tony," Kate said, smirking, arms crossed. "Dr. Isles. Special Agent DiNozzo."

"Pleased to meet you, Agent DiNozzo," Maura said, shaking his hand. DiNozzo reciprocated and said nothing, with Gibbs looking right at him and not in a mood for any of Tony's usual banter.

"McGee!" Gibbs said. "The list."

McGee went to his computer, called up GIF files of several women who resembled Kate, then typed in a command that put the photos on the monitor.

Maura, standing in front of the monitor, saw her own picture there, which chilled her. Jane got up from DiNozzo's desk and walked over to comfort her; Kate and DiNozzo stood together next to Jane, while McGee and Gibbs stood next to Maura.

"What are we looking at, Agent Gibbs?" Jane asked.


"All of these women," McGee said, "look like Kate" - glancing at his teammate - "and have reported being stalked in the past two months.

Julia Harris, Special Agent, DEA;
Sarah Holmes, from Louisiana;
Robin Childs, District Attorney in Las Vegas;
Laura Carlson, a writer for TV Guide;
Gretchen Witter, from Chicago;
Jesse Presser;
Allyson Merrill;
Dr. Jackie Collette from San Francisco;
Nora Smith from New Jersey;
and Juliana Cavanaugh, Detective, Los Angeles Police Department. And, you, Dr. Isles."


SLAP!

Kate, not impressed by DiNozzo's humor, slapped DiNozzo in the back of his head, hard. He thought of saying something, then saw Gibbs's glare, and opted to shut up.
Maura noticed only the monitor and McGee's monologue. Jane glared at DiNozzo for a moment, then spoke up.

"All by the same guy?" she said. "The same one that's been harassing Maura?"

The photos of the women disappeared, replaced by a single photo of a man, now suspected by the FBI and NCIS to be a Mossad agent gone rogue:

Ari Haswari.

"That's him," Maura said. "That's the guy."

"That's the bastard," Jane concurred.

"Hey," DiNozzo said. "McGeek. Take the jackass down, put the Kate League back up. Easier on the eyes."

**SLAP!**

"You through, DiNozzo?"

Gibbs definitely wasn't up for DiNozzo's usual banter this morning.

"Sorry boss," Tony said, again. Kate couldn't help but chuckle.
Gibbs explained to Jane and Maura the extent of the federal operation involving Ari Haswari.

The FBI and local law enforcement across the country were fully involved in regards to the stalking incidents (Agent Gabriel Dean in Boston alluded to this the day before, when she and Jane discussed the stalker) and working with NCIS.

Haswari was a person of interest in regards to Al-Qaeda activities along the east coast, drawing the interest of the CIA, Homeland Security and the NSA as well as FBI and NCIS.

The questions everyone had was Haswari's intentions and goals: were the stalkings a ruse to cover up for an attack on the homeland - or the stalkings part of the terrorist's plan to attack Gibbs? Ari had it in for Gibbs, for some reason, and was targeting Agent Todd and anyone who looked like her.

Gibbs hadn't yet shared with his team that his father, Jackson; his three ex-wives; and Assistant Director Jenny Shepard had received threats from Ari in the past 48 hours. His view was that Ari was working with terrorists for some kind of homeland attack and going after he and Kate.

Whatever the guy was doing, he was getting plenty of attention - perhaps more than he anticipated.

Gibbs thought that the women on the 'list' would be content to seek help from local law enforcement and FBI, and FBI agent Tobias Fornell to discourage anyone from coming to Washington to meet with him. When Gibbs was told the night before that a Boston detective, and her friend on the list, were headed for D.C., he groaned, and then tried to figure out what to do with them.

Right now, that meant discussing the case, and then getting them out of his hair - and keeping them away from DiNozzo - while following up on leads on the Ari case and keeping tabs on another case involving a dead Navy commander.

Kate would be their guide at NCIS; Gibbs would have her give them a tour, stopping in forensics and in autopsy. And he'd send DiNozzo out of the building to check on Ari's alleged accomplice. McGee would stay behind, to track a couple of suspicious financial transactions made overnight.

RI&K

Kate, Jane and Maura sat down at a table in the building's waiting room, ready to munch down on breakfast. For Kate and Maura, breakfast was apples, grapes, bananas, a tomato and bottled water; Jane munched down on an ham and egg muffin, hash browns and a triple-power latte.

"Jane," Maura said, looking at Jane's plate. "Studies from the University of Auckland suggest that people who stay awake overnight - like you and I - and eat a breakfast of fruit and vegetables and water, or black coffee, have more stamina throughout the day than those who eat a breakfast full of carbohydrates and starches."

Jane stopped chewing for a moment and stared at her friend.

"I'm going to feel more full than you, and the caffeine will take care of my stamina," Jane replied.

"Diet is also especially important with a lack of sleep," Maura stated, while munching on a apple stick. "Low fat foods are more nutritious and less fattening."

"Than what?" Jane.
"Than that," Maura said, pointing to Jane's half-eaten muffin and hash browns.

"Look, I'm not sitting here eating a bag of Doritos, okay? And it's not like we had time to go to Whole Foods when we landed."

Kate took in the conversation, trying to learn as much about the two visitors as she could. Gibbs got enough info on Rizzoli and Isles from Fornell that he signed off on their showing up at NCIS - but he wanted Kate to find out more. So far, Kate had gathered that:

* the two women enjoyed their constant banter, and were much more enjoyable to listen to than DiNozzo

* Maura may look like an older Kate, but her extended observations reminded Kate a little bit of how NCIS's medical examiner, Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard tended to ramble

* Maura also liked to quote statistics, and Kate wondered if she was as much of a geek in her own way as her teammate, probationary agent Tim McGee

* Jane seemed to be the one who kept Maura from veering off course in conversation, and always in a good-natured way. They seemed to be good friends, closer to one another than she and Abby were to each other

* Jane was clearly blue-collar, brash, a little prickly and somewhat butch, although Kate wouldn't say she was masculine.

* Maura appeared to be affluent - as evidenced by her clothing and her grooming - perhaps somewhat socially awkward and someone not easily rattled, even when she saw Ari's photo on the monitor.

The two women, Kate thought, were clearly close friends. If they were putting on an act, it was a damn good one. And although she wouldn't put anything past Ari, this dynamic would be very difficult for anyone to convincingly pull off. In fact, their banter and bickering...

I wonder if they're...no, they couldn't be, Kate thought. Could they? What if they are...I won't ask them about that. It's not like they have matching rings on their hands, anyway.

The three women finished their breakfasts, and Jane seemed satisfied and full, while Maura was spouting off more statistics and facts about sleep, while recommending types of pillows for Kate to use when 'staying overnight at NCIS'.

"Jane, Maura," Kate said, as the three stood up and pushed in their chairs. "As part of showing you what we do here, I'm going to take you down to forensics, where I'll introduce you to my friend, Abby Sciuto."

RI&K

Gibbs looked at the photos on the list of Kate lookalikes, one of whom was actually an undercover NCIS agent, and Kate's twin sister. [1]

Somehow, Kate and Gibbs had managed to keep that information hidden from DiNozzo, Abby and the rest of the team, necessitated by the twin's involvement with the newly-opened Office of Special Projects and everything Ari had been up to.

Leon Vance [2] - the operations manager in charge of the seven-month-old project - was pushing hard for his unit to take the lead on the Ari case, and Gibbs wasn't about to give way.
But if Leon did get his way, Gibbs thought perhaps Boston PD would be useful, and decided to solidify the working relationship with Rizzoli and Isles.

Notes

[1] Kate never had a twin sister in canon; Rachel Carlson was her older sister.

[2] in canon, Leon was never operations manager of the OSP; he created the division after taking over as director.
Chapter 4

Jane Rizzoli had seen a lot during her career on the police force, and Maura Isles had seen quite a bit herself as a medical examiner. They both had worked closely together almost daily over the past several years, including undercover.

Nothing they'd seen, however, quite prepared them for Abby Sciuto.

While Abby's laboratory itself was as well-equipped as any lab Maura had worked in or visited, the person running it - and the music blasting throughout it - distinguished it from any other lab Maura had ever worked in.

Abby, by all appearances, was a goth girl - late 20s, dark hair, spiderweb tattoo on her neck, dog collar, all black clothing underneath her white labcoat - and the music, the very loud music, matched Abby's appearance.

Yet, when Maura, Jane and Kate walked in to her lab, Abby Sciuto was grinning, ear-to-ear, and looked genuinely happy for them to be there - if a bit surprised - while holding a toy hippo in one arm, and an extra-large plastic soft-drink cup full of Caf!-Pow in her other hand.

"Oh hi," Abby said excitedly. "Iamsohappytoseeyouandsohappytomeetyou."

Her bright, bubbly, happy demeanor contrasted greatly with her attire and makeup, and Jane and Maura tried to make some sense of it.

"Jane, Maura," Kate said, "this is our forensics specialist, Abby Sciuto. Abby, Detective Jane Rizzoli, Boston Police, and Dr. Maura Isles, the medical examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

"I'm so glad to meet you!" Abby said enthusiastically, then hugged Jane - before she could extend her hand for a handshake - and Maura.

Jane looked at Kate with a 'what's going on here' look, while Maura embraced Abby back.

"You're Detective Rizzoli" - Abby looked at Jane - "and you are Dr. Isles, and you look just like Kate! You're not sisters, are you?"

"Not that I'm aware of, although I am adopted," Maura said.

"Really?" Abby said. "Do you have brothers or sisters?"

"Only child," Maura said.

"Me too," Abby replied. "Are your parents alive?"

"My adopted mother is," Maura replied.

"My parents aren't," Abby said. "They're gone."

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Maura said, and hugged Abby in response.

"Uh, I hate to break up the bromance," Jane interjected, rather loudly, "but I'd hate to keep Abby from her work, right Maura...uh guys? Guys?"
Neither could quite hear Jane over the very loud industrial rock music blasting from Abby's stereo.

"Uh, Abby, could you turn the music down?" Kate shouted.

"Bring what down?" Abby said.

"Turn the music down," Kate shouted. "The music."

"Music...oh, the music! Turn the music down."

"YES," Jane and Kate shouted in unison. "THE MUSIC!"

Abby ran over to her stereo, and turned the volume down to a much more tolerable level.

"How on earth did you hear her, Maura-"

"I heard Abby just fine, Jane-"

"And what on earth was that...'music'?" Jane asked.

"Oh, that's Green Satan," Abby replied.

"Green what?!!"

"Green Satan."

"You mean Satan, sends people to hell, and environmentally conscious, drives a hybrid-"

"Jane," Maura said, giving Rizzoli a 'drop it' stare. "Abby, it's so good to meet you."

"And it's awesome to meet you, and you too Jane," Abby replied. "Are you going to be here a while?"

"Maybe," Jane said. "We're not sure yet how long."

**RI&K**

DiNozzo found the woman suspected of being Ari Haswari's accomplice, to a gym in downtown Washington. She had been sighted numerous times in recent weeks in D.C., as well in the last two months by FBI and local police in Chicago, San Francisco and Louisiana.

"Whatcha got, DiNozzo?" Gibbs said, while reviewing an email Fornell had just sent him.

Tony was standing outside a pool, watching the woman from a corner. "Well, boss, whoever she is, she's hot."

"That's what you have to tell me?"

"Sorry boss," DiNozzo replied. "She's...attractive. Young, early 20s. Israeli. Good looking-"

"DiNozzo. What is she doing?"

"Swimming, boss," he said. "For the last 20 minutes."

"Drool on your own time, DiNozzo. Track her wherever she goes, whatever she does. Fornell says he's got a guy there. Touch base with him, and get back to me in an hour."
McGee came through, finding that Ari had made withdrawals from bank accounts in Switzerland and New York, and deposits into an account in Boston.

"What the hell's he doing in Boston besides stalking," Gibbs said, more to himself than to McGee.

"Maybe it has something to do with Dr. Isles or Detective Rizzoli?" McGee asked Gibbs.

"Check it out," Gibbs answered, and McGee tracked the account to a Boston-area man.

"David Carlton, 28, former Boston police, kicked off the force for insubordination three months ago," McGee said. "Recently became a person of interest by Boston PD."

"For what?"

"Written communications with a Charles Hoyt."

"Who's Charles Hoyt?"

"Looking him up now."

A minute later, McGee found a bio on Hoyt.

"BOSS!" McGee shouted across the room.

"Yeah, McGee."

"Hoyt is a convicted serial killer. Has a history with Detective Rizzoli, to the point of threats against her life, even after he was incarcerated...he's said to have terminal cancer. If Ari Haswari is dumping money into Carlton's account-"

"And Carlton is communicating with Hoyt who's threatening Rizzoli," Gibbs said. "McGee. Call down to Ducky, or Abby, and get Rizzoli up here now."
"Well, that was...different."

Detective Jane Rizzoli had seen a lot of strange characters and unusual people in her years on the Boston police force.

The characters she could do without; many of the unusual people were good souls, like the woman who she, Dr. Maura Isles and Special Agent Kate Todd had just met with: Abby Sciuto, forensics specialist, and a valued member of the Major Case Response Team Kate was part of.

"She's a really good person, Jane," Kate said, as the three women stood in front of the elevator. "And a good friend, and a talented scientist."

"I don't doubt any of that, Kate," Jane replied. "She's just so...gothic and bubbly and happy and so..."

"Unique?" Maura answered, as the elevator dinged. The door opened, and all three women stepped in, Kate pushing the button to take them to autopsy. "I think it's refreshing. Abby has a style all her own."

"Would you wear her 'style', Miss Vogue?"

"My style is my own," said Maura, who almost always dressed in the very latest fashions, even in casual circumstances. "Comfortable, presentable, and up to date."

"I think you look nice, Maura," Kate said. "May I ask where you got your shoes?"

"A little store on Newbury Street, in Boston," Maura replied. "These pumps cost me $500."

Both Jane and Kate were taken aback.

"500 dollars on a pair of shoes?" Jane asked.

"Why yes," Maura said. "This blouse cost me $150, the jacket $350, the skirt $200."

"You spent twelve hundred dollars on-never mind," Jane said, as the elevator stopped and the door dinged, opening to the floor where medical examiner Donald "Ducky" Mallard worked.

**R&I**

"Got more on Hoyt, McGee?"

Agent Tim McGee had looked for every bit of information he could find on convicted killer Charles Hoyt. He put the most relevant documents up on the main monitor in the bullpen, and emailed copies of all the documents to Gibbs. He'd spent all of the past ten minutes researching Hoyt - and zero on contacting Abby Sciuto or Ducky to find Jane Rizzoli.

"You find Rizzoli, McGee?" Gibbs asked.

McGee went blank for a moment, then realized what he had forgotten to do.

"Sorry, boss, so sorry-"
"You apologizing, McGee?"

"No boss...calling Abby now."

McGee called Abby, who told them Rizzoli, Maura and Kate had left her lab ten minutes before. McGee then called down to Mallard's office, but no one was picking up.

"No answer, boss."

"I'll go down there myself, then," Gibbs said, already on his way to the elevator.

**RI&K**

Kate introduced Maura and Jane to Ducky and his assistant, Jimmy Palmer. Ducky told them about the other case - besides Ari the Terrorist Stalker - that the MCRT was working on: a Navy Commander whom seemingly spontaneously combusted in his hospital bed.

Given that Gibbs' team was working on tracking Ari, NCIS had brought in agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy to work the case involving the commander, aided by Ducky and Abby.

That led to a conversation between Ducky and Maura involving human combustion, and then to their chosen professions.

"When I'm working on a body, I see someone who will never judge me, never tease me, and someone I can help," Maura said. "I can speak for someone who can't speak for him or herself. How do you view your bodies, Dr. Mallard?"

"Please, call me Ducky," Mallard said. "I myself see them as people I can help, Dr. Isles. I can find out how they died and help bring justice where necessary."

"And he talks to them," Palmer interjected.

"He what?" Jane said.

"Dr. Mallard talks to the dead bodies," Palmer answered.

"Like a regular, one-way conversation," Kate said. "Nothing unusual. Except the bodies don't talk back."

"That would be a bit unusual, Kate," Jane said.

"You talk to your bodies, Dr. Mallard-sorry, Ducky?" Maura asked.

"Yes I do, Maura. What you and I do is so invasive, and impersonal. It helps me to humanize the unfortunate soul lying there, on that cold steel table. By talking to them, I see humanity, instead of a pile of dead flesh and bones. Which I'm sure you do as well. Do you speak to your bodies, Maura?"

"I can't say that I do," she said.

"I can just imagine the conversations you would have with your 'bodies', Maura," Jane said.

"Sarcasm, Ms. Rizzoli?" Ducky.

"Moi? Noooooooo."

"Light, good-humored banter, Ducky," Kate interjected. "Constant light, good-humored banter."
"Is that what your profiling skills picked up from me and Maura, Kate?" Jane asked Agent Todd.

"Maura and me", Maura interrupted.

"Huh?"

"Maura and me, Jane. 'Maura and I' would not be grammatically acceptable--"

"Thank-you-for-correcting-me-Ms.-Grammar," Jane said to Maura, then looked at Kate. "Banter?"

"You and Maura do banter, Jane. A lot," Kate said with a smile.

"Dr. Mallard banter a lot too," Palmer interrupted, "it's quite informative."

"Mr. Palmer, I do not 'banter'," Ducky said, as the door to the medical examiner's room opened, and Gibbs walked in towards the group, standing around the commander's body. "I-

"Need to cut the banter short Ducky," Gibbs said. "And the tour. I need Rizzoli upstairs."

"Me?" Jane asked Gibbs. "Why?"

"Looks like Dr. Isles isn't the only one involved in this mess. You're involved, too."

"Involved?" Jane said. "How?..Are you-"

"The guy who tried to kill you, Jane. Charles Hoyt. He has a connection to Ari."

That revelation sent a collective chill down Jane's, and Maura's, spines.
Chapter 6

Los Angeles

The newly-opened Office of Special Projects had only been active for seven months, but it had already proven to be a vital asset to NCIS anti-terrorism operations. OSP was credited with stopping terrorist plots in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Honolulu, and its current operations manager, Leon Vance, was - over the objections of Leroy Jethro Gibbs - pushing hard for OSP to get the lead on the Ari Haswari case.

On a sunny southern California morning, Vance pulled up to the entrance to the OSP's L.A.-based headquarters, located among a nondescript row of warehouses. He flashed his badge to gain entrance into the building, then made his way to his office, where he spent the next 40 minutes pleading his case with Director Thomas Morrow via a video call.

The director refused to turn over complete control to Vance, insisting instead that OSP work jointly with Gibbs and the New York field office. New York was more than willing to do so, Morrow said; Gibbs hadn't been told yet of the director's decision, but Morrow insisted there wouldn't be any problem on that front.

Vance then made plans to touch base with New York and with Gibbs later on in the day, and went down his roster to figure out where his agents needed to be to help crack Haswari's network: special agent in charge Lara Macy, G Callen, Sam Hanna, Mike Renko, Lauren Hunter...

Then Vance heard a knock on his door; he remembered that he had an appointment with the team's psychiatrist, Nate Getz, for today, and also wanted to touch base with the new intelligence analyst and tech operator, Eric Beale.

"Nate," Vance said to his visitor, "you got that report for me on Juliana or Sam? Drop it on my desk and have a seat."

"There's a report on me and Sam?"

Hearing the distinctly female voice of his visitor, Vance looked up and saw the other agent on the Los Angeles OSP team: Juliana Todd.

The twin sister of NCIS Special Agent Kate Todd, and one of the women stalked by Haswari and his goons over the past few months.

"Yes there is, Juliana," Vance said, gesturing for Juliana to sit down. "Psych evaluations."

"You know how much we love those," she said, rolling her eyes.

"I do indeed, so much that Callen and Sam spent the last few weeks avoiding Nate," Vance said. "And they like the guy." Juliana chuckled at that; Nate had cornered her and Renko the other day after they returned from an interrogation.

"What can I do for you Juliana?" Vance asked her.

"I want in on this thing," Juliana said. "On Ari. He's terrorizing my sister, he's harassing me. I want to help take the bastard down."

"We all do, Juliana," Vance said. "And we'll get our chance soon. I'm coordinating with the New
York and Washington field offices on this joint operation."

"Joint operation," Juliana replied. "You know Gibbs doesn't 'do' joint operations."

"He doesn't have a choice," Vance told her.

"Send me to Washington," Juliana told Vance. "Let me talk to him-"

"I appreciate that, Juliana, but I honestly think I'll have better luck convincing him of what needs to be done," Vance said. "I don't think he'll even listen to Callen on this. Do you think he'll listen to you?"

"He may not listen to me, but he'll listen to my sister," Juliana said. "I know Gibbs well enough that he'll listen to Kate when he won't listen to anyone else. I can get through to her, Leon-"

"And how do you know she'll listen to you and not to Gibbs?"

"She will," Juliana said. "I'll get her prepared to face Ari-"

So this was what this is about, Vance thought. You don't want Kate getting herself killed.

"With all due respect, Juliana, Kate is a former Secret Service agent and couldn't take him down," Vance said. "Haswari kidnapped her. The report you and I both read said she couldn't - not wouldn't - couldn't kill him when she had the opportunity. And, I'm not fully convinced myself that when forced to choose she'll listen to anyone else over Leroy Jethro Gibbs."

"I'm don't exactly care for how Gibbs has trained her," Juliana said, with a mix of regret and frustration and a little bit of anger. "She's smart and still has a lot of potential. Put her here and she'd be a great agent in a couple of years.

"Leon...look. We've trained for this. We're more prepared to take on Haswari than Gibbs and his team ever will be. They're in over their heads, Leon. You have to let us take the lead on this."

"You know who I'm dealing with?" Leon told her. "The director made this a joint operation for a damn good reason. Gibbs will go along with that, but he's not going to sit on the sidelines and take a secondary role behind anyone. Not with this."

"And I'm not going to let my sister get shot through the head on some rooftop because he didn't prepare her," Juliana said with a steely tone. "Back me up on this. Send me and Callen to D.C. I'll convince Kate. He'll convince Gibbs."

Vance leaned back in his chair, contemplating Juliana's proposal.

New York

The New York City field office of NCIS, unlike its OSP cousin in Los Angeles, was not in some out-of-the-way area. It took up three floors of a Manhattan office building, but like the OSP headquarters was very low-key. A single entrance was made available to the public, and the other entrances were on a need-to-know basis.

One of those entrances was through the basement, where special agent in charge Roy Haines and fellow agents Danny Gallagher and Paris Summerskill were escorting a suspect to interrogation.

Abdul Walid and his four associates had tried to kidnap journalist Laura Carlson six hours ago; all of the associates died in a shootout with NCIS, the FBI and the New York Police Department. While
Carlson was being placed under FBI protection, NCIS was going to get first crack at questioneing Walid

He was put into a room, and made to wait for nearly a half hour, before hearing footsteps outside the door.

Walid guessed two people were outside, one being a male adult. The other footsteps confused him; they sounded like they were from a child. *The Americans bring children to their interrogation rooms?*

Walid was half-right.

Haines opened the door and stepped to the back wall, in front of the two-way mirror.

The other person wasn't a child at all, but a diminutive, bespectacled, older woman, who sat down across the table from Walid.

"My name is Henrietta Lange," she said, "and I have questions for you about your connection to Ari Haswari and his interest in Boston." [1]

[1] For those who weren't already aware, Henrietta "Hetty" Lange in canon is operations manager for the Office of Special Projects. Gallagher, Haines and Summerskill are on the RED Team seen in two episodes of Season Four of NCIS: Los Angeles. At one point, Hetty oversaw a NYC-based team which included Paris Summerskill and Roy Haines (and, perhaps Gallagher).
Gibbs and Jane abruptly left the medical examiner's room, and Kate and Maura had to sprint to catch them in the elevator before the door shut.

In the elevator, Gibbs' phone rang. It was DiNozzo. He was waiting outside the women's locker room at the gym where Ari's young, female accomplice had been swimming.

"Boss, the target is getting dressed," he said. "Her name is Z-i-v-a, zee-vah--"

"Did you find Fornell's guy?"

"I see him standing nearby--"

"I told you touch base with him, and don't lose track of Ziva," Gibbs barked into the phone. "Call me back when you get something," he said before hanging up on DiNozzo.

Back on the third floor, Gibbs led the way to the bullpen, and barked at McGee to put the Carlton info on the monitor. Maura opted to stand next to Jane and Gibbs in front of the monitor, while Kate stood at McGee's desk.

"Tell me about David Carlton," Gibbs told Jane. "How is he connected to Hoyt?"

"Carlton was a sergeant on the force, until he got kicked out three months ago for insubordination. There was a robbery and he decided that he was going to shoot a guy for being under suspicion," Jane said. "The only thing his suspect was guilty of was being black."

"Black?"

"Yeah," she said. "Black. Carlton pulled the gun on the guy, the other officers on the scene ordered him to stand down, he wouldn't do it, and he shot at the guy."

"He shot him?" Kate asked.

"Shot at him, and missed," Jane replied. "Carlton was screaming at the guy, at his fellow officers, and got taken downtown. He got suspended, then cussed out everybody and told them where they could go and what they could do. Then he tried to tackle a lieutenant as he was being led out, against orders. Next morning he told Cavanaugh to kiss his frickin' ass, and he could fire him if he didn't like it. Cavanaugh gave him his wish."

"Hoyt?" Gibbs.

"We found out Carlton was writing letters to Hoyt in prison. They've communicated through lawyers and visitors at least three times. They intercepted a couple of the letters."

"Anything on you?" Gibbs said.
"Nothing specific on anyone," Jane told him. "Carlton said Hoyt got screwed, the Boston police are idiots. He doesn't go after anyone in particular, but says enough about the force in general to keep us concerned and him under monitoring."

"Detective Rizzoli, I discovered withdrawals from an account known to be used by Ari in Switzerland and another in New York, into an account opened by Carlton at a Boston bank," agent Tim McGee said.

"How much?" Jane said.

"Looks like eighty thousand dollars in all," McGee answered.

"What's he gonna do with eighty grand," Jane muttered. "McGoo--"

"McGee," he corrected.

"Sorry, McGee. Any activity on that account?"

"None so far," McGee said.

"So what's he going to do with the money and why did Ari give it to him," Gibbs said. "McGee. Call Boston PD--"

"--and ask for Detectives Korsak and Frost," Jane told McGee, "and put it on speaker. I want on the line--"

"I can do better than that," McGee told her. "Videoconferencing. I assume Boston has that capability?"

"I think."

"Give me a few minutes to set it up. You'll be able to stand in front of the monitor and talk as long as you need to."

**New York**

Walid was very sure of himself as he was taken to NCIS's Manhattan field office, much more than a guy who escaped getting riddled with bullets and was facing a host of charges should be. He kept up the facade when Henrietta Lange entered the interrogation room Walid was placed in, for the first few minutes.

Five minutes had passed, and she could tell the guy was beginning to crack.

"She's going to break him like an egg," said Special Agent Danny Gallagher, watching with fellow agent Paris Summerskill and two FBI agents behind the glass. "Nobody messes with Hetty, right Paris?...Paris?"

Summerskill was preoccupied with an email sent to her phone. She went to her laptop and checked
the email from there; the attachment was bank records of a $40,000 transfer from an NYC-based account of Walid's to a Boston-area man named David Carlton.

"Danny, get Roy in here," she told Gallagher, as the FBI agents looked over her shoulder, and one made a phone call to his superior.

Haines walked in moments later, Gallagher momentarily taking his place in the room. Summerskill showed Haines the email, and the attachment.

"Hetty's very aware of that," Haines told Summerskill. "Now she's about to find out what else the guy knows. And I don't think it'll take very long to crack him."

Boston

McGee successfully set up the videoconferencing software, allowing Gibbs and Jane to talk with two of her fellow detectives - Vince Korsak and her partner Barry Frost - in Boston.

Frost and Korsak were going to check on David Carlton, although they, like Jane, worked in homicide, and Carlton hadn't (yet) killed anyone. As is, he'd already become a person of interest to Boston PD and the FBI would take notice of him soon enough.

The video conference was straightforward, and Gibbs was about to end it when an unexpected visitor made her way over to Frost and Korsak.

"Jane???

It was Jane's mother, Angela.

"Jane?? Maura?? Are you two alright??"

"Angela, we're fine," Maura said to the monitor, while Jane - who loved her mother dearly - did a standing facepalm.

Kate, a bit surprised, decided to stand back and observe, to find out who this woman was and to learn more about Jane and Maura in the process...if Gibbs didn't decide to cut the feed.

But he just stood there, between Jane and Maura, while Jane's mother went on and on.

"That's Jane's mother, Angela," Maura said to the room. "Hello, Angela," she said, waving to the monitor.

"Hello, Maura, hello, Jane, hello NCIS," said Angela, whose face now took up most of the screen. "Are you alright? How was your flight? Why didn't you call me when you got there? How long are you going to stay--"

"Ma, Ma, Ma!!!" Jane said, trying to calm her mother down. "We're fine, Ma...everyone, this is my mother, Angela Rizzoli. She runs a coffee shop at the station...Ma, we'll be back home late tonight."

"You sure," Angela asked, "because you didn't pack any clothes and I don't know if Bass has enough food to last him if you had to stay--"
"Ma why would we stay?" Jane said, loud enough for some passersby to take notice. "The return trip tickets are for tonight--"

"Angela," Maura interjected, "there is some spinach on the kitchen counter, enough for the next few days. I have some grape leaves you can give him as well and some nasturtium--"

"Some what?" Jane looked at Maura. "What in hell is a nastytarium?"

"Nasturtium," Maura answered. "is a genus of seven plant species in the Brassicaceae family, best known for the edible watercresses Nasturtium microphyllum and Nasturtium officinale--"

"Maura. English."

"Nasturtium is a form of cabbage."

"You're feeding him fancy cabbage??"

"No, your mother will--"

Kate observed that this may be the longest Gibbs had ever tolerated any prolonged banter on someone else's part. For whatever reason, he was exercising the patience of Job with these two women.

If DiNozzo had gone on this long, Kate thought, Gibbs would have slapped Tony's head silly and probably made a permanent indentation in the back of his skull.

"Jane," Kate said with a loud whisper. "Who's Bass? Her dog?"

"No, her giant turtle," Jane whispered back.

"Tortoise, Kate," Maura said. "Bass is my tortoise, Geochelone sulcata, also known as an African spurred tortoise. Angela, don't feed him any strawberries. He ate some a few days ago, so don't give him any tonight. Grape leaves, summer squash or nasturtium should be fine when you get back to my house--"

McGee, seeing all this, tried to bury himself in his computer, while Kate leaned on the front of her desk and took it all in.

Gibbs, standing between Maura and Jane, still had not said a single word since Angela's interruption. However, Kate noticed that he looked to be besides himself and about to do or say something to bring all of this to a close.

Which he did.

"You may want to stay here, at least for tonight," he said to Jane and Maura.

"What?" Jane said. "Our return tickets are tonight, and we don't even have a hotel room--"

"My gut tells me you'll be safer here in Washington, at least for tonight," he replied. "And you don't have to worry about a place to stay. You'll stay at the same place Kate's staying."
"You want us to stay at her house or apartment?" Jane.

"Thank you, Agent Gibbs, but we don't want to impose." Maura.

"Guys," Kate said, to them both. "Gibbs's house. He's having me stay at his house until this blows over."

"And there's plenty of room for the two of you, too," he said. "No charge, either."

"Jane, Maura," said Angela - still taking up half the monitor, with Korsak and Frost in the background watching in bemusement - "you need clothes. Where are you going to get clothing. Do I need to have Frankie or Tommy ship some of your clothes down to Washington. Should I have Frankie drive them down? Should I have Frankie drive Bass down there--"

Gibbs looked back at Kate and mouthed, 'What have I gotten myself into?"
Chapter 8

Boston

Angela Rizzoli stood directly in front of the video camera connecting the Boston Police Department Homicide Unit with NCIS headquarters in Washington, D.C.

She had tried, in vain, to convince her daughter - Detective Jane Rizzoli - and their friend - Dr. Maura Isles - not to take an overnight flight to Washington. She stayed up half the night worried sick about the two women, and hadn't heard from them since they left Maura's house the night before.

Angela came up to Homicide to see if Detectives Vince Korsak or Barry Frost had heard from Maura and Jane. As soon as Angela saw Jane and Maura on the monitor at Frost's desk, she commandeered the screen - much to the chagrin of her own daughter and the bemusement of Frost, Korsak and, apparently, someone in the background.

"Jane, Maura," Angela said to the screen, "you need clothes. Where are you going to get clothing. Do I need to have Frankie or Tommy ship some of your clothes down to Washington. Should I have Frankie drive them down? Should I have Frankie drive Bass down there? Do you need Jo Friday?"

"Ma!!" Jane shouted to the screen from Washington. "We'll be fine. We're coming home tonight--"

"Not a good idea," said the silver-haired man, Gibbs, standing between Jane and Maura. "If Ari has a connection to this Hoyt character, they both might be in danger there."

Korsak decided that Angela had had enough screen time, and walked up to the camera. Because Angela's face was very close to the camera, Korsak had to stick his own face right against hers.

"Ma! Korsak! What in hell are you doing??" Jane said.

"I'm trying to wrap this up," Korsak said.

"Back up," Jane told him. "I don't want to see your boogers--"

"Boogers?" Korsak said. "My nose is clean, or I thought it was--"

"Let me look," Angela said, as Korsak turned his face to hers, and Frost - half-hidden in the background - put the Sports section of The Boston Dispatch over his face to hide his laughter.

"There aren't any boogers in his nose," Angela said, disapprovingly to Jane. "Detective Korsak is very well-groomed, in fact."

"You think so?" he said, and Angela nodded. "Thank you very much."

Gibbs - not at all laughing - was back to looking completely besides himself. Kate Todd - standing behind, watching the whole thing - thought he might, just might, headslap Jane Rizzoli to put an end to it.

Instead, he held up his cell phone to Jane.
"You might want to continue this conversation on the phone," Gibbs said, to Jane and then to the screen. "But not before settling where Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles are staying. My gut tells me that there's a connection between Ari and Hoyt and both Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles are in danger, at least for the time being."

"Agent Gibbs, I'll need more than a gut feeling to convince Lieutenant Cavanaugh to let them stay down there," Korsak told them. "Why would they be any safer down there than here in Boston?"

**New York**

"Guantanamo Bay is not a place you want to be, Mister Walid," said Henrietta Lange, sitting across from Walid Abdul in the interrogation room at the NCIS field office in Manhattan. "And I can help you avoid the worst possible scenario for yourself if you work with me."

"How...how can you help me?" Walid said, trying to appear cocky but coming across as extremely nervous, sweat beading down his forehead and dampening his shirt at the armpits.

"Attempted kidnapping of Ms. Carlson; attempting to kill federal agents and New York police officers in a shootout; taking money from a known terrorist and placing it into the account of a man we believe accepted it as payment for an upcoming hit job on two Boston women, in conjunction with a guard at a Boston prison connected to convicted serial killer who has attempted to murder one of those women."

"That's in addition to your connections to the Reynosa drug cartel in Mexico," said the male agent standing behind Lange, Roy Haines. "You're screwed."

"And if you do or say nothing, it could be said, that you screwed yourself," Lange told the now-sweating Walid. "But if you tell us where David Carlton is hiding, and keeping his weapons, and the address of the man he's working with on this hit job, then you will merely earn yourself life in prison instead of a life sentence - and much shorter life - in Guantanamo."

"Because, Walid," Haines said, leaning over the table, "if anything bad happens to Ms. Carlson or those two women in Boston or any other American citizen over what you've done, then we cannot prevent any of the bad things that will happen to you--quickly."

"A short life," Lange said, looking Walid in the eye - Walid was trying to avoid her gaze - "or a chance at a longer life. The choice, Walid, truly is yours."

**Boston**

Lieutenant Sean Cavanaugh ran the Homicide Unit at Boston PD, and did not want one of his top detectives nor the state's medical examiner out of town as long as they were.

But if word on the street here in Boston, and the intel from NCIS in New York were right, he'd have to let Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles stay in what, effectively, would be federal protection.

Cavanaugh had Gibbs on video in his office, with Korsak and Frost in the room, and without Angela
or Officer Frankie Rizzoli; in Washington, Gibbs had taken the call in NCIS's Multiple Alert Threat Center room, to avoid scaring Jane and Maura, and talk more freely with Cavanaugh.

Gibbs convinced Cavanaugh he could protect the two women in D.C., although the lieutenant made a note to speak with the Boston Chief of Police and the NCIS Director the next day as a follow-up. The NCIS director - Thomas Morrow - had just walked into MTAC, and told Cavanaugh that he could clear Maura's absence with her superiors and Rizzoli's with the chief.

Cavanaugh told Gibbs and Morrow that Boston PD's Special Operations Unit would be responsible for tracking down David Carlton and his associates, working in conjunction with the FBI. He told Korsak and Frost that police would be stationed 24/7 at Jane's apartment and Maura's house, and that Jane's family - Angela, Frankie, her brother Tommy and her father Frankie Sr. - would get 24/7 police protection.

And - upon Gibbs' suggestion - Cavanaugh said he would get approval for Officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr. to drive Jane and Maura's clothes and other 'essentials' down to D.C. that afternoon.

Korsak, Frost and five officers ended up helping Frankie Jr. and Tommy load a U-Haul full of clothing, shoes, and other 'things' from Maura's house and Jane's apartment.

Maura's tortoise, Bass, and Jane's dog, Jo Friday, were with Frankie in the front seat.

Frankie Jr. left Boston around 4 p.m., hoping to get to D.C. before midnight. He was tailed by an unmarked FBI car driven by Agent Gabriel Dean.

**Washington**

Special Agent Tony DiNozzo, so far, had tracked the mysterious Ziva to a swimming pool at a gymnasium; a cafe; a boutique; and a library branch.

"Fornell's guy" that Gibbs wanted DiNozzo to meet turned out to be FBI Agent Ron Sacks. DiNozzo and Sacks were very much alike in most respects - sense of humor, a natural disregard for policy, strong loyalty to their job and their bosses, and a love of cinema - but, for some reason, they seemed to mix like oil and water.

Only the seriousness of the situation involving Kate Todd and the other women on the "list" - and Ziva's connection to Ari Haswari - kept DiNozzo and Sacks focused on the job instead of sniping at one another.

Now, DiNozzo and Sacks were driving around Washington, trying to follow Ziva without getting made - or worse.

That was much easier said than done, when Ziva drove off into one of the most notorious neighborhoods in D.C.
Chapter 9

Chapter Summary

DiNozzo and Sacks track Ziva to a more dangerous part of D.C., and are made by a
canon character from NCIS Season 6; Maura and Kate have a discussion; and Fornell
suspects why Rizzles and Kibbs truly are in danger.

Washington

Sacks and DiNozzo followed Ziva's car into the Anacostia neighborhood, which was a study in
contrasts.

Anacostia had a reputation for being one of D.C.'s most crime- and poverty-ridden areas. It also had
pockets of affluence, reflected in the well-kept, maintained houses dotted throughout the
neighborhood.

Still, most Washingtonians chose to avoid the area and especially at night. Although it was early
afternoon, Sacks and DiNozzo were still on their guards while tracking Ziva.

They followed her to a convenience store, with DiNozzo parking 60 feet away, on the other side of
the street.

"You have a plan, DiNozzo?" Sacks asked. "We can't follow her around forever."

"That's what I was told: 'follow the accomplice and don't get made'," Tony replied.

"That's your plan?" Sacks retorted.

"Alright then, Sacks, what were you told?" Tony.

"Follow the accomplice and see what she's up to. When we find out, call Quantico."

"Then what? High-speed chase through town like Steve McQueen in Bullitt? Track her to a
nightclub, kill her like Uma Thurman killed Lucy Liu in Kill Bill?"

"We've been driving around town for God knows how long and--"

"And now she's here. In that convenience, liquor...place...perhaps a front for gamblers, or a place
where you can get some good ol' American hooch and good ol' South American cocaine--"

"Are you through?" Sacks said, exasperatedly. "For all we know she could be talking to Haswari
right now."

"Yeah, next to the hooch."

"Can you be serious for a minute???? I'm going in."
"Not a good idea, Sacks."

"Try and stop me."

Just as Sacks opened his door, DiNozzo grabbed his arm to stop him from getting out of the car.

"What the--"

"Don't move. I think we've been made."

"What?? Made?!?"

"Look, up the street, other side, on your two."

On the other side of the street, a car length on the far side of the convenience store, was an SUV - not Ziva's - with a middle eastern male in the driver's seat.

The driver was looking right at DiNozzo's and Sacks' own car.

"Take a look," DiNozzo said, handing Sacks his pair of binoculars. Sacks took them, looked at the SUV, and saw the driver looking in their direction.

"Damn," Sacks said. "You may be right. I'll call Fornell."

As Sacks pulled out his phone, the driver of the SUV started the engine, and suddenly pulled out on to the street, racing past them and going a quarter-mile before taking a left at the next intersection.

DiNozzo and Sacks looked at each other, and Tony glanced back at the store. Ziva's car was still there, and there was no sign she had left the store.

"She could have gone out the back," Sacks said. "I'm going in--"

There was a knock on the driver's-side window, briefly startling Tony.

It was another middle eastern man - Israeli - looking into their car.

The man quickly pulled out a badge, and another one; Sacks, seeing the second badge, pulled out his own, as did DiNozzo. Tony unlocked the back driver's side door, and motioned for the man to take the back seat.

Once he did so, the man once again showed his two badges, one identifying him as an officer of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, the other as Mossad's special liaison to the FBI.

"You're right," Sacks said to DiNozzo. "We've been made."

"Not necessarily," said the man in the back seat. "Not by the men Ziva David is meeting with. I cannot say for certain about her; it is probable she already knows about you two following her--"

"Hold on," DiNozzo put his hand up to silence the man. "Before you go any further, tell me who you are and what you're doing here."
"Very well," he replied. "My name is Michael Rivkin. I am a Mossad officer, liaison to your Federal Bureau of Investigation, and I am Ziva David's control officer."

RI&K

Back at NCIS, Jane Rizzoli was on her cell phone talking with her mother, Angela, next to the windows looking out at the Navy Yard. Maura was sitting next to her for a long while, listening in and speaking up every so often, before walking away and making her way back to Kate's desk.

Gibbs was talking with agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy about a lead on the Navy commander case; Ensign Evan Hayes, confronted by the two agents at a high school in Alexandria. Hayes ran from the scene but was caught by a coach, and was in interrogation awaiting Gibbs, Burley and Cassidy.

Kate walked past, spotted Maura at her desk, and invited her to join them. On the other side of the glass in the interrogation room, Kate, Maura and Agent Cassidy watched Gibbs and Burley grill Ensign Hayes.

"I've seen my share of interrogations, and even participated in one myself," Maura told Kate.

"Really?" Kate said. "You interrogated a suspect?"

"Well, I questioned Charles Hoyt."

"Charles Hoyt? That guy who tried to kill Jane?"

"Yes," Maura replied. "It wasn't quite like is going on in there" - looking at Gibbs and Burley - "nor what I have seen with Jane and Detectives Korsak and Frost. What I did was more of a psychological profile, trying to get into Hoyt's head."

"The head of a maniac," Kate said. "Did it mess with you? With your mind?"

"Hoyt isn't that good," Maura told her. "He thought he was. Because I am Jane's friend, he was going to toy with her by toying with me. I wouldn't let him."

Kate didn't reply, thinking of her own brushes with Ari Haswari. I let him mess with my head, she thought. I wonder if I'm going to pay the ultimate price because of it. Ari is obsessed with me. Ari let me go instead of killing me because he likes me. Ari had kind eyes. Ari is obsessed. Ari has a black heart.
"Ari is a homicidal terrorist maniac."

"Jane could have killed Hoyt," Maura said, "but she didn't. She's not a killer. She upholds the law, she upholds justice, ahead of revenge. I think you two are alike in that regard. I also think you two are alike in that you will kill if you have to, but neither of you two are cold-hearted killers, murderers.

"I'm sure Jane second guesses herself on not killing Hoyt when she had the chance. She doesn't second guess not being like him. If Jane had...has...to kill him...she will. Just like you will kill Ari if it comes to it."

Maura turned away from the window, grabbed Kate's hands, and looked her in the eyes.

"I haven't known you all that long, and not nearly as long as I've known Jane," Maura said. "But I am confident in saying you're not a killer, you're a protector, and an agent of justice like Jane. There are plenty of good people around you to help remind you of who you are. Don't let a bastard like Ari or Hoyt define you."

"Thank you," Kate said softly.

Cassidy had mostly paid attention to the interrogation - Gibbs was now in the ensign's face - and keeping an ear on the conversation between Agent Todd and Dr. Isles.

She had heard rumors about Kate having a twin sister and thought now was as good a time as any to raise the subject.

"I'm sure you two have been told a hundred times today how much you look alike," Cassidy said to them. "I have to ask: are you twins? Or at least sisters?"

"No!" they said in unison, then laughed. "At least not that we know of," Kate said.

**New Jersey**

Frankie Rizzoli Jr. and Agent Gabriel Dean pulled off at a truck stop to take a break, get lunch and talk shop.

"As far as I know, I'm driving to the guy's house, dropping off Jane and Maura's stuff and staying overnight," Frankie said as he and Dean ate lunch, sitting on the U-Haul's back bumper, "then driving back to Boston tomorrow afternoon."

"Makes sense," Dean said, munching on a cheeseburger. "It'd be a helluva drive back tonight. 14 hours on the road is a lot even for a young guy like yourself....when do you take your detective test?"

"Soon," Frankie told him. "I'm nervous as hell. Jane thinks I'll ace it. I'm not so sure."

"Maybe she knows something you don't," Dean said. "I was nervous when we had training at Quantico. More than once I was sure I was going to fail, and even looked into detective work. Turns out, I made it through, got my badge, and here I am. Even if you do flunk, don't sell yourself short. Jane says you got what it takes to be a detective, I'm inclined to believe her."

"Thanks, man," Frankie said. They finished lunch, went over the directions to Gibbs' house, and then Frankie got in the U-Haul, Dean in his car, and both got back onto the New Jersey Turnpike.
So did a Somalian man in a black Corvette, hanging 50 feet behind Dean's car. He made a call on his satellite phone, while being careful to avoid being seen by Dean.

"Ari," the Somalian said. "I am tracking the subjects now....they should be in Baltimore within two hours...no I have not been made...I am to follow and not to engage, and to pull back if I am seen....you are clear, sir."

**Quantico, Virginia**
**FBI Headquarters**

Tobias Fornell already had a lot on his plate, and this mess with Ari Haswari threatened to sweep everything else to the side.

Fornell looked at the info on Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles and took interest in a couple of paragraphs written by Agent Dean.

Dean admitted to romantic interest in Rizzoli, who in turn showed some interest but chose not to pursue a relationship. That wasn't a crime, nor was it against FBI regulations.

Fornell noted Dean's reluctance to his superiors to disclose his suspicions on why Jane ended the relationship, and his protest when forced to do so after Haswari was found to have special interest in her and Maura Isles.

Dean said in the FBI report he suspected that Jane and Maura were romantically linked, although perhaps in denial and keeping any interest in one another a secret. Dean had not yet been told about Haswari's stalking of women who resembled NCIS Agent Kate Todd; Fornell suspected Dean probably would have protested having to invade their privacy, but not at disclosing information that could save their lives.

Fornell thought further on the Rizzoli-Isles romantic connection, and why Ari might have targeted them instead of Maura.

*Did Ari suspect Gibbs of having a thing for Kate?* he muttered to himself. Ari was known to have had some obsession with Kate in the past, although it wasn't for certain if he still had some feelings for her.

Kate in turn was known to want no further part of Haswari, which the FBI judged to have fueled his jealousy and his harassment of the women on what had become known as the 'Kate List'.

Maura Isles, being on that list, was known as a close friend of Jane Rizzoli's.

*If she and Jane are involved, Fornell thought, and Ari thinks Gibbs and Kate are involved as well...he hates Gibbs, hates Kate, wants to kill them both. Do Rizzoli and Isles remind him of Gibbs and Todd? Would he kill the Boston women as an example to Gibbs?*

Fornell jumped up from his desk, and made plans to head to NCIS. If what he suspected was on the money, the four were in extreme danger. He called Gibbs on his cell phone, without success.

"McGee?" Fornell said, having reached his second choice, Probationary Agent Tim McGee. "Is Gibbs there?...good. Tell him I'm on my way, and have to talk with him a-sap....are Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles there?...good, I need to talk with them too...let me put it this way: it's as damn important
to the Ari case as anything."
Walid broke under Hetty Lange's interrogation tactics, freely giving her information about Ari Haswari's deposit into Walid's account, that Walid subsequently transferred over to David Carlton.

Bank records recorded cash withdrawals from Carlton's account roughly a half-hour after the deposits.

Two hours later, Boston PD detectives and FBI agents observed a man of Carlton's description making a purchase of a Bravo 51 sniper rifle, with ammunition, on the street and with cash, from a known member of the Black Celtics street gang in southwest Boston.

Carlton was then followed to his south Boston home, and Boston PD's Special Operations Unit and the Boston FBI office began making plans to apprehend him.

The FBI New York office, having questions of their own for Walid, picked him up from the Manhattan NCIS field office, leaving the New York Major Case Response Team to concentrate on the Ari case.

Hetty spent just ten minutes on a conference call with Leon Vance in L.A. and Gibbs in Washington.

She was surprised that Gibbs was so willing to go along with her first-stage suggestion - using one of her agents as a guard for Kate Todd, Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles.

So, Hetty put Paris Summerskill on a Navy plane from LaGuardia to Andrews AFB, with her tentative arrival in D.C. scheduled for 11 p.m.

Tony DiNozzo, FBI agent Ron Sacks, and the Mossad agent/liaison to the FBI named Michael Rivkin remained parked outside Cosmo's Convenience Mart & Liquor.

It was just after six o'clock, and an array of characters had found their way to the store, standing at various places along the barred front windows and in the small parking lot.

Ziva David - the alleged accomplice of Ari Haswari who DiNozzo and Sacks had been assigned to follow - still had not left the store. That's what Rivkin had persistently told the other two men in the car, despite Sacks' repeated attempts to get out of the car and walk into the store.

"If either of you walk out of this car, you will be made for certain," Rivkin said emphatically to Sacks. "She must not see us in the store nor out here."

That set off an argument between the FBI agent and the Mossad agent/alleged liaison.
"What the hell are we supposed to do, follow her around all week?" Sacks told Rivkin. "We need eyes in the back of that store."

"We do," Rivkin said, pulling a laptop out of his bag. A few minutes later, Rivkin opened a browser, showing video from cameras in front, back and on both sides of the building as well as within the building itself.

Ziva was, of all things, playing poker with a group of men in an office room.

"How'd you get that video, Rivkin?" Tony asked him.

"We have our ways, as your own agencies do," he replied. "Of course, this is in full cooperation with the FBI."

"Some joint operation, where they don't even tell their own agents about Mossad guys working undercover," Sacks said.

"Were you not told you would know what you needed to know as the operation progressed, Agent Sacks?" Rivkin.

"Well, yes--"

"And, Agent Sacks, did you not tell Agent DiNozzo your orders were to follow Ziva David and then inform Quantico?"

"Again, yes--"

"Then there is nothing to complain about. The operation is going smoothly--"

"Says you," DiNozzo interjected. "We're sitting here, in a Boyz n the Hood-esque neighborhood. I'm almost guaranteed to be made just by being the sole white guy within at least a mile. I know what I was told and what Sacks told me. But something tells me that we need to get her, soon. Sacks is right. We can't tail her forever."

"And do what with her, Agent DiNozzo? Ziva is a fully-trained, formidable agent of Mossad. I highly doubt both of you combined can apprehend her and make her go where she doesn't want to go."

"And you," DiNozzo said back to Rivkin, "said yourself that you're her handler. How do we know that you don't want her to be captured, that you aren't working with her yourself?"

"I am her handler," Rivkin said, "and I am also an agent of Mossad and its liaison to one of your top intelligence agencies. Unlike Ari Haswari, I am not a traitor to my country. I will not spit on the relationship between Israel and the United States, even for his sister, whom I have held in the highest regard."

"Have?" DiNozzo replied.

"Have, and still do," Rivkin said, "even if she is mistaken in her loyalty to a man whom we now know has threatened American citizens and murdered one of Mossad's own agents--"

"--and threatened to kill the American President and Israeli Prime Minister," DiNozzo said, glaring at
Rivkin, and thinking about all Ari had inflicted on Jethro Gibbs and Kate Todd during this ordeal. 
"You damn well better be on our side on this. Because if you aren't, I will beat your ass down."

"That's the first thing I've agreed with you on all day, DiNozzo," Sacks said, also glaring at the Mossad agent.

Rivkin looked at DiNozzo, chuckled, then looked down, and back up at he and Sacks.

"Perhaps," he said, "but you must know that I am on 'your side'. Ari is a threat to Israel as much as he is to your own country. And yes, we will not follow Ziva David for eternity. But she must be approached carefully, and cautiously. And definitely not here."

"So we're gonna wait for her to finish her poker game," DiNozzo said, somewhat frustratedly. "I'm overdue to call Gibbs."

"And I'm overdue to call Quantico," Sacks said.

"That is not a mere poker game," Rivkin said. "It is a negotiation, with men suspected to be agents of Ari's. Here to potentially kill two of your NCIS agents and two Americans visiting from Boston."

DiNozzo was momentarily in shock over hearing that, then gathered himself. "Thanks a hell of a lot for waiting to tell us that," he shouted to Rivkin.  

"You had not asked," Rivkin replied. "You can call Agent Gibbs and Quantico if you like. But we must wait."
Chapter 11

Chapter Summary

Gibbs and FBI Agent Fornell discuss the terrorist’s interest in Kate and Gibbs, and Rizzoli and Isles; Maura confirms the status of her and Jane’s relationship to Fornell and Gibbs; and Paddy Doyle finds out how the terrorist found out that Maura and Jane were under Gibbs’ protection.

Chapter 11
Washington, D.C.
Navy Yard

Tobias Fornell walked off the elevator onto the third floor of NCIS headquarters, hoping that everyone he needed to talk to was in the building and not out working a case.

Although Detective Jane Rizzoli and Dr. Maura Isles weren't NCIS employees, Fornell wouldn't put it past Leroy Jethro Gibbs to drag them along to a crime scene - especially if he knew Fornell was looking for them.

Fortunately for Fornell, Gibbs wasn't playing hide-and-seek this afternoon.

Special Agent Kate Todd was at work at her desk; Special Agent Tony DiNozzo wasn't around, but Detective Jane Rizzoli was sitting at his desk, working remotely on paperwork from a cold case, and an email to her supervisor. Special Agent Tim McGee was hard at work at his desk.

And, as if on cue, Special Agent in Charge Gibbs made his way down the stairs to the bullpen.

"Looking for someone, Tobias?" Gibbs said, walking to his desk.

"I think you know the answer, Gibbs," Fornell replied. "Where's Dr. Isles?"

"Working with Abby," he replied, as Jane, Kate and McGee looked up from their desks.

"I see Rizzoli over there at DiNozzo's desk," Fornell said. "Not even a full day and you're already putting them to work. What's next?"

"Why do you ask, Tobias?" Gibbs asked. "Recruiting? FBI looking for detectives and medical examiners?"

Fornell looked over at Jane. "I do need to talk with Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles," he said.

"I'd like to go home, and so would Maura," Jane said, standing up from DiNozzo's desk and walking to Fornell, who was standing in front of Gibbs' desk. "You mind telling me what this is about? Is something going on?"

"You can talk to me, Tobias," Gibbs said, then nodded his head toward the elevator. "I got time."

Fornell looked back at Jane, then followed Gibbs, who was walking to the elevator. Jane looked at them; Gibbs caught her eye, then nodded with a slight elevator dinged, and both men stepped in.
"Okay, Kate," Jane said. "You've been around those guys far more than I have. What's going on?"

"Fornell wants to talk to you and Maura, and Gibbs is going to find out why," Kate told her. "That nod? His way of letting you know he's got your back."

"My back?"

"Your back. And Maura's, too."

**RI&K**

Gibbs hit the button for the ground floor, waited a few moments, then hit the kill switch, stopping the elevator and dimming the lights. This was standard operating procedure for Gibbs and his team whenever they wanted to talk in absolute secrecy - such as now, with the conversation between Gibbs and Fornell.

Gibbs had wanted to talk with Fornell first, then talk with and prepare Rizzoli and Isles before allowing Fornell to talk with them. Fornell beat him to the bullpen, and now that Rizzoli was aware of Fornell's intent to question Maura and herself, Gibbs wanted to get to the bottom of whatever the FBI agent was up to.

"Gibbs," Fornell said. "Are you and Agent Todd an item?"

*That came out of left field,* Gibbs thought.

"You come up here, tell Rizzoli you want to talk to her and Dr. Isles, just to ask me *that*?" Gibbs said. "What do you want, Tobias?"

"I'll ask again, Jethro. Are you and Kate together?"

"Do you think we're 'together'? Kate and I are dating? Rule 12, Tobias. I haven't broken it with any member of my team."

"No, just with the assistant director of NCIS when you worked with her in Europe. You being straight up with me, Jethro?"

"Tobias, what the *hell* is this about? You wanna talk with Jane and Maura? Wanna ask Agent Todd out on a date yourself?"

"Jethro, I'm not joking around."

"Neither am I. Why ask the question? Why do you want to talk with Jane and Maura? Are the two connected?"

"Jethro. Why has Ari been stalking Kate, and Dr. Isles, and those other women? Why has he been tailing her, and sending her those letters and emails?"

"Tobias, you saying Ari thinks Kate and I are an 'item'?"

Fornell looked at Gibbs, saying nothing.

"You think Ari thinks Kate and I are a couple," Gibbs said, Fornell nodding. "Why?"

"The way you talk to her," Fornell said. "You don't talk...roughly to her like you do DiNozzo and McGee, and for that matter most people you come across. You don't even talk to her like you talk to Abby."
"And how do I talk to Abby, Tobias?"

"Like a daughter."

"You profiling me, Tobias?"

"No, I'm trying to show you a connection."

"Connection?"

"You're more gentle with Kate than with anyone else, as gentle as Sciuto, but different than a daughter. If not for the age difference I'd think you would have made your move already. Ari profiled you and your team."

"So that means he's connected me and Kate 'together'?"

"That means his actions indicate he believes you love her, Jethro, or at least like her a lot. He wants to kill you, Jethro, and has threatened Kate. If he kills her, he makes you hurt."

Gibbs couldn't argue with that, although Fornell's assertion that Haswari thought of he and Kate as a couple came out of nowhere.

"Tobias...there is nothing between me and Agent Todd," Gibbs told him. "I'll...acknowledge that I treat her differently, more gently, than I do DiNozzo or McGee. For that matter differently than I treat Abby or Ducky...has he made a threat?"

"Nothing we're aware of."

"Tobias, I think I'd know if Ari thought of us as a couple and had made a threat."

"Kate is staying with you, Jethro."

"Because he's staked out her apartment, Tobias. She's safer with me."

"You're not sharing a bed?"

"Tobias...no. We're not sharing a bed. Now that I know you think Ari sees me and Kate as a couple, what do you want with Rizzoli and Isles?"

"I was about to get to that," Fornell replied, "although I'm surprised you hadn't picked up on Ari thinking of you and Kate as a couple."

"Didn't say I hadn't thought of it," Gibbs retorted. "Also didn't say I thought anything of it."

"Well you better, because that's the opinion of FBI and probably every other agency," Fornell said. "Ask Morrow."

"What I want to ask you, Tobias, is what this has to do with Rizzoli and Isles."

"Gibbs...you and your team aren't the only ones Ari's profiled."

"He's profiled them?"

"And he's guessed, as have we, that they really are a couple."

So had Gibbs, though he wasn't going to admit that, yet, to Fornell. "So he's going after people he
"Couples that resemble the couple he sees you and Agent Todd as being," Fornell said. "Only them, so far. There's been rumors in Boston police about Rizzoli for years, even though she and Dr. Isles have a history of dating men. They also have a history of being close friends."

"If that makes them a couple, then lots of women are couples." 

"We've surveilled them over the past couple of months. We've seen instances of intimacy between them. Let's say second base."

"FBI. The FBI has been spying on those women."

"You would too, Jethro, if you thought it was necessary."

"So they're a couple."

"We think they are, and we think Ari thinks they are...Dr. Isles has been stalked almost to the same degree Kate has been."

"Letters?"

"And emails, to her home, her work and her email address."

"To harass her, like the other women on the list."

"More than that. We think he may be planning to kill her and Rizzoli."

"Kill?"

"As a message to you. Ari thinks of Jane Rizzoli as the Gibbs in the relationship, Maura Isles as the Kate. He kills Maura, hurts Jane, then kills Jane to show you that he'll kill you and Kate."

"How long you been sitting on this, Tobias?"

"A week-"

"A week? You should have told me, Tobias! Or at least told Boston PD."

"They showed up here today, and I'm telling you now, and Cavanaugh in Boston already knows."

Gibbs hit the kill switch again, and the elevator resumed moving downwards. "Let me talk with Rizzoli and Isles," Gibbs told Fornell.

"I need to verify it with them, and they deserve to know Ari is after them," Fornell replied, as the elevator stopped at the ground floor. Three people got on, and the two men remained silent all the way back up to the third floor.

"We talk to them together," Gibbs told Fornell as they walked off towards the bullpen, where Rizzoli and Maura Isles awaited.

**RI&K**

Gibbs had the conversation take place in the conference room upstairs, near Director Morrow's office and the MTAC room, with Gibbs sitting at the head of the table next to Jane, and Maura opposite Gibbs next to her, and Fornell right across from them.
Fornell explained what FBI intelligence had picked up about Ari Haswari's theory of Gibbs and Kate Todd being a couple and how it tied into the so-called Kate List. Then he explained why FBI intelligence believed Maura had been targeted so intently by Ari, and what it had heard not only from sources embedded within Ari's circle, but from within the Boston police department.

"You think Maura and I are a couple?!!" Jane shouted at him. "What the hell do you think you're saying?"

"Jane!" Maura put her hand on Jane's arm to quiet her, but Rizzoli wouldn't have it.

"What the hell kind of question is that?" she screamed. "That's it-Maura, we're going home-"

"Jane," Gibbs said, quietly, then looked over at Fornell and spoke forcefully. "Agent Fornell. You will tell Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles the opinion of the FBI or you will leave."

Fornell looked at Gibbs for a moment, then turned to Rizzoli and spoke.

"Detective," he said, firmly. "It is not my business, nor the FBI's, to harass citizens, and certainly not anyone it wishes to protect, like you and Dr. Isles. Ari Haswari views Agent Gibbs and Agent Todd as a couple. He has a history of harassing and stalking women who resemble Agent Todd, and we believe this is with the intentions of sending messages to Gibbs and to Kate.

"We also believe he views the two of you as a couple - you, Detective, as the Gibbs in the relationship, and you, Dr. Isles, as the Kate."

"As I said, it is not our business or our intent to harass you. Your privacy is your right, and you're relationships are your business. However, Ari Haswari has clearly violated that privacy for his own purposes, and to the point of threatening both of your lives, and in order to provide you our best protection in this matter, the FBI needs to know for certain the status of your relationship. So I'll ask again. Are you friends, or more than friends?"

Jane looked incredulous, and frightened, and a little rattled, Maura calm and collected.

"I promise you we are not voyeurs," Fornell told them both. "If he thinks you are a couple and you're not, you're already in danger. If he knows you are a couple and you are, you're in even more danger. Because we believe he will go after you to prove a point to Gibbs, and to satisfy his own murderous urges."

Jane and Maura looked at one another.

"Jane," Gibbs said gently. "It doesn't matter whether you're together, or just good friends. What matters is catching that bastard, and you - all of us - living through this. It doesn't have to go past here."

"The FBI will honor your privacy, I assure you," Fornell told them.

Jane looked at Maura, still uncertain. "Maura?"

Maura nodded, and looked directly at Fornell.

"Jane and I are friends, Agent Fornell," she calmly said, reaching over to grasp Jane's hand.

"Best friends. Life long best friends, forever."

"And yes, we are lovers."
Maryland

The very late lunch/dinner Officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr. had at the truck stop hadn't filled his stomach, so he munched on a bag of corn nuts as he drove the U-Haul through Baltimore.

Gabriel Dean, an FBI agent assigned to Boston - where Rizzoli was a Boston police officer - followed right behind him.

And, about 100 feet behind them, was the Somalian, who thought he had managed to not get made this far into the trip.

He was mistaken; Dean was right on top of it, and called ahead to colleagues waiting two exits ahead to join the caravan.

Boston

Eddie said all the right things, did almost all of the right things, to embed himself fully into Paddy Doyle's organization.

A handyman by trade, the 25-year-old came from a long line of Irish-descended, working-class Bostonians, some of whom were legitimate, outstanding citizens of the community.

Eddie was part of the criminal portion of the family, and to him getting in with the most notorious crime boss in Boston was, perhaps, the crowning achievement of his life.

Unfortunately for Eddie, he wasn't above taking bribes to further his interests, and it finally caught up to him.

Stupidly, he thought nothing of it when he took $500 from an African man to divulge what he overheard Paddy discussing earlier in the day: a Boston police source telling him that Dr. Maura Isles and Detective Jane Rizzoli were under federal protection in Washington, D.C., and Detective Rizzoli's officer brother had left to drive clothes and other personal belongings to them.

For the next, and final, 12 minutes of his life, chained to a radiator in the basement of a run-down central Boston house, Eddie would regret having taken the cash and not walking away.

"You were better off getting shot to death by that terrorist," Paddy yelled at him, between blows to Eddie's skull from the pipe he was beating him with. He was alone with Eddie in the basement, his lieutenants monitoring the door to the basement, the house and the neighborhood.

"You sold my daughter out to a terrorist! A terrorist!" Paddy screamed.

Eddie was too out of it to comprehend what Paddy was saying, and certainly to understand that Paddy's anger wasn't about Paddy, it was about selling out Maura to a man whom, if he wanted to, could be the next bin Ladin and seemingly wanted to put her to death.

Paddy Doyle dealt with Eddie - like all who had betrayed him - as only Paddy Doyle could.

As he opened the basement door, he told two of his goons to clean up the mess below, then made a phone call to one of his top lieutenants.

"Get that kid from BCU to hack into the FBI," he said. "Find out where Maura and Rizzoli are, and find out more about this Haswari bastard...nobody threatens her! You hear me?!...find out where he is...we take down his men...and when he shows up, we take him down too."
Chapter 12

Washington, Navy Yard, NCIS

Tobias Fornell took his leave of the conference room, and the NCIS building, and was on his way back to FBI headquarters in Quantico. He intended to check in with Agent Sacks to get an update on his and NCIS Agent Tony DiNozzo's tail of Ari Haswari's half-sister - and Mossad officer - Ziva David.

He left two women and one man in that same room, to clean up the emotional mess that was a consequence of Fornell's questioning.

Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles were known as close friends, and for some time rumored to be much more than that. For the past several months, they had in fact grown from 'lifelong best friends forever' to dating one another, in secret.

They thought no one else knew.

Jane was confident she could handle the rumors, especially since the bulk of them came from officers, and her boss in Boston PD's Homicide Unit, Lt. Sean Cavanaugh, had spread the word throughout the force for everyone to lay off.

Maura had heard similar rumors - of a much nicer, accepting nature - from her own staff, and hadn't had to deal directly with any bigotry from officers.

The one who had to hear it was Jane's brother, Frankie Jr., who in fact was an officer, though the worst offenders had stopped giving him grief about his sister's personal life.

Both Jane and Maura were confident that no one else knew they were "Jaura" or "Mane" or whatever other goofy name they came up with one evening to describe the new state of their relationship.

They could take their time to grow as a couple, and figure out how to tell their loved ones and colleagues about their relationship.

Now?

In the space of ten minutes, they discovered that not only had the terrorist stalking Maura know about them, and not only had the FBI spied on them, but Cavanaugh himself now knew about them - on top of Fornell and Gibbs.

Jane stared at the table, hands clasped in front of her, Maura's arms wrapped tightly around her shoulders, holding her.

Gibbs looked forward, and downwards, and back at Maura and Jane apologetically, several times.

"I knew when we went undercover at that bar," Jane said, still looking downwards.

"I'm sorry?" Maura said, her head still lying on Jane's shoulder, arms still wrapped around her.
"The lesbian bar. You were a waitress, I was sitting at that table, talking to all those women trying to fish out the murderer. You showed me your boobs."

Maura pulled her head away from Jane's shoulder, and looked at her quizzotically.

"I passed it off like I wasn't impressed. Not to say you don't have a nice rack, you do...but when I looked up and saw your eyes...that's when I knew."

That made Maura grin, ear to ear.

"Most guys and some of those women in that bar would've stopped at the boobs," Jane joked, making Maura laugh.

She stroked Jane's hair, and cheek.

"I knew when you were shot," she said to Jane. "Screaming at them to shoot that dirty cop because Frankie needed surgery. You pulled his gun on yourself. You shot yourself to kill him and save your brother. It was all in slow motion, Jane...I ran to you but I couldn't get there in time."

"What could you have done to stop him," Jane said. "You're a doctor, not a cop...you gave me medical attention on the spot. You helped save me, and--"

"I knew then I couldn't live without you," Maura told her, grasping her hands. "I'd...come out at your pace, since I knew it'd be harder on you than on me--"

"What did I tell you in that hospital room? 'Whatever happens, we go through it together.' That hasn't changed."

Jane pulled Maura into a tight embrace, and kept it for several long moments, then kissed her softly on the lips.

Meanwhile, Gibbs was looking and feeling much, much more awkward than he did when he endured the discussion between Maura, Jane and Jane's mom down in the bullpen.

He was trying to think about the case involving the Navy commander, the ensign brought in for questioning, even renaming the boat in his basement 'Fornell' and burning it, while trying to be as inconspicuous as possible.

Maura noticed his discomfort, and broke her embrace with Jane to speak to him.

"Agent Gibbs, we are so sorry to embarrass you," she said. "Not that we're sorry for liking each other. But...a 2003 study from Boston Cambridge University found that, amongst a sample of female same-sex couples from the northeastern U.S., 82 percent tended to--"

"Googlemouth!!!!" Jane whispered to Maura, then turned around to Gibbs. "Sorry about the PDA, Gibbs. We're not in the habit of making out in public--"

"Ladies," he replied, "I have a rule. No apologies. Especially about expressing affection for someone you love."

Then he took a deep breath, and exhaled, and took a sip from his cup of now lukewarm coffee.
"Sometimes, there are exceptions to rules," he continued. "I'm sorry about Fornell, and what he said about the FBI spying on you, and for what Ari has done to you. You both have my full support, and my team's full support. Don't worry about anybody or anything. Whomever gives you problems, come to me."

"Thanks," Jane said.

"Thank you," Maura said. "We both appreciate what you've done for us."

"Hopefully," Gibbs said as he stood up from the table, "this will all be taken care of soon...NCIS, my team, and I will do whatever it takes to protect you both from Ari and his people, even if it means taking a bullet."

Maura and Jane looked at each other, and back at Gibbs, who motioned for them to stand up, as he made his way to the door.

"I hope it doesn't come to that," Jane said, following Gibbs, holding Maura's hand.

"One other thing," Gibbs said, walking out the door and into the hallway. "Don't worry about DiNozzo...I'll put a muzzle on him."

Gibbs made his way down the stairs, to the bullpen, where Agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy awaited him.

Maura and Jane followed him downwards, hand-in-hand.

"DiNozzo?" Maura said. "The guy who walked in off the elevator this morning?"

"Don't worry," Jane replied. "We can handle that clown."
Chapter 13

Chapter Summary

Kate Todd talks with Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles in the aftermath of their emotionally upsetting questioning by Fornell.

As Gibbs made his way to his desk in the bullpen - with Agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy waiting on him - Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles walked down the stairs hand in hand.

Burley and Cassidy saw them, although their attention was mainly on Gibbs, who wanted an update on the investigation involving the murder of Commander Michael Dornan. Burley was there to tell Gibbs that the prime suspect, Ensign Evan Hayes, probably wasn't the killer, and that he needed to show Gibbs why in Abby Sciuto's forensics lab.

Tim McGee didn't notice Jane and Maura; his attention was on David Carlton's bank statements and on another transaction to a Los Angeles-area man from an Indonesian account believed to be linked to Ari Haswari.

On the other hand, Kate Todd, following up on an NCIS Office of Special Projects report sent to Gibbs, did notice Jane and Maura, and their hand-holding somewhat surprised her.

"Kate," Gibbs said to her as he went to his desk. "Any word from DiNozzo?"

"He hasn't called me, nor has he called McGee, since you talked to him in the elevator," she replied. "I've tried twice. No answer."

"I'll find out why once I get through with Burley," Gibbs said, then walked over to Kate's desk and lowered his voice. "I want you to talk with Jane and Maura."

"Talk?" Kate tilted her head and raised an eyebrow. "Chat...about what?"

"Fornell," Gibbs said, "raised an issue that...wasn't particularly pleasant for either of them. Their...relationship."

"Relationship?" Kate whispered; Jane and Maura were on Gibbs' six, headed his way.

"Yeah," he whispered. "No rings means they're not engaged. They're together. Assure them we're on their side." Then Gibbs spoke more normally. "Kate, if DiNozzo calls, tell him to call my cell. Stan, Paula, you're with me."

As the two agents followed Gibbs to Abby's lab, Maura walked over to McGee's desk, while Jane pulled up a chair from DiNozzo's desk and parked it in front of Kate's desk.

"How'd it go up there?" Kate asked Jane.

"I'd...I'd rather not talk about it," Jane told her.

"Wanna talk? I'm a pretty good listener," Kate replied.
"About 'Maura and me', 'Maura and I' or however Ms. Grammar would put it?"

"Jane…Fornell said something, didn't he?"

Jane looked downward, took a deep breath, and put her feet up on Kate's desk.

"Got a beer?" she said, with a smirk.

"Sorry, no alcohol allowed in the building," Kate told her. "They make you leave the building if you need, or want, a drink."

"Hmmph," Jane muttered. "I could use a beer right now – guess I'll have to settle for something from the machines—"

"I can get McGee to make a coffee run," Kate answered, and a minute later the probationary agent was on his way to a nearby café to pick up four coffees.

With McGee out of the way, Kate thought Jane and Maura might open up a little more.

She was mistaken, at least in regards to Jane.

"The sooner I forget about what went on up there the better," Jane said, before getting up to find something to eat at the vending machines, and leaving Maura with Kate.

"She's a little rattled," Maura said, apologetically. "That guy…"

"Fornell?"

"Yes, Agent Fornell asked Jane and I some very personal questions which he said were necessary and related to the reason we are here in Washington," Maura told Kate. "There were things said that were somewhat…awkward…and things we learned that were…surprising."

Kate knew she wasn't going to get neither Jane nor Maura to open up like she wanted, not now and not in this building, then remembered that wasn't what Gibbs asked her to do.

Jane walked back to the bullpen, chocolate bar in hand, and asked Maura to come with her, to talk.

"I got a text from Cavanaugh," Jane told Maura. "He wants to talk with us both, on the phone…Kate, is there a semi-private place on this floor?"

"Other side of the stairs, opposite DiNozzo's desk," she told them.

McGee returned from the café, four coffees in a paper tray, took his, and laid the other three on Kate's desk.

"Where are Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles?" he asked.

"Talking with their boss from Boston," she said. "You talked with Dr. Isles earlier?"

"Tried to," McGee said. "I, ah, think we're both kinda awkward around the opposite sex…please don't tell Tony."

"Don't worry," Kate said with a wink, "I'll be the only one to harass you about that…Dr. Isles. Was what she like? Aloof?"

"No, she was friendly, just not comfortable," McGee said. "Could be she, uh, doesn't know me, or
that we don't have anything in common."

"What did you two talk about? The weather, Thanksgiving, Washington?"

"Cherry blossoms," he said. "She asked me what my hobbies were, and I mentioned computers, war games, jet packs. When I mentioned the outdoors, she asked me about the cherry blossom trees here in D.C., and started telling me the history behind them. Said it would have been nice to have seen them in season. Then you pulled me away to get coffee."

"Don't complain, I paid—"

"I'm not. You know what's going on with them?"

"You noticed?"

"Noticed what?"

"Er...nothing. Nothing that you mention to anyone other than Gibbs, especially Tony, Abby, Ducky and Palmer, got it?!"

Kate gave him a 'I'll kick your butt' look, and McGee took her at face value.

"Understood," he told Kate. "Are they alright?"

"For someone who found out they couldn't go back home tonight, and probably anytime soon, because a terrorist was stalking them?"

McGee and Kate walked back to his desk so he could continue tracking one of Ari's bank accounts. A few minutes later, he had decided to take Jane and Maura's coffees down to the break room to warm them up in the microwave when both women walked back to the bullpen, Maura holding on to Jane's arm.

Jane and Maura both saw their coffees and picked them up.

"We're sorry," Jane said. "Thank you for the coffee, McGee, Kate. We may need to nuke them—"

"There's a microwave in the break room," Kate said. "Mind if I walk with you two back there for a few minutes?"

Jane looked at Maura, as if allowing her to make the decision.

"Sure," Maura said.

In the break room, Kate sat down with the two women, and decided to make her point.

"You guys okay?" she asked.

"We're fine," Jane said, a little curtly.

"Jane," Maura said to her, then reached out to hold her hand. "Kate, we're...alright. It's been a little more stressful day than we anticipated."

"Sure sounds like it," Kate replied. "I'm sorry about that, too...look. We don't know each other that well and for heaven's sake I pulled a gun on you and my hair was a mess. That made a lousy first impression."
Maura smiled, and Jane chuckled.

"Did Gibbs say something to offend you, to hurt you?"

"No no no," Jane said. "He was a gentleman. That other guy…I'd like to wring his freakin' neck—"

"Not if I get to him first," Maura said, then laughed, and looked at Kate. "You noticed us."

"Noticed what?"

"Us. Holding hands, walking down the stairs. I saw you see us, not leering, but you did notice."

"Maura, you held hands. You love each other. That's not a problem. I guessed you two might be a couple when we talked earlier in the breakroom, but I also guessed you could be best friends not involved. Either way, it's not an issue here…and that's not the most important thing anyway. Gibbs told me we were going to protect you and you’d be here tonight and probably for a while. I know a little how that feels."

"Do you," Jane said, somewhat exasperatedly. "You live here. We don't—"

"Jane!" Maura said back to Jane. "She's trying to help. She's not the one you want to grill—"

"Maura…Kate. You're straight. We're….not straight. You don't have to move, we do. Tell me how that feels."

Kate – a few years younger than both Jane and Maura – looked them both in the eye.

"I'm as shaken up over Ari as anybody. I've had my entire world turned upside down. FBI has to listen in on conversations I have with family. I had to leave my apartment and move in with Gibbs. And I can forget having a social life, much less dating.

"But I had already worked here and dealt with Ari. I can't imagine being torn from here, torn from my friends and family, and told I had to work in a strange city, stay with strange people. That would be stressful enough…if someone like Fornell, or even Gibbs, started grilling me about personal stuff? I would be…pissed…hurt…scared…I don't know how I would react."

Kate reached out, grasping Jane and Maura's hands.

"I want to tell you that you're not alone. What I told you earlier about Gibbs having your back? He does. It isn't talk. It's real. We have your backs. We're in this mess as much as you are, and we're going to get through it together."
"That's really, really sweet of you to say that, Kate," Jane Rizzoli said, ungrasping her hand from Kate Todd's. "But you have no idea what in hell Maura and I just went through up there, in Boston. No. Idea. Whatsoever."

Jane stood up from her seat, kicked the chair out of her way and stormed to the women's restroom. Maura Isles - now known for certain to Kate as Jane's girlfriend - held on to Kate's hand.

"Kate," Maura said, "that wasn't just sweet of you to say that - it was the right thing to do."

"She doesn't seem to agree," Kate said of Jane.

"This would be hard on her if we didn't come down here," Maura replied. "I think she knows you and your team aren't at fault, and want to help. I know you aren't, and you do."

"She has to work through this in her own way," Kate said.

"A study done at, if I remember correctly, Boston Cambridge University five years ago showed that 57 percent of women presented with a life-changing decision in very stressful situations, involving an involuntary change in employment, or location, took between three and seven weeks to fully accept their situations," said Maura, as she shifted into Maurapedia mode. "26 percent between seven and 18 weeks, and 10 percent between 18 and 26 weeks. Four percent 27 weeks or more. Two percent took only one to three weeks."

"That's...interesting, Maura."

"That left one percent, Kate."

"One percent who got over it in a day?"

"No, one percent who never got over it."

"Um...okay...let's hope that Jane's among the two percenters."

Maryland

The Somalian had tailed the U-Haul from New Jersey, and up to now thought he was in the clear. But the three cars - one behind, two aside - his own, and the two Maryland state troopers a quarter-mile ahead were about to make him realize that he's not.

"Let's get him boxed in," said FBI Agent Fritz Howard, driving the car hugging the passenger's side of the Somalian's car, "and take this guy off the road."

Anaconda

Rivkin, DiNozzo and Sacks were watching the poker game/negotiation, on Rivkin's laptop from
DiNozzo's car, outside the convenience store.

Ziva David had apparently won herself quite a bit of cash, and decided to take her leave. She was followed out of the back room by two, 20-something Arab men, and the three piled into Ziva's SUV, which took off in the opposite direction from DiNozzo's car.

"Let's go," DiNozzo said, and moments later was back on the road, 70 feet behind the SUV.

Up to now, Ziva's driving had been conservative, keeping right at the speed limit, and Tony had no trouble following her.

Four blocks from the store, Ziva changed her tactics. She started driving like a maniac.

And, all of a sudden, Tony had trouble keeping up.

Boston

David Carlton had finished writing another scathing, rambling letter about the Boston PD, but this one was addressed to the three Boston daily newspapers. He sent the emails to all three papers' editorial departments, then walked back down to his basement, where he kept his guns and ammunition.

He reviewed his final plans to "take out" the two women he had been paid a total of $80,000 to murder.

He would never get the chance to carry them out.

All along the street outside his house, the FBI and the Boston PD Special Operations Unit were covertly preparing to take the bastard down no later than sunrise.

Across town, at a prison, warden Charles Price had just wrapped up for the day, expecting to have dinner with a much-younger woman later on.

Instead, he was intercepted by three FBI agents, who drove him to their headquarters so he could answer their questions about Charles Hoyt, Rod Mason and Ari Haswari.

Rod Mason - Hoyt's personal guard - had been arrested an hour before by the FBI, accused of conspiring with Hoyt and Haswari to help Carlton kill Jane Rizzoli.

At Boston PD's main headquarters, Sean Cavanaugh - Lieutenant, in charge of the Homicide Division - had a lot on his mind.

He was going to lose one of his best detectives - Jane Rizzoli - for an indefinite amount of time. Not only did he have to replace her, but he had to tell her that she had to stay in Washington under federal protection. She wasn't happy at all, and neither was he, but Cavanaugh tried to convince her it was for the best.

Maybe she had picked up that he didn't believe it any more than she did.

Then there was the other thing.

Not only were the rumors about Jane true, according to the FBI she and Maura Isles were in a relationship. Cavanaugh had to figure out how to break that news to his department - if he broke it at all - and especially how to break it to Jane's family...and her mother, Angela.
Los Angeles

Leon Vance gave Juliana Todd a noncommittal answer on her proposal to send herself and another agent to Washington, which didn't please the young undercover agent in the least.

She left Vance's office, and found her way to the agents' bullpen area, stationed outside the vast Ops Center.

There, Juliana grabbed the only other agent in the building at the moment - G Callen - and asked to talk with him in private, away from Vance and any other potentially listening ears.

A Navy plane, somewhere over the East Coast

Paris Summerskill figured her new assignment to be either one of the more mundane or one of the biggest in her career.

She was going to help guard Jethro Gibbs' house at night, and perhaps help his team work the cases that it couldn't because of the Ari Haswari mess.

She didn't like being apart from her partner, Roy Haines, in New York. But Hetty Lange told her she was needed here, and so here she would go.

Washington, D.C.

Leroy Jethro Gibbs' house

The American Cablevision people were known to work on their own sweet time, but arrived at Gibbs' home on time and ready to work. Apparently, Gibbs's being a federal agent had its perks, at least so far as getting the cable installers to do their jobs.

Or maybe it was the FBI having screened the installers - anticipating Ari might try to infiltrate that way - or having their own people do the work. Regardless, by sunset every bedroom, the living room and the basement would have the finest programming American Cablevision had to offer.

Jane needed to remember the sports tier - where she could watch the Celtics and Bruins - and Gibbs needed to remember 199, for the Americana Channel, and 407 for ZNN.

"It'll be a helluva lot better than what he's got now," said Brent Langer, the FBI agent assigned to watch the house during the day. "Nine channels, and I swear this TV was made before the guy was born."

"You callin' probie an old man?"

The other man in the room, nursing a Corona beer, had been staying at the house only a week but already had gotten a reputation in the neighborhood as 'that old coot'.

Old coot he may be, but Mike Franks wasn't about to let Gibbs nor his people deal with this Ari bastard by themselves.

Washington, D.C.

NCIS headquarters

Third-floor women's restroom

Jane hated to show weakness in public and did not want anyone to see her sobbing like a baby.

She spent the past few minutes in a stall, trying to stay as silent as possible, and using half the roll of
toilet paper to wipe her eyes and blow her nose.

I'm alone...no I'm not I have Maura...I'm in this strange city...with Maura...I got grilled by a strange man...with Maura...and he grilled her...we're here because some strange, stalking terrorist went after Maura...if it was me it's be okay but he wants to hurt Maura the only person I've ever truly loved if he hurt her and she went away oh god I'd hurt forever oh crap what's wrong with me oh god oh no...

Jane stood in front of a sink, trying to wash her face, hoping nobody would notice her makeup was smeared. Maura would have plenty of makeup, anyway.

Maura...my amazing, goofy, quirky, beautiful Maura...why would anybody want to hurt you?

Just because of who you are...who you look like...who you love...

And Jane broke down, again, sobbing, and the tears flowed and her cries filled the room.

A woman walked in, having heard the cries from outside, and went to see what was wrong.

Abby Sciuto knelt next to Jane, offering a Kleenex, and a hug.

"I can't do this," Jane cried, "it's too damn much...so hard...why..."

I heard Fornell said something to them upstairs, Abby thought. He must have done a number on them, at least on Jane...I'm gonna make Gibbs make Fornell make it right.

Abby put her arm around Jane, to comfort her. "It'll be alright, sweetie. I promise."

At that moment, Maura bolted thru the door, and ran right to Jane, grabbing her in a tight embrace.
CIA agent Trent Kort comes to finish off The Surgeon, Charles Hoyt.
stated everything was proceeding as normal, and that he should be out of the prison by the end of the week.

"Turkey and dressing, compliments of the warden, with wine," the guard said, as Hoyt settled back into his now-clean bed.

"About damn time," the murderer replied, munching on the first meal he'd had since breakfast. "Hungry as hell. What about Rizzoli?"

"Everything is proceeding as planned," the guard told him, sitting down next to his bed. "However, I will need to review everything with you, so that I am certain we are both on the same page, and that we will be able to execute this operation."

"Everything? Like how I will slice Jane's neck and puncture her hands and make her watch her girlfriend bleed to death."

The guard patiently listened as The Surgeon described in gross detail what he planned to do to both Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles.

"And how do you plan to get them in here?" the guard asked.

"The eagle that lost his family," Hoyt told him. "And that's all you get."

"Mr. Hoyt," the guard told him, "I have worked undercover, in counter-terrorist operations, freelanced for the IRA, advised Saddam Hussein. I have executed operations myself which took out operatives under conditions much more difficult than this.

"But even the softest targets require full knowledge among the parties executing it. I need to know what you did that serves as the carrot on the stick to lure them here. Ari wants to know; that way we can cover it up when this operation is concluded, and the secret will go with you to your grave."

"No one will know?"

"Well, Ari and myself, but such is the price of working with him. You should consider yourself fortunate; you and he both get what you want."

"Revenge against Jane?"

"Whatever you wish to call it."

So, The Surgeon proceeded to tell the guard about a family of four that he killed in a park, years ago, a missing persons' case that made the other member - a college freshman-to-be - the prime murder suspect. The Surgeon told the guard how he killed the parents and two siblings, strapped their bodies into the family car, then put it in drive until it went into a nearby lake and sank to the bottom.

Outside, CIA agents were listening via a bug placed by the guard on Hoyt's dinner tray, and forwarded the information to Boston PD's Homicide Division.

The guard convinced Hoyt of his sincerity, and told him he would contact Boston PD with his demands. If only Hoyt knew what was in the guard's back pocket he might have had a heart attack on the spot.

In his pocket was his CIA badge, identifying him as Trent Kort. The truth serum placed in Hoyt's food and in the wine had done its job, and Kort was waiting to finish his job.
Charles Hoyt truly was not long for this world, and Kort was going to finish him off before the cancer did.
Chapter 16

NCIS Headquarters

McGee was the only person in the bullpen at the moment, and he didn't take it as his chance to goof off.

Not only was he busy tracking Ari Haswari's varied accounts, he also was listening for a phone call from Tony; waiting for Kate to return from the break room with Jane and Maura; and waiting for Gibbs to show up and bark out a question or an order.

Gibbs got there first, with Ducky, Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy keeping up behind him.

"McGee! Any word from DiNozzo?"

"No boss, still no word," McGee replied.

"Ducky, Stan, you're with me. Paula, stay here with McGee, help him track those accounts, then get over to the house." Gibbs picked up his cell phone - Burley and Mallard right behind him - and McGee and Cassidy could hear him ask for Tobias Fornell as he stepped in the elevator.

"Agent Cassidy, did I hear right? Did he tell you to go to the house?" McGee asked Paula.

"Yeah," she replied. "He wants me on protective detail, at least for tonight."

"That's funny," McGee said. "Gibbs told me the same thing."

Not far away from the bullpen in the women's restroom, Maura held Jane tight, trying to calm down and comfort her. Jane was just softly crying now, her face on Maura's shoulder, while Maura gently stroked Jane's hair and cheek.

Abby knelt with them, staying silent but trying to show her support with her body language. Kate, having heard the commotion, followed Maura into the restroom, and was standing next to Abby.

Kate's face was a mix of sympathy and concern and she wasn't sure how to proceed, but hoped that the couple would sense her and Abby's concern for them.

Jane was too shaken up, but Maura acknowledged Abby and Kate, with a smile and a look of gratitude.

"We'll be right outside if you need us," Kate said, signaling to Abby to follow her out the door, but Maura looked at her and held up her hand.

"Kate, Abby, please stay," Maura told them, still holding Jane in her arms.

Abby looked at Jane and put her hands on Jane's shoulder and Maura's arm to show support.

"I'll get Gibbs to tell Fornell to fix this," Abby said.
"He was just doing his job, as difficult as he was," Maura said. "He was apologetic--"

"Helluva apology," Jane muttered, finally looking up from Maura's shoulder, and at Abby and Kate.

"He'll apologize if Gibbs tells him to," Abby said, confidently. "You won't have to worry about him anyway, right Kate?"

"Abs?" Kate said to her.

"We're their protection detail! Our whole team!" Abby said, gleefully to Kate before looking back at Jane and Maura. "You don't have to worry about Fornell. You'll stay with us. I know this isn't Boston, but it'll be fun, too! Ducky's gonna make Thanksgiving dinner, and Gibbs just got cable, and Tony can bring over movies and you'll get to go out on cases with us and we'll make this as much as home as we can!"

Even Jane, as distraught as she was, couldn't help but notice Abby's exuberance and sincerity.

"Look....I'm sorry to have been such a hardass," Jane said, quietly, as Maura dabbed her eyes dry with a tissue. "That guy asked us something we weren't ready to...tell everyone about. To know that the feds know and this Ari guy knows, and we haven't had a chance to tell our loved ones...look. I know this isn't your fault, and I'm sorry for--"

"Jane, we understand," Kate said. "You don't have to apologize--"

"Already forgiven!" Abby shouted, then reached over to hug Jane and Maura both. Maura hugged Abby with her free arm, while Jane - not normally a hugger - patted Abby on the shoulder. "You're one of us!"

"Abby, honey, we barely know you," Jane quietly said.

"Doesn't matter," Abby said as she let go of the couple. "I know you're one of us. And it's not just because you look like Kate, Maura. You're family. Family sticks together!"

Jane and Maura looked at Kate.

"Hey, if Abby says you're family, you're family."
Chapter 17

Chapter Summary

Tony DiNozzo follows Ziva David on a wild chase from D.C. to Fairfax.

Chapter 17

Washington, D.C.

While Abby and Kate walked with Jane and Maura out of the women's restroom at NCIS HQ, Gibbs was enroute, with Ducky and Burley, to the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland.

"The Commander's doctor didn't kill him," said Burley, driving his car, with Gibbs riding shotgun and Ducky in the back seat. "That is what you said down in autopsy, right, Ducky?"

"I'm afraid that's the conclusion I've arrived at," Ducky replied. He had figured out that Naval Commander Michael Dornan died as a result of his heart surgery. Dornan's death had something to do with the heart valve his doctor, Janice Byers, implanted, and Byers had made Dornan's death look like a murder.

The only questions were how he actually died and how Byers covered it up; Gibbs, Burley and Ducky were on their way to Bethesda to question her.

Neither the Commander nor the doctor, however, were on Gibbs' mind at the moment. Talking to Tobias Fornell was; the FBI agent already had put Gibbs in a sour mood, but he needed to find out where his agent, Tony DiNozzo, was.

"Fornell," Gibbs barked into his cell phone. "I can't get a hold of DiNozzo. Have you heard from your guy?"

"DiNozzo hasn't called you?" Fornell said.

"Not for a few hours," Gibbs replied. "He's with your guy, Tobias. Have you heard from Sacks?"

"Actually, I have-" 

"Then why didn't you just say it?"

"Look, Gibbs, I've got two cases I'm juggling-"

"And I'm on my way to handle my own case, Tobias. I can't raise Tony on the phone. Is he with Sacks?"

"Yes. He, Sacks and our Mossad liaison were on a stakeout, tracking Ari's accomplice."

"Mossad liaison?!" That was news to Gibbs; Ari's accomplice, like Ari himself, was rumored to be or have been Mossad.

"Name's Rivkin, Michael Rivkin. Mossad officer, sent to be their liaison to the FBI to assist on the
"You trust this guy, Tobias?"

"He checks out, Jethro."

"Where in hell are they?"

"Sacks said they're following her through Anacostia and that she's driving like a maniac."

"What'd Sacks say about Tony?"

"He's driving the car."

**I-295, outside of Anacostia along the Anacostia River, headed south**

Every once in a while, Tony DiNozzo daydreamed about being behind the wheel in the middle of some crazy car chase, almost always inspired by one of the many movies the film buff had seen over the years.

The classic chase in Tony's mind was the one from the 1968 film *Bullitt*, with Steve McQueen's character racing the bad guys through the hilly streets of San Francisco in an Oscar-winning sequence.

Tony also found himself as Gene Hackman racing a subway train in *The French Connection*; H.B. Halicki in the famous chase scene from *Gone in 60 Seconds*; Robert De Niro chasing Natascha McElhone in *Ronin*, or even Paul Walker in one of the *Fast and the Furious* films.

It was all a fantasy, and that's where Tony expected it would stay. Until he found himself trying to keep up with Ziva David on the streets of Washington.

She literally drove like a lunatic, running red lights and stop signs left and right, making U-turns in intersections, and darting in and out of traffic.

As DiNozzo's car pulled onto I-295, about 200 feet behind Ziva's SUV, he thought it was a miracle he still had her in sight, much less that neither he nor his two passengers weren't already dead.

"Sacks!" Tony yelled, as he pushed the speedometer to 80 miles an hour. "Call Metro PD! Give them the descrip."

"NO!" Rivkin yelled. "We keep tailing her!"

"You call the Metro police, you put their lives in danger," Rivkin said.

"Maybe you didn't notice, Mr. Liaison, but Zee-vaahah's putting everyone's life in danger by the way she's driving!" Tony yelled, darting in between a minivan and a cable TV installer's truck. "Metro PD or Virginia State trooper's probably gonna find us anyway."

"Keep up, DiNozzo!" Rivkin yelled. "Stick to the plan."

DiNozzo's car moved within 150 feet of the SUV, which kept darting in between lanes.

"We're passing Bolling Air Force Base! You think she's profiling that?" DiNozzo yelled.
"Don't lose her, man!" Sacks said.

"I'm more worried that I haven't written my will," DiNozzo said. "Who in hell is in that SUV with her?"

"Ari's operatives," Rivkin said. "I believe I know where she's taking them-

"You sure she's not taking them to the pearly gates?" DiNozzo yelled, as he pushed the speedometer to 85, barely keeping pace with Ziva's SUV.

"I do not believe she is taking them to a place called 'the pearly gates,'" Rivkin said.

"It was a joke, Rivkin," Tony answered back. "Where is she taking them? And why?"

"I believe she is driving them to their base, in Fairfax, and it probably was part of her participation in that poker game. They are Ari's associates, and they know her to be close to him. Therefore, they will not question her."

"She's taking them to their hideout?" Sacks asked.

"You can say that," Rivkin replied.

Ziva's SUV made a sudden lane change near the ramp to the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge. Tony raced to keep pace, and suddenly found himself cut off by a tractor trailer going 65.

"CRAP!" he yelled, putting on his brakes, and causing a pickup behind him to do the same; the driver laid on his horn, and DiNozzo could see the guy screaming and giving him the finger.

Tony wasn't going to wait to see what else the guy might do. With the ramp closing fast, he pulled alongside the tractor-trailer - narrowly missing a Mini Cooper intending to get in that same lane - and put the pedal to the floor.

Somehow, the car managed to get around the tractor-trailer and make the exit, only for Tony to sight Ziva's SUV straight ahead.

"She going south?" Sacks yelled.

"No...she's staying on 495," Tony replied.

"She's changing...don't lose her!" Rivkin yelled.

"I hate backseat drivers!" Tony yelled to Rivkin.

Tony kept Ziva in his sights; by some miracle, traffic had lightened some, and they hadn't drawn any local or state cops. Tony slowed down to 75, as they proceeded along I-495.

Ziva pulled into the right lane, and slowed down to 70. Shortly afterwards, her SUV pulled off at exit 52A.

"Exit 52A...puts you west. 236, Little River Turnpike," Sacks said, as Tony's car took the same exit.

"She's headed into Fairfax?" Tony said.

"Looks like it," Sacks answered.

The car pulled off onto 236, and drove past a string of churches. Ziva's SUV slowed down to 60.
"Mr. Sacks," Rivkin said. "Call your associates. Agent McBride. Tell her to be _ready._"

"Call Agent McBride...ready?...who the hell _are_ you, man?" Sacks said.

"Your 'teammate', Agent Sacks. _Should I_ call?" Rivkin held up his cell phone.

"You _buying_ what this guy's saying, Sacks?" DiNozzo asked, running another red light to keep up with Ziva.

"I actually know an Agent McBride...let me call her."

"Sacks, _come on._"

"Agent McBride!...Agent Ron Sacks...I'm near Fairfax, with Agent DiNozzo from NCIS and an Officer Rivkin from Mossad...you _know_ him?...Rivkin said to call you to tell you to be ready..._really?...he is?...Starbucks. Fairfax...236, passing a Jiffy Lube on my right...not far?...okay-hello? Hello?...she hung up."

"Sit rep, Sacks." Tony yelled.

"Kelly McBride, FBI Agent," Sacks replied as Tony sped through a yellow light. "I know her. They're expecting our SUV to stop at a Starbucks up the road."

" _FBI_ knows?"

"Laying a _trap_-is that right, Rivkin?"

"It is, Agent Sacks," Rivkin said. "We will be at the Starbucks very shortly. Be ready."

It seemed like seconds later when Ziva's SUV sharply turned into a parking lot with a Starbucks. DiNozzo overshot it, but managed to turn at the next right on Chain Bridge Road, then drove 300 feet, took another right, and started back towards the coffee shop.

" _Stop_!" Rivkin yelled. " _We will be made!_"

"What the hell are they _doing_?" Tony said, ignoring Rivkin and screeching to a stop. "I had to have broken every speeding law in Virginia-"

"Wait," Rivkin ordered. "And watch."

They saw Ziva get out of the SUV, and run to a black Corvette waiting in the parking lot, then getting in the driver's side.

At that moment, Rivkin got out from the back seat - with his computer and bag - and ran towards a Porsche 20 feet away, getting in the passenger side.

Tony and Sacks saw Ziva's Corvette pull out of the lot; race past them; and the Porsche pull out like a madman and chase after her.

Tony was about to chase after the Porsche when another SUV appeared behind him - with flashing blue lights - and two more SUV's raced past them and stopping near the SUV Ziva had been driving. Tony and Sacks saw two cars pull in front of that SUV, and a legion of FBI agents pour out of the four vehicles, all armed and yelling at the occupants to get out.

As they watched the two occupants thrown out of the SUV and wrestled to the ground, Tony heard a knock on his window.
A tall, curly-haired, blonde woman, holding her FBI badge, motioned for Tony to roll down the window.

"I'm FBI agent Kelly McBride," she said. "You're Agent Anthony DiNozzo with NCIS?"

"Yeah," Tony replied.

"Ron?" McBride said, to Sacks, still gripping his seat-belt strap.

"Kelly?" he said to her. "Kelly...what in the hell just happened here?"

In most circumstances, Tony would already be pouring on the charm to a woman like McBride whom he found attractive.

Not now.

"I'm with Sacks," DiNozzo shouted to her, angry and frustrated, getting more so as he went on. "I've tailed this woman all day. Found Sacks. Staked her out. Then some guy who says he's a Mossad officer and their liaison to your agency jumps in the back seat. Shows us video of her playing poker with Ari's guys somewhere in one of the worst parts of D.C. on his laptop, then has us chase her from there to Fairfax.

"I probably broke enough traffic laws to earn me a lifetime ban from driving. Then Mr. Liaison jumps out of my car, into another car, and chases her, you pull behind me when I go to follow them, and your and Sacks's people are apprehending them" - pointing to the two men in the distance being lifted off the pavement and into one of the FBI vehicles - "and not chasing Ziva or Rivkin.

"Can you tell me what just happened?"

Tony laid his head in his palm, elbow resting on his steering wheel, in exhaustion.

"What he said," said Sacks, still gripping his shoulder harness.

McBride proceeded to tell them about the FBI operation, and confirmed Rivkin's claims. She called Fornell, who backed up everything she had told them.

"You alright, DiNozzo?" Fornell asked, through the loudspeaker on McBride's phone.

"Yeah, if you count four near-death experiences on the interstate and ten dozen new gray hairs as 'okay'," Tony said.

"Rivkin is still tailing Ziva with two other of our agents," Fornell said. "Gibbs has been trying to get ahold of you all afternoon. He wants you to call him."

"Not like I had time," DiNozzo replied. He proceeded to call Gibbs, and put him on speaker where he, Sacks and McBride recounted the day's events.

"Sounds like you've had a hell of a day, Tony," Gibbs said. "Call it a night. Get here, get some food and some rest. We'll talk about Ziva later. Get yourself a coffee if you want, but I've got plenty here."

Sacks ungripped himself from his seat, managing to get into McBride's vehicle; Tony pulled out of the lot, went through the drive-in of a nearby Taco Bell, and proceeded on his way to Gibbs' house in the District.
Chapter 18

Chapter Summary

A short interlude, in which the guy pursuing Jane’s brother on behalf of Ari Haswari gets taken out by the FBI.

Chapter 18
Tuesday, November 20, 10:03 p.m.
MD-295 South, headed from Baltimore towards Washington, D.C.

Frankie Rizzoli, Jr. thought he was making good time, and expected to get to his destination in D.C. soon, especially given that the afternoon rush hour was long over.

He expected to get to the NCIS agent's house within the hour; after helping unload his sister Jane's and Dr. Maura Isles' belongings, Frankie would spend a little time with them before getting a few hours' sleep at the house. He'd leave in the morning, to return the U-Haul to Boston, and then spend Thanksgiving with his mother Angela and brother Tommy, before going back on patrol Friday, while continuing to study for his upcoming detective's examination.

This long drive didn't help with preparing for the exam, and no one in the Rizzoli family was happy about Jane's apparently forced exile. Frankie still didn't fully understand why Jane and Maura both had to stay in D.C. for an extended period - and he hoped to get some answers out of this agent Gibbs they were staying with before he left Washington.

For now, Frankie was enjoying the ride as much as he could, and pleased that he hadn't run into any traffic or crazed drivers. Neither Bass the tortoise, laying in his cage on the passenger's seat, nor Jo Friday the dog, laying on the floorboard below Bass, seemed to mind.

Frankie's cell phone rang; it was Agent Dean.

"We're making good time, Agent Dean," Frankie said.

"How are your passengers?" Dean asked.

"No complaints," Frankie replied, "although I think Jane and Maura both are gonna kill me when they see where I put them. Thought it was better with me and the heater than back there in the cold trailer, though."

"I won't tell on you, Frankie," Dean said. "I'm going to pull alongside you, in the fast lane."

"Everything alright, Agent Dean?"

"Everything's fine, Frankie. Just want to make sure we keep it that way."

Eighty yards behind the U-Haul, The Somalian drove in his Corvette, and was gradually increasing his speed to close the gap between himself and the U-Haul. His mission parameters had not changed, but he wondered if he might need to use his automatic or his rifle.

He wouldn't get a chance to find out.
Right next to him, on the two lane highway as they drove through Anne Arundel, was FBI Agent Fritz Howard, driving a Camry.

Behind them in both lanes, were a Chevy Impala and Ford Expedition, both driven by FBI agents.

Ahead, between the U-Haul and the Corvette, was a Chevy Tahoe, also driven by FBI.

"Let's box him in," Howard said on his bluetooth earpiece to his fellow agents.

They did so, as they passed above Patuxent Freeway, then waited for the right opportunity to take him off the road.

As the caravan passed Fort Meade Road, the Somalian sensed something might be wrong; the Tahoe slowed down, forcing him to do the same. Ahead, Dean had told Frankie to push the U-Haul to 80 without telling him about the caravan.

"What's wrong, Dean?" Frankie asked. "Something going on back there?"

"Just roll with me, Officer," Dean replied. "Don't worry about local police. This'll help us make better time."

Frankie looked in his side mirror, and saw a white Camry and a blue SUV putting on their brakes every so often. He figured whatever was going on had something to do with that, and kept his speed at 80. slowing down only for traffic, and Dean kept right along side him.

Behind them, the FBI agents had boxed in the Somalian, and Howard decided to end this.

"If we're gonna take him out we need to do it now," Howard radioed. "Let's do this."

The FBI vehicles boxed in the Somalian, and spun him out into the median just a mile and a quarter from the 295/Capital Beltway interchange. He flipped over twice into the brush; the four FBI vehicles quickly pulled over, and the agents ran to the wrecked Corvette.

The Somalian wasn't seriously injured, incredibly, and he was arrested without incident.

Frankie, Jr. proceeded on his way, Agent Dean following him, and soon made it to Gibbs' house.
Chapter 19

Chapter Summary

Just before Rizzoli & Isles arrive at Gibbs’ house, they have dinner with some of the NCIS team, and we learn what they think of the team - and vice versa.

Chapter 19

Andrews Air Force Base

The U.S. Navy Boeing 737 C-40A Clipper jet flew from New York to Andrews without incident. That was good for NCIS Agent Paris Summerskill, who was able to take a quick nap during her evening flight.

After retrieving her bags and obtaining a rental car, Paris rechecked the directions on her phone to make sure she knew where Leroy Jethro Gibbs' house was located. She knew how to get to the Navy Yard and the other government buildings in the area, but Gibbs' quiet, middle-class neighborhood wasn't familiar to her.

Once she got in her rental, Paris called her boss - New York field office operations manager Henrietta 'Hetty' Lange - on speed dial.

"Ms. Summerskill," Hetty said, "I realize that you're skeptical about this operation, but your presence in Washington may prove vitally important to those you are assigned to help protect."

"Hetty," Paris replied, "you're sure this...joint op with Washington and Special Ops will work?"

"I'm sure that the people involved, yourself included, are more than capable of carrying out this mission," Hetty answered. "Your task, Paris, is to carry out your assignment, which for now is helping protect Ms. Isles and Ms. Rizzoli and Agent Gibbs and his team. While they're looking out for the couple, and each other, someone from NCIS has to help look out for them."

"Hetty, we've already talked about this. There's plenty New York can do without having to join three other former and current agents and the FBI in babysitting."

"I assure you, Paris, you are not babysitting. Our team is doing plenty to assist on the Haswari case, to find this monster. And you are there to keep an eye on them, to make sure Gibbs doesn't go off the proverbial script."

"Yeah. Good luck with that. Maybe I'll call in Special Ops and the rest of our team to help me out with Gibbs."

"I expect you, Paris, to carry out your assignment, however it will change from now until the joint operation ends," Hetty told Paris. "Mr. Vance and I will handle Agent Gibbs. Just because he and his team are involved does not mean they have full control and that we are their lackeys."

Washington, D.C.

Vincenzo's Restaurant
Although neither Detective Jane Rizzoli nor Dr. Maura Isles were certain how this enforced exile from their jobs and homes in Boston was going to work out, some of the people they were going to have to spend their exile with were starting to grow on them.

Jane and Maura joined NCIS agents Kate Todd, Tim McGee and Paula Cassidy and forensics specialist Abby Sciuto at a nearby Italian restaurant for dinner.

Kate sold it as not wanting to intrude on Gibbs by taking over his kitchen. What she wanted was to get Jane and Maura in a relaxed, neutral atmosphere away from NCIS, Ari, the FBI, anything that reminded them of they had endured earlier in the day.

She was pleasantly surprised that Jane and Maura were as relaxed as they were; the most tension was over Jane's choice of food (pizza, as opposed to Maura's shrimp fra diavolo served with linguine), but it was good-humored and even playful.

The detective and the doctor were more readily affectionate with one another than they were at NCIS, and even opened up a little about their own jobs and lives in Boston; this was where the group learned more about Jane's family, Maura's background as a medical examiner, and about the two pets that were going to join them here in Washington. Everyone knew when the group left for Gibbs' house that Jane was a diehard Red Sox fan; Maura was a darn good mechanic; and that Bass was a tortoise, not a turtle.

Jane and Maura not only were relaxing and enjoying their dinner and each other, they were trying to get to know their hosts a little more without giving too much of themselves away this soon.

Kate, they learned, was a former Secret Service agent who resigned and accepted Gibbs' offer to join his team. She seemed to be the leader of the group; they liked her, especially how her own sense of humor and sarcasm mirrored Jane's.

They also liked Abby, particularly her exuberance and her sense of style, even if neither would be caught dead in her outfits. Maura especially appreciated Abby's scientific knowledge and her dedication to her work, sensing she was as dedicated to Gibbs' team as Maura herself was to Jane and the other two detectives in Homicide - Barry Frost and Vince Korsak - she normally worked with.

McGee seemed to be bashful around the two women, probably because he was the only male in the group. Jane and Maura did notice that Abby seemed to really like the young man, and Kate seemed to have a friendly rapport with him.

Cassidy came across as a nice person who was the odd woman out of the group. That made sense, being that Cassidy was temporarily reassigned from the Pentagon to help Gibbs' team.

The five women and lone man finished their early dinner to give themselves enough time to get to Gibbs' house, then wait on the U-Haul that Jane's brother was driving down from Boston, unload its contents, then get Jane and Maura some rest, as they hadn't had a full night's rest in two days.

They arrived at Gibbs' place a short time later, and were met by his former boss - Mike Franks - sitting on the front porch, munching on a sandwich; Gibbs himself was down in his basement, and Kate ran down to ask him to go upstairs.

Ten minutes later, Paris Summerskill found the house and parked down the street. The U-Haul driven by Jane's brother Frankie arrived five minutes after Paris, and Frankie pulled it in front of the house.
Tony DiNozzo got there two minutes after Frankie, munching on a burrito supreme as he walked into the house, then walked out to help Paris with her bags after getting an earful from Abby and Kate.
Chapter 20

Chapter Summary

Maura and Jane 'argue' (if you want to call it that) over Jo Friday and Bass riding shotgun down with Frankie Jr. in the U-Haul, while everyone else starts to unload the trailer; meanwhile, Tony needs a little 'encouragement' from Gibbs to get a move on.

Chapter 20
Washington, D.C.
Leroy Jethro Gibbs' townhouse

"What's wrong with you, Tony? Gimme that."

Abby Sciuto took Tony DiNozzo's burrito from his hand, and started walking towards the kitchen.

"Hey! I'm still hungry!" Tony said, following Abby to the kitchen. "Don't throw that-aw Abs!"

"DiNozzo!"

Tony stopped in his tracks upon hearing the voice of Gibbs speaking loudly from the basement.

"Yes boss!"

"Stew's on the oven, DiNozzo. After you help unload the trailer!"

"Right boss!" Tony said abruptly, turning to go outside to help unload the U-Haul containing Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles's personal belongings.

"You shouldn't be eating that junk anyway," said Kate Todd, pointing the way out the front door for Tony. "You can start by helping Paris."

"Paris? Who's he?"

"She," Kate replied, "is Agent Paris Summerskill, reassigned here from New York to help us with protection detail."

"Ahhh," Tony said, "Protection detail. Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles. Kate the doppelganger and her raven-haired sidekick. Thelma and Louise. Cagney and Lacey-"

His repartee was interrupted - mercifully, in Kate's mind - by their boss, Gibbs, whose voice could be heard loud and clear despite him being in the basement.

"DiNozzo! Do I have to get up there and give you a push out the door?"

"No boss! Going now, boss!"

"And no flirting, DiNozzo!"

"Wouldn'tthinkofit, boss!" Tony yelled, then lowered his voice to a whisper. "Kate, he's
downstairs...how does he know I'm not out there already?"

"I wouldn't test him, Tony," Kate said with a bright, wide smile, "not unless you want him to push you out the door?"

Right then, Tony thought he heard someone walking up the basement stairs, and took off. "Going out the door to help the ladies, tell him Kate."

"No flirting now, Romeo," said Mike Franks, Gibbs' former boss, as Tony walked past him on the front porch. Franks was staying with Gibbs and Kate for the time being.

"Where's Agent Paris?" Tony asked him.

"Over there. Stan's helping her with her bags," Franks answered.

As Stan helped Paris with her luggage, Frankie Rizzoli Jr., Jane's brother, was backing the U-Haul up into Gibbs' driveway. Franks yelled at him from the porch that parking in the street wasn't the best idea. So FBI Agent Gabriel Dean - who followed Frankie down from Boston - parked in the street instead.

Paula Cassidy and Tim McGee were helping Agent Dean unload the U-Haul, with Maura telling them what was what.

Frankie's 'passengers' - Jane's terrier, Jo Friday and Maura's tortoise, Bass - were on the front porch. Bass was still in his cage, while Franks was petting Jo Friday.

Jane meanwhile was arguing with her brother.

"God, Frankie," she said. "You had to put Jo Friday and Bass in the front seat?"

"Hey, there's a heater in there," Frankie replied. "There's no heater in the back. And Bass was in his cage and Jo Friday was warm down there."

"Couldn't you have put them in Gabriel's car?"

"What if he got into a chase?"

"What if he...what if you got into a chase?"

"What if I got into a chase? At least I could keep an eye on them."

"Who told you to do that?" Jane asked him, as her and Frankie's conversation started to get everyone's attention. "Ma wouldn't have told you to stick them in the front seat. She would have told you put them in the car."

"She didn't say anything, she was too busy telling us where to pack the clothes," Frankie said, as Tony looked on in fascination, leaving Dean, McGee and Paula to unload the U-Haul.

"Who's bright idea was this, then?"

"Tommy's."

Jane rolled her eyes and threw her hands up in exasperation. "Tommy came up with that idea?"

"What would you have done? Stick them in the back? On the roof?"
"Who's idea was it to bring them down in the first place?" Jane asked. In the background, Kate elbowed Tony, to tear his attention away from the conversation and towards unloading Jane and Maura's belongings.

"That was Ma's," Frankie said.

"Ma?...I'm gonna kill her," Jane muttered, "and Tommy. Putting pets in a U-Haul?"

"Jane?"

Maura put herself between Jane and Frankie, and held her hand up to Jane's face to quiet her.

"It is a bit unusual, but given the circumstances I think Tommy made the best choice," Maura said. "I'll check Bass and Jo Friday to make sure they're okay, but I'm sure they're fine."

"You're sure, Doctor?" Jane said, with more than a hint of sarcasm. "Are you making a guess?"

"I don't guess," Maura replied, as Tony stopped in the background to look on. "I make observations, and then theorize based on available evidence-"

"Huh?" Jane said, as Kate elbowed Tony again, to get him to move instead of stopping to watch. "English, Miss Bill Nye?"

"I looked at them both, Jane, and they looked fine," Maura said, as Tony ignored Kate in the background, oblivious to the presence of Gibbs, who had emerged from his basement and made his way to help unload the U-Haul. "But I'll take another look once we're inside."

"You mean they're not dead, that Frankie didn't kill them on his way down here," Jane replied, looking at Frankie who rolled his eyes.

In the background, Gibbs headslapped Tony, and pointed toward the trailer; Tony got the hint, and resumed helping everyone else unload the trailer.

"We could have kept them with Ma for a few days, then figured something out something better," Jane said. "We could have put them on a plane-"

"You want to put them on a plane?" Maura said, in horror. "Bass, by himself? In an airplane with the luggage? Jane Clementine Rizzoli! That truly is cruel. You can't leave Bass and Jo Friday by themselves. They need people with them on such a long trip...Tommy and your mother had an excellent idea sending them down like this. I'm sure Frankie here was good company-"

"Alright, Maura Dorthea Isles, I didn't say throw them in the back of a plane... They could've ridden coach."

Kate briefly stopped at the mention of Maura's middle name, then resumed taking the two boxes she was holding into the house.

That's something else I'll have to ask them about, Kate thought as she walked up the front porch stairs. Clementine and Dorthea? And I thought the mean girls in school gave me a hard time about my middle name. [1]

"Coach? That really is cruel, Jane. I would put them both in first class."

"First class?! Maura. First class? For a dog and a turtle?"

"Tortoise, Jane-"
"Two seats for a giant turtle and another for a dog."

"Tortoise, Jane, and a terrier. It's a much better alternative to putting them in coach, or cargo."

Frankie Jr. had pulled himself away from the 'argument', which was really more of friendly banter between two people he thought of as close friends. He spotted Gibbs, unloading another box, and introduced himself.

"Frankie Rizzoli Jr., Officer, Boston Police Department," he said. "You're Agent Gibbs? Pleased to meet you?"

"Likewise," Gibbs said, shaking Frankie's hand. "Let's get this thing unloaded and everyone inside. We'll get a bite to eat and then talk."

"Is everything alright, sir? With my sister and Dr. Isles?"

"No additional threats, if that's what you're wondering, but we do need to talk. Let's get everything inside and get settled in. Then I'll talk with you and Dean."

[1] Kate's full name is Caitlin Rose Todd.
A short update, as Jane and Maura learn where they’ll be sleeping in Gibbs’ house, and we check in on Michael Rivkin, staking out Ziva, and the FBI’s interrogations of the Somalian (who followed Frankie Jr.) and the suspected associates of Ari that Ziva had dropped off for the feds to capture.

Chapter 21

Washington, D.C. - Gibbs' house

Jane and Maura were still bickering over how their pets were sent to their new, temporary home away from home.

Frankie Jr., holding a box in his arms, rolled his eyes; he knew they weren’t really mad at one another, but he thought it was too late for this to go on, and he wasn’t going to let a stranger bring it to an end.

"Jane! Maura!" he said, walking back to them and still holding the box. "We'll rent a private jet to put them on when you go back to Boston. First class, valets, everything. C'Mon. It's late. Let's get everything inside and get settled in."

Both women looked at him and one another. "You're right," Jane said apologetically. "Maura, we're arguing over ridiculous crap."

"Yes we were, Jane," Maura replied, "and now we're going to tell everyone where to put our things."

"Bedroom," Gibbs said, holding a box in one arm and a bag in his other hand. "Upstairs. Where you two will stay while you're here with us."

"Oh boy," Jane muttered, as Gibbs handed her the bag from the trailer. "Moving night. I'm hungry. I need to crash. I need coffee. And you're" - Jane looked over at Maura - "going to want to decorate."

"Already started," Gibbs said. "Kate put me to work last night rearranging my bedroom for you two."

"Your bedroom?" Maura said.

"We're sleeping in your bedroom?" Jane said; both she and Maura were very suprised at what he just said. "We're putting you out?"

"I have a cot in the basement," he said, carrying the box into the house, Jane and Maura following behind him. "Slept in a lot worse conditions when I was a Marine. I'll be fine. My concern is you. Least I could do is give you the best accommodations in the house."

Fairfax, Virginia

Michael Rivkin switched cars twice to make sure Ziva David was unaware that he was tailing her,
and followed her to a budget motel.

She had to sleep sometime, and so did he, Rivkin realized, as he checked into a nearby room.

One way in which his association with the FBI came in handy was in having agents able to do surveillance on her at all hours. Not only were two agents watching her room from the parking lot and two more watching the back part of the motel, but Rivkin also had an agent in the room with him: Seeley Booth, who would take the overnight shift. Hopefully, Ziva wouldn't pull something crazy, and Rivkin would be able to get a few hours of sleep.

**Quantico, Virginia**

**FBI Headquarters**

Two separate interrogations were going on, close to midnight, both connected to the Ari Haswari case.

The first involved the man who tailed Agent Gabriel Dean and Boston police officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr. from a truck stop in New Jersey: Mohamed Farah, a Somalian native connected to pro-terrorist groups in his homeland.

Farah had gotten into the United States through a religious relief organization, and decided to reward its generosity by involving himself with a domestic-based terrorist cell connected to Ari Haswari.

So far, Farah had refused to say a word, though a check of his cell phone showed he had plenty to say to someone, at least every 15 minutes. Unfortunately, it appeared the calls were placed to burn phones; Haswari was no fool in all respects, and certainly wasn't going to make himself traceable by the feds.

The second interrogation involved the men that Ziva had driven to the Starbucks in Fairfax; they also were refusing to speak, and so far were harder to trace than Farah. They hadn't shown up in any databases of domestic citizens, and hadn't yet appeared in any databases of suspected terrorist groups.

Elsewhere in the building, Tobias Fornell was wrapping up one of the longer days he'd had as an FBI agent. He expected that Farah and the two men from Ziva's vehicle would eventually talk, but not tonight.

Fornell was grateful for that respite, as he really wanted to get some sleep before dealing with the suspects and Ziva and the rest of the Ari mess.

His very long day had been made worse by effectively outing Jane and Maura to Gibbs and offending them both, and he hoped to have the opportunity tomorrow to make some kind of amends. Thanksgiving was the day after tomorrow, and he didn't want to wait till the weekend to revisit the subject nor do so on a holiday.
Chapter 22

Washington, D.C. - Gibbs' townhouse

By the time everyone got the U-Haul unloaded it was half-past midnight. It was decided that given how Jane and Maura hadn't had any real sleep in a couple of days, they'd pick out clothing for tomorrow and sleep in. Agent Summerskill would take them to NCIS for a few hours in the afternoon, and they'd return tomorrow evening to pack everything and decorate their temporary home/bedroom.

Agent Stan Burley and Abby Sciuto left right after, as both needed to be at work early the next morning. Agent Gabriel Dean was headed to a hotel near FBI headquarters in Quantico, but not before having a conversation with Gibbs in the basement.

Upstairs, Maura nibbled on some strawberries that Jane's mother had packed in a cooler, feeding some to her pet tortoise Bass; Abby had cooed over Bass before she left, and he was drawing a bit of attention from everyone else in the living room.

Jane fed Jo Friday some dog food before devouring a bowl of the beef stew Gibbs was cooking on the stove (never mind that Jane had just ate at the restaurant a few hours earlier). McGee and Frankie picked out their cots in the living room that they'd sleep in, while Paris put her bags into Kate's room upstairs.

RI&K

Gibbs told Frankie to eat as much stew as he wanted, but to come down to the basement in a 'little bit'; he wanted to talk with Dean separately before debriefing Dean and Frankie together.

The first thing Dean noticed after walking down the stairs was the frame of a boat, and then Gibbs sanding the frame.

"Agent Gibbs," Dean called out. "I'm ready to talk when you are."

"Good," Gibbs replied. "Have a seat."

Dean sat on a stool, and took in the man before him, sanding the frame of a boat in his basement, without any way seemingly to move it without taking it apart. So this was the guy they were talking
about in Quantico, he thought to himself.

"How are Jane and Maura doing, Agent Gibbs?"

"Call me Gibbs," he replied, putting down his sandpaper, then taking a drink from a jar filled with water. "I think they're doing alright, Agent Dean, given they just learned today they can't go home for awhile, and given a conversation one of your agents had with them this afternoon."

"What conversation? And which agent?"

"You know a Tobias Fornell, Dean?"

"Just through a couple of phone conversations, about this case and about my relocating to Washington. I'm sure I'll run into him from time to time."

"Worked in Boston for a while?"

"Based out of Boston," Dean replied. "Got reassigned to Quantico a month ago."

"You knew Jane Rizzoli?"

"Dated her for awhile, Gibbs."

"Dean...you know why Ari has targeted her and Dr. Isles?"

"You get right to the point, don't you?"

"Don't expect any less from a Marine, gunny." [1]

"How'd you know, Gibbs? You look up my file?"

"No, I know a Marine when I see one. Now that you mentioned it, how long did you serve?"

"Six years. Camp Pendleton, did some time in Afghanistan before I got recruited into the FBI by another gunnie: David Rossi, works now with our Behavioral Analysis Unit. They see all kinds of crazy stuff." [2]

"Tobias told me about them. What they deal with is pretty disturbing, on a level I see once in a while and I'm sure you've seen from time to time yourself."

"It takes a special person to do that kind of work, Gibbs. What they deal with is a lot even for Marines like us...mind if I ask you a couple of questions?"

"Shoot."

"Gibbs, why the debrief? And with and without Jane's brother?"

Gibbs remembered telling Frankie to get a bite to eat, and that he was probably close to being finished.

"I need to talk to you both about Jane and Maura," he told Dean while keeping an eye on the entrance to the basement, "and to talk with you without her brother being present."

"Talk about what," Dean said.

"What was in your report about Jane and Maura. Fornell saw that report, I've seen the report. I
figured it out about their status before I read it, but Frankie doesn't know to the best of my knowledge and I want to debrief you before he comes down."

"Report..." Dean remembered what his superiors had asked him about Jane and Maura when they had become targeted by Ari.

"Gibbs, Jane told me about her and Maura after she got shot...actually, she shot herself to kill some dirty cop who had her in a neckhold and was probably going to kill her. She was off duty three months, we were scared she might not make it early on but she pulled through...I loved her...thought there might be something special."

Dean took a drink of his beer, while Gibbs remembered his first wife, Shannon, whom he spent half the previous night telling Kate Todd about.

"She told me she cared about me a great deal but she was in love with Maura," Dean said to him. "Maura was - is - her soulmate, her life, her love. That's when I knew it wouldn't work out...she asked me not to betray her confidence until they were ready to tell the people in their lives about their relationship. I wouldn't do anything to hurt Jane, gunny...it tore me up to betray that by telling my superiors about them..."

"Gabriel," Gibbs said, "you were following orders."

"Doesn't make it any easier, Gibbs."

"Maybe not, but if it helps, you were giving the FBI information that may help save their lives."

"If it wasn't for that maniac Haswari, it wouldn't be any of their business."

*Couldn't have said it better myself,* Gibbs thought, remembering just how Fornell brought up the subject to Jane and Maura earlier and their justifiable reaction to it.

"No, but because he's made them a target, it is. Fornell knows, and that's the other thing I want to debrief you on without her brother down here."

Right then, Gibbs and Dean saw Frankie appear in the doorway.

"Five more minutes, Officer," Gibbs said. "Federal business I need to finish debriefing Agent Dean on."

"Yes sir," Frankie said. "Five minutes."

Frankie stepped out of the doorway, and headed back to help Jane and Paula Cassidy finish cleaning the kitchen. Maura was in the living room, telling Tony, Kate, Paris, McGee and Franks everything they ever wanted to know about Bass, while Kate elbowed Tony for every Jurassic Park reference he made about the very large tortoise in front of them.

"Five more minutes for what?" Jane asked Frankie. "Put these plates in that cupboard."

"He wants to talk with me and Dean about something, probably about you and Dr. Isles," Frankie said. "He and Dean are talking 'federal business' whatever that is."

*I bet I know what it is,* Jane thought to herself. *Right now I'm glad Gabriel's the FBI agent in the house instead of that Fornell guy.*

Downstairs, Dean and Gibbs wrapped up their part of the conversation.
"So Fornell confronted them about their relationship? And told them the agency spied on them?"

"Gabriel, he didn't want to hurt them but he did what he thought he had to do," Gibbs said. "I'll talk to Fornell in the morning, try to get this thing taken care of. If they were already known to everyone...it might have been an annoyance. Under the circumstances, it got blown up."

"I'd be pissed too if the FBI spied on my love life. Does Frankie know about them, yet?"

"Not that I'm aware of, and I'm not going to tell him. That's something his sister needs to do herself, and she deserves that opportunity."

"She sure does," Dean said. "Want to bring Frankie down?"

Frankie got called downstairs, and for the next 20 minutes grilled Gibbs with question after question about why Jane and Maura had to stay with him and how long they'd be in Washington.

Then Frankie asked a question no one had quite thought about.

"You give any thought to hiring them both?" he asked. "I don't know how long Boston PD or the Commonwealth will keep them on payroll. If NCIS is protecting them, I'm sure they could use the paychecks.

"Ma and my brother are staying at Maura's place. Someone's gotta pay the bills there, and for Jane's apartment. And Jane and Maura have to make some kind of living, too. They're talented, skilled, and if they have to be under your 'protection' why not make use of their skills and pay them something for their trouble?"

"Not a bad idea, Officer. I'll take it up with my boss, in the morning," Gibbs said, then wrapped up the debriefing, and sent Dean and Frankie upstairs.

Gibbs considered Frankie's idea, and how he might use Jane and Maura both on his team, and how he might sell it to Director Morrow, with the threat of Ari Haswari hanging over all their heads.

Footnotes

[1] I can't recall if Gabriel Dean was referenced as a Marine on the Rizzoli & Isles TV show, but it is part of the backstory for his counterpart in Tess Gerritsen's novels. I'm making it canon for this story. The six years portion of his Marine service is made up, as I couldn't find any details online about his Marine service in the novels.

[2] Rossi is a character from the CBS television show Criminal Minds, which also is canon in this story.
Chapter 23

Chapter Summary

Kate, Jane and Maura have a discussion about girls and guys. Plus, a look ahead to future chapters.

Chapter 23
Very early Wednesday/Thanksgiving Eve morning, 12:45 a.m.
Gibbs' townhouse

On the upper floor of the house, Paris Summerskill was settling into one of the two guest bedrooms, aided by Paula Cassidy, who had the room the night before and opted to stay in a hotel near the Navy Yard.

Gibbs wasn't fully happy with her work on the Dornan case, so Paula didn't want to stay in the man's house if she could help it (Paris and Kate offered to speak to Gibbs on her behalf, but Paula declined); Paula would eventually say her goodbyes, and head to the hotel.

Meanwhile, in the main bedroom, Kate was helping Maura and Jane unpack.

Kate was still a little wired from the day's events, and Maura and Jane both were awake - and chatty - enough that Kate wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to talk with them a little more before everyone settled in for the night.

Gibbs had already told them, and Paris, not to show up at NCIS before noon.

"He wants you two to get some rest and take it easy for the rest of the week," Kate told them, as she helped unpack Maura's belongings. "It might take the rest of the week just to unpack these shoes."

"How many pairs of your shoes did Ma send down, Maura?" Jane asked, rolling her eyes at the nearly 20 shoe boxes on the floor and the mattress.

"Let's see...12 on the floor, six on the mattress, and one on top of Bass's cage. Nineteen." Maura said. "That's not all my pairs, of course, and I may have Angela send down a few more pairs. Like the ones from Milan-"

"Gibbs let us use his *bedroom*, Maura, but I don't think he wants us taking over his basement," Jane replied.

"I won't *take over* his *basement*," Maura answered, "though I may send some of these clothes back and have Angela or Susie send down some different outfits. Like that jacket and blouse I had shipped in from Milan-"

"*Italy*?" Jane said.

"Why yes, of course," Maura answered.

"*Where* are you going to wear them? The *break room*?"
"I'll wear them where I normally wear them," Maura replied.

"Like Gibbs's gonna let you wear designer clothes to one of his crime scenes," Jane said, "right Kate?"

"Probably not," Kate answered, "if you were to accompany us to a crime scene, you'd probably wear the same gear we wear. NCIS issued caps, jackets, pants, shoe coverings."

"As not to contaminate the crime scene," Maura said, "although we're allowed to wear regular clothes in Boston."

"Well Miss Fashionista," Jane said, "federal agencies don't have a sense of style like you do. Remember when I said you always looked like you were dressed for a photo shoot?"

"Yes I do," Maura said, with a smile, caressing Jane's shoulder. "You seem to like it."

"Yeah, but Gibbs wouldn't," Jane said. "Man...this...whole deal is gonna be so different from what we're used to."

"Jane, Maura, I know some of this will be really different," Kate said, to her and Maura. "We'll make it as easy on you as we can, and we'll help you out where we can...clothing wise, it won't be that much different than what it's like in Boston."

"Kate," Maura replied, "we know some things will be different than what we're used to. What those things are, we're not sure ourselves and we know you're not sure yourselves."

"You don't want to be here." Kate stated, looking at both women.

"No, we'd rather be home," Maura said, holding Jane's hands. "But, if we had to go through this, I can't think of anyone I'd rather be with than you, Jane."

Jane smiled, shyly, and looked back at Maura.

"Can't think of anyone I'd rather go through this with either," she said, before giving Maura a soft kiss on the lips.

Kate, trying not to be rude or conspicuous, couldn't help but appear the latter - and Jane and Maura both picked up on it.

"We're not making you...nervous, are we?" Maura asked, politely.

"Um," Kate answered, "you're not a problem with me."

"You sure?" Jane asked, also politely but a little more directly than Maura had.

"I'm...Catholic," Kate said.

"Me too!" Jane replied. "Born and raised Catholic. You go to a public or Catholic school?"

"Catholic, all 12 years, and graduated from an all-girls school."

"Really? I graduated from public school. Ma and Pop didn't have enough money for Catholic school tuition. I know people who did go to Catholic and private schools. They saw a lot of the same crap I did, probably the same as you."

"If your friends were like my friends who went to public and private schools, then they probably
did," Kate said, laughing. "I saw plenty of things, good and bad, in high school. Including lesbians."

"Me too," Jane said. "Never thought of myself as one...not then," she said, looking at Maura. "Played field hockey in high school and college, knew more than my fair share of girls who liked girls...got hit on by girls in school, on the field, in church."

"So did I!" Kate said. "I played softball and golf in high school, got hit on by women...even when I worked in the Secret Service, and even here at NCIS."

"Fool around any?"

Kate found herself answering Jane's question a little more honestly than she expected. "A little, in high school and college...I knew I was straight, though...oh my god, do NOT tell DiNozzo!"

Kate got up, and ran to the door; she could hear Tony downstairs, bragging to McGee and Frankie Jr. about a date he had with a Washington Wizards cheerleader.

"You alright?" Jane asked her, she and Maura concerned over seeing her rush to the doorway.

"Yeah," Kate exhaled, relieved that Tony was nowhere near the room, and Jane and Maura both laughed, realizing what - and who - Kate's concern was about.

"Don't worry, Kate," Maura said. "Your secret is safe with us. We won't tell Agent DiNozzo anything he doesn't need to know... Did you two know that women experimenting sexually and romantically with other women is not uncommon in high school and college, approximately 1 in 10? That's according to a 2005 study published by the University of Plymouth."

"No I didn't," Kate answered, as Jane rolled her eyes. "Makes sense, though. DiNozzo would swear it's 1 in 2, probably wishful thinking."

"What is that guy's deal anyway?" Jane asked.

"He's a pig, and a Neanderthal, and a overly sexed-up male," Kate told them.

"In other words, he's a guy." Jane answered.

"Yes! A guy!" Kate exclaimed, and she, Jane and Maura laughed, loud enough to draw Paris and Paula's attention from the next room.

"You guys having a slumber party?" Paris said, as she stuck her head in the doorway.

"Just talking," Maura said.

Downstairs, in the living room, Tony heard the women's laughter, and was overcome by his curiosity.

"What's going on up there?" he mused.

"Probably none of our business," Frankie Jr. said, "and if any of us decided to find out, Jane'd probably kick our asses."

"Really," Tony replied, wondering exactly what that meant about Jane Rizzoli.

"We probably need to get to bed anyway," Frankie said, stretching out on his cot. Tim McGee was already half-asleep; if not for Frankie Rizzoli being in the same room, Tony would have played some kind of trick on the probationary agent by now.
Instead, DiNozzo would settle for waiting until Jane's brother fell asleep, before sneaking up the stairs to see for himself what was going on above him.

**Coming up:**
* Tony DiNozzo gets into trouble with Gibbs - and nearly causes a brouhaha in the process
* Afterwards, Gibbs and Mike Franks have a discussion
* more about Kate's twin sister in the AU, Juliana, and her backstory
* Korsak and Frost discuss Jane and Maura's absence, while Angela and Tommy do the same at Maura's house - under FBI protection
* Boston P.D.'s Special Operations Unit, and the FBI, prepare for an overnight raid on Carlton’s house
* The fate of Charles Hoyt, aka The Surgeon, at the hands of CIA operative Trent Kort
* Breakfast at Gibbs' house
* Rivkin and Seeley Booth resume their tail of Ziva David, and Gibbs sends Tony to join them - mostly to keep him out of Rizzles, and his and Kate's, way
* Paddy Doyle tries to hack into NCIS to find out where Maura's staying - and McGee steps up big time to keep him in the dark
* Thanksgiving at Ducky's!
Chapter 24

Chapter Summary

Gibbs and his mentor, Mike Franks, talk about Rizzles and their earlier confrontation with Fornell; the boat Gibbs is working on and who he’s named it after; and what Tony might discover about Jane and Maura, and how he’d react.

Chapter 24
Gibbs' townhouse

After Frankie Rizzoli Jr. gave his suggestion to Gibbs about NCIS putting Jane and Maura on payroll, Gibbs wrapped up his debriefing with Frankie and FBI Agent Gabriel Dean.

Dean talked briefly with Jane and Maura before leaving to check into his hotel room in Quantico; Frankie Jr. took the cot in the living room not claimed by agents Tim McGee or Tony DiNozzo and settled in for a few hours of sleep.

On the upper floor, Kate was talking with Maura and Jane, while Paris was settling into the other guest room vacated by Agent Paula Cassidy, who opted to check into a hotel.

Tony tried in vain to talk with Paula, but she ignored him, not out of spite but from fatigue - it had been a long, long day. She nearly screwed up twice, and was bailed out by fellow agent Stan Burley, which did not go unnoticed by Gibbs.

"I have to work with the man, but I won't sleep in his house if I don't have to," she told Tony, just before she pulled her car out into the dark, quiet street to drive to her hotel.

"Hey, you can stay in my apartment," Tony said.

"You'd love that, wouldn't you," Paula said. "Apparently he wants you here."

"Think about it," Tony told her. "You won't have to pay for the room, and I wouldn't have to worry about you not returning my phone calls."

"Just like I wouldn't have to worry about you not emailing me all those months I was on the ship," she replied.

"Figured you were busy."

"With what? Agent afloat doesn't take up all my time."

"Five thousand sailors."

"Well..." Paula said, somewhat in shock, given how tired she was and how on edge Gibbs had put her, "...guess I just couldn't choose between all 5,000 of them."

Paula rolled up her window, then pulled away from the curb and drove away.

"Paula! Come on!" he shouted, to no avail.
But Tony wasn't very worried; he'd give it another go with Cassidy tomorrow. He did have both her phone number and email, after all.

As Tony walked back into Gibbs' house, and as Kate wrapped up helping Paris unpack to talk with Jane and Maura, Gibbs himself was downstairs in the basement doing what he normally did at night, when he was home: work on his boat.

Everyone has his or her unique personality traits, and one of Gibbs' involves building a functional boat in his basement, not necessarily for its own sake.

He had built complete boats before, naming them after one of his ex-wives, for the purpose of burning them. Whenever he worked on a boat, Gibbs thought through a case, or worked through some personal or job-related issue.

And he had yet to reveal to anyone just how he got the thing out of the basement.

"Probie."

Gibbs heard his friend, and former boss, Mike Franks, walk down the stairs to the basement.

Franks, as usual, called Gibbs by the nickname he had given him from the day Franks hired him as a novice Naval Investigative Service agent years before.

"Mike," Gibbs said, looking up at Franks - who pulled up the stool Agent Dean had sat in - before resuming work on sanding the frame of the boat. "If you're looking for something to drink, whiskey's on the table."

"The 125 proof stuff?"

"The kind you sip, Mike."

"Maybe the kind you sip, probie. I drink mine."

Franks poured some of the whiskey into a glass he brought down from the kitchen, sat down next to Gibbs, and took a drink.

"You figure out what you're gonna tell those women when they make their way down here?" he asked Gibbs, referring to Jane and Maura.

"Tell them what, Mike?"

"Oh...why you're building a boat in the basement, or how you get the damn thing out of the house," Franks said. "How about why you have 'Fornell' written on a piece of paper taped to the frame?"

Gibbs didn't respond, instead continuing his sanding.

"Maybe you should tell them what you told Kate."

"What I told Kate," Gibbs said, "was to make Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles feel at home, because they're likely to be here a while."

"No thanks to Ari."

Gibbs, again, said nothing in response, and kept sanding away.

"So how did that case with the Commander turn out? That ensign have anything to do with it?" [1]
Hayes didn't do anything, Mike, except hold a grudge against the Commander.

Who killed Dornan?

He was already dead. Doctor neglected to replace his heart valve. Set the fire to cover herself. Ducky's taking it hard.

Ducky fell for the doctor?

Yeah. Told him on the way back you can't let women get to you like that, especially ones you don't know that well.

Heh. Guess you'd know something about that.

Gibbs stopped his sanding to take a drink of water from his jar, then got up to stretch his legs.

Who's the boat really named after, probie? asked Franks, pointing to the sheet of paper with Fornell written on it.

Gibbs took a breath, then another drink of his water.

I renamed it Shannon, he said, after his first wife, who tragically died, along with their only daughter Kelly, years before.

My god, Jethro...I guess you explained it to Kate when she found her way down here last night?

Told her the whole story last night, Mike, when we were straightening up my bedroom getting it ready for Rizzoli and Isles.

You tell anyone else on your team about Shannon and Kelly, Jethro?

I'll tell them when the time comes, Mike.

Franks took another drink of his whiskey, then got up from his stool, and walked over to the frame.

Jethro, why in the world is Fornell's name on that piece of paper?

Gibbs looked at the sheet, then back at Franks.

Well, Mike, I was thinking about renaming the boat after him.

I didn't know you two were at odds.

We're not, Gibbs responded.

Then what'd he do?

Said something to Rizzoli and Isles earlier, Gibbs said. It's not what he said so much as how he said it.

After swearing Franks to secrecy, Gibbs rehashed the conversation involving Fornell, Jane, Maura and himself at NCIS earlier in the day.

Hell, probie, I wouldn't have thought of them as liking women, Franks told Gibbs. Truth is, I've thought more about how Isles looks like Kate.

Mike, I haven't discussed this with Rizzoli's brother upstairs, or Cassidy or Summerskill, or my own
team outside Kate," Gibbs said. "Not even Morrow."

"Last thing you want is DiNozzo drooling over two, beautiful lesbians, right?"

"I trust Kate and you to keep your mouth shut," Gibbs replied. "They deserve their privacy. Ari knows, that's bad enough. Fornell knows, and they think he's worse than he is. Out of respect to them, I won't even tell McGee, Ducky or Abby until I have to."

"None of them would have a problem with it, they wouldn't say anything..." Franks caught himself. "Abby might blurt it out, wouldn't she? And Tony would hear-"

"DiNozzo won't cause a problem," Gibbs said, taking another drink of water. "Fornell did, and he didn't intend to."

"So that's why you're keeping Tony busy, chasing Ari's sister."

"Keeps him out of their hair and my way," Gibbs responded. "And I trust Tony to keep tabs on her. He's annoying as hell, but he's a damn good young agent. And I don't want Fornell's people following Ziva without one of my own there right with them."

"Probie, if I wanted DiNozzo out of their hair" - referring to Jane and Maura - "I'd have him sleep in his own damn apartment."

"I want as many of my people here as possible with Jane and Maura in case something goes wrong."

"You better hope DiNozzo stays in the damn living room instead of deciding to sneak up the stairs, to give Kate a hard time, or see just what the hell's going on," Franks told Gibbs. "You've told me before how nosy he can be. Those women might be messing around in your bed, DiNozzo hears it, and then he knows about them. And he won't handle that like Kate would."

Gibbs thought for a few moments what Franks had just said. He put down his jar, and thought he heard someone whispering in the laundry room adjacent to the stairs and the kitchen.

What Gibbs heard, as he crept up the stairs, was DiNozzo, excitedly whispering to a half-groggy McGee about what he had just seen in Gibbs' bedroom.


Footnote

[1] Referring to episode 8 of Season Two, Heart Break. The case was investigated and resolved in this AU pretty much as it was in the episode, albeit with Stan Burley replacing Tony DiNozzo and Kate Todd in the investigation, and Kate not shooting Ensign Hayes.
Chapter Summary

Tony DiNozzo sneaks upstairs to see what the ladies are up to and ends up discovering the nature of Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles’ relationship (in the story’s AU). Tony spills it to Tim McGee - and gets caught by Gibbs.

Chapter 25
Gibbs' townhouse

In the living room on the main floor, Tony DiNozzo heard the laughter from the women upstairs, and his curiosity was piqued.

He wanted to know what - or who - they were laughing about.

However, the other guys sleeping in the living room - Tony's fellow NCIS agent Tim McGee, and Boston police officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr. - didn't seem to care.

Frankie was tired after a long day driving down from Boston, then helping unpack the belongings of his sister, Jane, and her friend, Maura Isles, both of whom apparently were going to stay in Washington for the time being.

McGee also was tired, given his long day at work and also helping unload the trailer that Frankie drove from Boston.

Tony himself was a little tired, but hadn't yet wound down from a long day of staking out Ari Haswari's half-sister Ziva, nor from the insane car chase he was involved in earlier in the evening.

When he got to Gibbs' house, he found himself helping everyone else unpack the trailer. Tony tried, without success, to start a conversation with anyone about the chase. He figured he'd try again at breakfast, when he'd have a more captive audience.

He attempted to engage Frankie and McGee in conversation, bragging about a date he had with a Washington Wizards cheerleader ("Pro-oh-bie, you'd faint at how hot she was"), and ending up talking to himself.

The only thing Frankie and McGee were interested in was getting some sleep. They hit their cots and fell asleep quickly, leaving Tony alone with his thoughts - and his curiosity.

If I'm going to do this, now's the time, he thought. Gibbs hadn't come up from the basement in a while; Mike Franks was down there, and they probably were talking about Commander Dornan, or some past NIS case, or Gibbs' latest red-haired girlfriend. Fine by me.

DiNozzo waited until he was sure that both Frankie and McGee were asleep.

Two minutes, 19 seconds for McGee.

Four minutes, 23 seconds for Frankie.
Tony remembered a case from his police days in Peoria, in which he had to sneak from the living room of a house, up the stairs to a bathroom to catch a suspect in a string of robberies, without making a sound.

With his boss in the basement, Tony was almost sure he could sneak up the stairs, scout out the upper floor, and sneak back down without anyone suspecting.

He wouldn't put it past Gibbs, of course, to somehow know what he was up to, but not even Gibbs' hearing was that good.

Probably.

Tony crept up the stairs, making sure to look forward and behind him. He could shoot McGee a 'leave me alone' look if necessary, but didn't want to chance Frankie waking up and deciding to drag Tony's rear end downstairs.

As he made his way up, Tony reminded himself of why he was going up there. What was Kate up to? What about that new blonde agent? And those two women sharing Gibbs' bedroom? What was up with that?!

He wondered if Frankie himself had wondered the same.

A few minutes later, Tony found himself at the top of the stairs, not having made a sound, and congratulated himself for the feat. Then he asked himself where to go next.

Tony knew that Gibbs had three bedrooms upstairs - he slept in one of them during the few times he had stayed overnight in the boss's house. He guessed, correctly, that Kate and Paris had taken a spare bedroom apiece.

The door to the first bedroom was completely shut; he stuck his ear to the door as quietly as possible, and faintly heard Kate's voice singing some song from the radio.

Beyoncé? he thought. I've got to get Kate to do karaoke...hey...that's Britney...the same song Kate sung in the shower.

Tony chuckled to himself. It wasn't that long ago when we guarded that Lieutenant Commander and her family. Kate...in the shower, singing Britney, hadn't shaved her legs...and now she's staying in the boss's house. Outrageous.

DiNozzo smiled, and crept over to the other spare bedroom, putting his ear to the door; he didn't hear a thing. He thought that its occupant - Agent Paris Summerskill, from the New York field office - was probably asleep. I'll have plenty of time to get to know her, he thought. I'll get to check her out at breakfast, at least.

All that was left for Tony was to check out the master bedroom.

He snuck over to the door, which was, curiously to him, not completely closed. He noticed there was a light on, probably from the lamp next to the bed. And he heard someone talking.

Inside, Maura and Jane had gotten dressed for bed. They were sitting on the side, talking, albeit quietly as to not wake up the two women in the guest rooms.

"Oh god, Maura," Jane whined. "We're gonna have to live here for a while...are you sure you don't know anyone who might be able to get us back to Boston?"
"I can't think of anyone," Maura said, glumly. "Agent Dean doesn't know anyone?"

"Gabriel told me yesterday that if it wasn't for that terrorist sneaking around in Boston, we could stay," Jane replied. "We'd be under FBI protection 24/7...with us at crime scenes, with me on a case, living with us-"

"You'd have to bunk with Angela in the guest house," Maura said.

*Angela? Who's that?* Tony thought, as he eavesdropped.

"No," Jane said. "I'd sleep in *your* bed. I'd tell the feds it'd be easier to protect us that way."

*Wait...what?! In her bed?* Tony thought.

"And there'd be an agent in the room with us," Maura said.

"No, Maura, he or she'd be outside the door."

"No, in the room. Remember the guy who tried to break into your bedroom? The guy Gabriel said was from Oman, and an associate of Haswari?"

Jane sighed. "You're right. No agent outside the damn door..."

"There's *one* good thing about being here," Maura said, as she put her hand on Jane's leg. "No one's in this room with us right now."

"And we're sleeping in that guy's bed," Jane said, throwing herself backwards to lie down. "The only thing I want to do in this bed is *sleep*. And talk."

"You *sure* that's all you want to do?" Maura said, suggestively.

"Um...no..." Jane responded, suggestively. "But *not on his bed!*"

*I wouldn't do it either on his bed*, Tony thought. *She'd have to be really, really hot. I'd take her in the bathroom and...*

*...holy crap. Hoo-oh-ley crap...*

At that moment, Tony figured out that Jane and Maura probably were much more than friends...who didn't want to do whatever the one was suggesting on Gibbs' bed.

He heard the women get up from the bed, and he weighed on whether to race down the stairs or hide in the bathroom. He decided instead to quietly and gingerly crack open the door to see if he could see what they were up to.

Tony pushed it about eight inches, enough to allow him to see part of the bed.

What he saw blew his mind.

Maura was massaging Jane's shoulders, and stroking her hair; Tony noticed Maura was wearing a satin nightie, Jane a T-shirt and panties.

*Calm down, DiNozzo*, he told himself...

"Honey...let's go take a shower. *Now*," Maura said, huskily.
"Honey?!"

"C'mon, Maura...it's been a long day..." Jane whined, as Tony saw Maura's hands moving downwards from Jane's shoulders.

"Jane...join me in the *shower.*" Maura said, ripping off her nightie, and exposing herself to her partner in the room, and to a half-leering, half-shocked DiNozzo spying on them from the hallway.

"Oh...oh." Jane said. "Well if you put it *that* way..." Tony saw Jane get up from the bed and follow Maura to what he guessed was the master bathroom, and a few moments later Jane's T-shirt thrown towards the bed.

Tony heard them chuckling, and laughing. And heard them doing other things.

And, then, he heard a noise from Kate's room.

*Damn!*...*now's probably a good time to get downstairs,* he decided, and - as quietly as possible - raced down the steps, hoping that no one would hear him.

After he got back to the living room, he heard another noise upstairs - he hid, and looked around the corner, seeing Kate going to the other bathroom upstairs.

He looked in the living room to see if both guys were asleep; Frankie was lightly snoozing on his cot, but McGee was nowhere to be found.

*Holy crap,* Tony thought. *I'm gonna get caught.*

He found McGee, awake, grabbing something out of the fridge, and looking around.

*No,* Tony thought, *I've got to tell someone what I just saw. McGee. Probie doesn't get any, anyway. He needs to hear this. And I need to tell somebody about it.*

"*Probie!*" Tony appeared in the doorway to the small kitchen, whispering just loud enough for the probationary agent to hear him.

"*Tony?*" McGee said, too loudly for DiNozzo, who looked back in the living room to see if Frankie Rizzoli had stirred.

"*Quiet,*" Tony whispered back to McGee, then looked back at Frankie, who was still snoozing. Satisfied, Tony turned back to McGee, putting his finger to his mouth, and pointed to the adjacent laundry room.

"*Whisper,*" Tony said, pulling McGee next to the washer.

"*Tony!*" McGee said, still half-groggy. "*What in the world-*"

"*Probie,*" Tony whispered, now grinning like a 12-year-old, "*don't talk. Whisper. Don't wake anyone up, especially the man downstairs...Probie, you will never, never guess what I just saw upstairs.*"

"*Tony, what in the world are you talking about?*" McGee said. "I woke up to get a snack, didn't see you, looked around.*"

"You've eaten enough snacks, McGut," Tony said, poking McGee's stomach. "You really don't need a midnight snack, but I'm glad you're up, because you need to *hear* this and if you weren't awake I'd wake you up anyway. *If he*" - pointing towards Frankie, in the living room - "*wakes up, we're*
talking shop, okay?"

"Uh, Tony, okay," McGee replied, before taking a bite from a slice of cheese. "Now what's so important?"

"Probie...I'm swearing you to secrecy on this. Don't tell Kate. Don't tell Ducky, don't tell that guy in the living room, don't tell Paris, don't even tell Abby or Palmer and for god's sake don't let on to Gibbs or even Franks what I'm about to tell you-"

"Tell me what," McGee said, somewhat annoyed. "You see something?"

"Probie, you getting assertive on me?" Tony said to McGee, slightly condescendingly, and wanting to get to his point. "Listen. Swear to me. This goes no further than this room."

"Okay...whatever," McGee said. "I swear. Now what's so damn important it can't wait until tomorrow?"

"What. I. Saw. Upstairs." Tony said, and over the next few minutes described in gross detail what he overheard, and saw, from Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles in the master bedroom.

Incredibly, to Tony (and only to Tony), McGee didn't share his enthusiasm.

"Tony what in hell are you thinking?" McGee said. "You're invading their privacy. So what if they're...together-"

"Probie! Come on! It's like Blair and Jo from Facts of Life making out...or Kate making out with Jo..."

"Does every damn thing come back to sex for you?" McGee said, still at a whisper. "In case you didn't remember, Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles have been stalked and harassed by the same guy who kidnapped Kate. The same guy who is threatening to kill her, and Gibbs."

Tony was left speechless for a moment - but just for a moment. That's the most assertive I've ever seen Probie, Tony thought, though he wouldn't admit it out loud.

"I know that, McObvious," Tony said, "but...damn it was hot...it's like a real-life L Word upstairs, every single night-"

"What's like a real-life L Word, upstairs, every single night?"

Tony's back was turned, to the doorway going downstairs to the basement. He hadn't heard anyone walk up the stairs.

McGee wasn't the one who asked the question, but he was looking at the man who did.

"I said, DiNozzo, what's like a real-life L Word?"

I didn't hear who I thought...no...that can't be him....Tony thought.

"That's a great trick, McVoice," Tony said, nervously, before realizing that the last man on earth he wanted in the room right now was standing behind him.

"DiNozzo...downstairs. NOW."

Tony turned around.
Leroy Jethro Gibbs had never looked angrier in his life, and Tony thought briefly about making a run for it.

He doubted he'd get past the front door, and Gibbs would likely grab him before Tony could get to his car. If Tony wouldn't have had to make a detour to his cot to grab his keys first.

"YES boss," Tony said.

"McGee." Gibbs said, as Mike Franks made his way into the laundry room. "You responded just as I would want you to...now get back to bed...but before you do, go to DiNozzo's cot. And get him another pair of pants."

Franks made his way past the three men, then put a glass in the kitchen sink. "Guess I'm sleeping up here tonight," he said as he walked towards the living room.

"Wait," Gibbs said to DiNozzo. McGee found a pair of jeans and underwear in Tony's Ohio State Buckeyes gym bag, and handed both to Tony.

"Downstairs," Gibbs ordered Tony, who realized that the front of his pants was soaking wet.
After Tony’s spying on Rizzoli and Isles, Gibbs pulls him downstairs in his basement for a talk; the boss drives home his point not with a headslap, but with a story about a case gone wrong, why it’s important to protect Rizzles and stop Ari, and Gibbs’ reaction to Tony’s fiasco.

Chapter 26
Gibbs’ basement

Tony DiNozzo silently walked down the stairs leading from the laundry room to the basement of his boss’s house, with only one thing on his mind.

*I hope he doesn't kill me.*

Not anyone else finding out about his escapade, nor what Kate Todd might say and do to him, nor being demoted to desk duty, not even losing his job.

The truth, Tony would later admit, was that he had no idea what was coming, and that scared him more than anything else he could imagine.

Upstairs, Mike Franks was settling in, as quietly as possible, into Tony’s assigned cot in the living room.

Tim McGee was already back in his cot, a pillow over his head, trying to fall back asleep.

And, somehow, Frankie Rizzoli was still sound asleep.

*Whatever DiNozzo did was enough for one night,* Franks thought as he pulled his blanket over his chest, *without that kid waking up in the middle of it.*

Then Franks decided that it may be worth staying up just a little while longer, in case Gibbs went overboard.

The former Naval Investigative Service agent got up and went to the kitchen, making himself a bowl of ice cream, before sitting down next to the entrance to the basement.

Downstairs, Tony DiNozzo changed his pants.

*I wish I had written my last will and testament now. I thought I had 50 years to do it. I wonder if Baltimore PD will take me back. If Peoria is looking for detectives. If they even did background checks somewhere like Fairbanks...*

The long, intense, stare of Leroy Jethro Gibbs brought DiNozzo back to the moment.

*Here I am, sitting on this stool, next to the boss's tool bench. There's his boat, which he's probably gonna name after me and burn down. With me in it.*
And there's Gibbs. Standing there...glaring...standing there...and glaring...

He's gonna kill me.

"Tony."

Here it comes. He said my name...and he's walking towards me like no one I've seen before.

Gibbs pulled up a stool, next to Tony, and sat down.

"When I started working for Mike at NIS, we had a case," Gibbs said, looking at Tony.

"A dead Petty Officer, female, in a park in suburban Baltimore. She had a partner, also female. 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' had just become policy throughout the armed services. We had to deal with the nature of their relationship, and the fact that it violated Navy policy.

"The dead officer's partner was targeted by the killer, and Mike and I were responsible for protecting her. Though we didn't fully understand their lifestyle, we understood she was a human being, and scared for her life. Our obligation was to protect her; we weren't going to wait for a thumbs up or thumbs down from the Navy or the director or anybody else.

"The killer found her, and got the jump on Mike. By the time I got there, Tony, she was dying. Mike came to, and stayed with her. I chased after the bastard, and caught up to him two miles away. Mike had run to the nearest house to call for help; by the time the ambulance got there...there was nothing you could do for her.

"Tony...there are things I don't talk about. When a case is done I walk away from it. I don't ever go back to it, because living in the past doesn't do you any good.

"But, when Fornell called me and told me those women were coming down here looking for help, I thought back to that case. The guy...the killer...was a small-time thug who got the jump on us.

"This guy who's stalked and threatened Dr. Isles and Detective Rizzoli - Ari - who kidnapped my own agent and your own teammate Kate, who's threatened me, who shot me in the shoulder, who held Kate and Ducky and Gerald hostage in our own building.

"Ari is a Mossad officer, Hamas trained terrorist. He has threatened not just the four of us but dozens of other people, from the President of the United States to the assistant director of this agency to my own father.

"I cannot do anything other than everything I know how to stop him before he kills someone who doesn't deserve to die. Tony...I accepted the responsibility of protecting Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles because of that happened to that petty officer years ago and the fear I saw in the face of the woman who was left behind.

"I saw that fear in Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles' faces today, Tony. A fear that they may not live through the year, because of Ari. Whether it's a hatred of Kate, a hatred of me, a hatred of his own father, a hatred of America...

"I.

Will.

NOT.
Gibbs looked away, and walked towards where he kept a bottle of bourbon. While he poured himself and Tony a drink - in two nail jars - Tony was left to process what his boss had just said.

"Tony," Gibbs said, handing him a jar, a quarter filled with Jim Beam. "This team is responsible for protecting those two women. I've brought in more agents to help us do that, while handling our usual case loads. Even Mike came back here to help.

"I trust you and Kate and McGee to do your best, to give your lives if necessary, so that bastard doesn't win. I expect the very best out of you because I know you can deliver it. I expect you to act like a federal agent at the top of your game.

"What I don't expect," Gibbs said, pointing upstairs, "is for you to act like a kid. This isn't some drunk sailor or greedy officer. Ari's a world-class bastard and terrorist. Those people upstairs are depending on us to protect them. They deserve our very best in return. Not to spy on them and brag about it like a frat boy."

Gibbs took a couple of drinks from his jar, then looked DiNozzo in the eye.

"Tony. What you did tonight. You disappoint me."

Gibbs got up to put the jar on the bench, but to Tony, he may as well have shot DiNozzo right in the gut.

Tony lived for Gibbs' approval, and what his boss just told him did more to get his point across than any amount of sermonizing or yelling or headslaps ever could.

"You stay down here tonight, on Mike's cot," Gibbs said. "Get some rest. Get up at 5 a.m., shower in the new bathroom out back. Get yourself breakfast somewhere - I'll pay. Call Fornell, find out where to meet Rivkin, then tail Ziva. Check back in with me later. Now get some rest."

"Yes, boss," Tony said, though he wouldn't be getting much sleep over the next few hours. Gibbs had given him too much to think about.

Including the idea that it was time for him to grow up.
Chapter 27

Chapter Summary

Boston PD Special Ops and the FBI prepare to take down a local threat to Jane and Maura; Korsak, Frost and Maura’s team discuss Jane and Maura’s absence; and Cavanaugh tries to figure out how to replace Jane - and respond to potential rumors about Rizzles.

Chapter 27

Boston

David Carlton finally had finished his preparations.

His weapons were cleaned, loaded and ready.

He knew where his targets lived, worked and played.

His contacts would move at his word.

David Carlton would kill - or, as his benefactor described it, 'put down' - his two targets.

It was no big deal to him, as there would be plenty of women to have his way with and plenty of money to spend, down in Mexico, where the feds could never touch him.

Carlton settled down for a few hours of sleep. He'd wake up at six o'clock sharp, gather his weapons, then take out Dr. Maura Isles and Detective Jane Rizzoli, just as his benefactor had taught him.

His benefactor's spies throughout his neighborhood, and in the nearby vicinity, were to monitor for any police or federal activity, just in case the authorities got wind of Carlton's intentions.

The spies were no longer available, thanks to the FBI. So, Carlton had no idea who was outside his house, preparing to take him down.

RI&K

The Special Operations Unit of the Boston Police Department was set up specifically to handle men like Carlton - men with military and terrorist training, who presented a real threat to the public and could not be handled by conventional officers and detectives.

Special Ops was as close to a paramilitary, special forces unit as any civilian agency could get. Whenever Boston PD ran into a threat like Carlton, Special Ops got the call to take it down, and the Chief of Police had every confidence that it would do the job tonight, especially with backup from the FBI.

Commander Charles O'Rourke, Special Ops's field leader, was equally confident that his team would take down Carlton with no loss of life.

Daniel Todd [1], the FBI field agent in charge on site, was less confident about collateral damage - he knew men like Carlton, when faced with death, would take as many people with him as possible,
and tear up the neighborhood in the process.

So, he led a team of FBI agents and Boston police officers who quietly evacuated every resident within a three-block radius of Carlton's house.

You can replace a car blown up by a bomb and fix a house shot up by bullets, but you can't bring back someone killed by a maniac, Agent Todd said numerous times over.

Satisfied that Carlton wouldn't harm nor kill any civilian, he prepared for the joint op and hoped that none of the Special Ops personnel nor his fellow agents would die in the battle.

Not himself, and especially none of his colleagues.

He expected, when the op was done, that he'd email his colleague, Gabriel Dean - recently located from Boston to Quantico - and his younger twin sisters at NCIS, to brag, and most importantly to celebrate being alive at the end of yet another dangerous mission.

RI&K

At 2 a.m. on Thanksgiving Eve, the main headquarters of the Boston Police Department was as abuzz as it ever was on a busy weekday.

Special Ops and FBI were going to move in on Carlton's house at any time, and the entire brass of Boston PD - including the Chief - was either on-site or watching from HQ.

Homicide was fairly empty, except for the two detectives who were there working on their regular cases, and their guests from the Commonwealth Medical Examiner's office, all monitoring the Carlton op.

Detectives Barry Frost and Vince Korsak couldn't get any sleep, knowing the threat Carlton posed to their colleagues and friends, fellow Homicide detective Jane Rizzoli and Dr. Maura Isles.

Maura's team was there as well, and also aware of Carlton's threats. Each team member hoped that Special Ops and the FBI would get Carlton, thereby allowing Dr. Isles - and Detective Rizzoli - to return to their jobs like normal.

Frost and Korsak knew differently.

"I wish they were right," said Korsak, working on his seventh medium coffee while stifling a yawn.

"You want to tell them, or should I, or not say a word?" Frost asked.

"They'll find out in a few hours when Maura's replacement shows up," Korsak answered.

"We already know."

The team's leader, Susie Chang, stood between Korsak and Frost's desks, while drinking down the last of her own coffee.

"We know Dr. Isles isn't coming back for a while, and T. Pike's taking her place," Chang said.

"Great," Korsak replied sarcastically, throwing up his hands. "The state chooses to replace a competent M.E., probably the best it's ever had, with an idiot."

"An idiot who thinks he's better and more deserving than the woman he's replacing," Frost said.
"How are you guys handling this?"
"Not well," Chang told him and Korsak. "We've got half a mind to go down to Washington ourselves and apply to help her with whatever she's going to be doing."

"I don't think they'll let you any of you go," Korsak joked. "What if Pike doesn't become the interim examiner? What if it's Popov?"

"Dr. Vladmir Popov?" Chang asked.

"Popov, the guy who loves his vodka," Frost answered, "and, makes Pike look like-

"Dr. Isles?" Korsak answered.

"That's it. We're definitely moving to Washington," Chang said, with a smile.

"Frost and I'll be right with you," Korsak joked.

"As long as you pay for the truck," she joked. "We know what's going on. Dr. Isles and Detective Rizzoli are in Washington indefinitely, at least until they catch the guy who's really harassing them."

"Unfortunately Susie, you're right," Korsak said. "Even if Carlton willingly gave himself up, Jane and Maura are going to stay in Washington indefinitely, at least until the real threat - Ari Haswari - is found and arrested."

**RI&K**

The man who supervised Jane, Frost and Korsak, Lt. Sean Cavanaugh, was also still in the building, and still working in his office.

At the moment he was there to monitor the Carlton operation, but in practice he was also making preparations for Jane to be gone for the long-term.

He not only had began a search for her replacement, but how long to keep her on payroll.

He also had to decide how to handle one of the main reasons she and Dr. Isles were in federal protection - their relationship, and Haswari's reaction to it.

Cavanaugh's initial reaction was surprise, followed by a recognition that their being a couple made perfect sense.

His preference was to keep it to himself and allow Jane and Maura to tell everyone themselves on their own schedule. However, Cavanaugh knew that such news tended to become publicly known sooner than later, and he had to decide whether to be preemptive or reactive.

He was well aware of the rumors about Jane, which went back years; he figured they weren't tied into fact as much as they had to do with her being a woman in a male-dominated, sexist profession.

Cavanaugh had already heard through the grapevine talk by some officers that Jane and Maura had used witness protection as a cover for their marriage in Provincetown. Ridiculous, he thought, not the least because they're actually in D.C.

He knew Jane's brothers, Tommy and Frankie, and their and Jane's mother Angela, and Frost and Korsak would hear the rumors sooner or later.

What would he do, he asked himself numerous times. What should he do?

For now, he'd keep his mouth shut, hope for the best, and prepare to pull Korsak, Frost, and the
Rizzoli aside if the grapevine burst open.

**RI&K**

The operation went down at 2:23 a.m. local time.

As expected, Carlton put up quite a fight, and there was significant damage not just to FBI and Special Ops vehicles next to the house, but to the homes on both sides of Carlton's house and four across the street.

The firefight lasted 17 minutes, and ended when an FBI agent shot Carlton once through the head at 2:40 a.m.

Daniel Todd thought he might have had the kill shot, but realized during the post-operation mop-up that he was at the wrong angle. The fatal shot came from one of his fellow agents, five feet away.

At the 3:15 a.m. press conference, an FBI spokeswoman told local media that there were enough arms found in Carlton's house "to arm a small army."

By then, Dr. Isles' team had gone home for a few hours' rest before returning to meet Pike or Papov, while Korsak and Frost fell asleep at their desks.

When Korsak woke up a couple of hours later, he discovered an email sent to Homicide, detailing the location where the bodies of a family that went missing several years before could be found.

The email alleged that the killer was the infamous serial killer, Charles Hoyt.

The sender was anonymous; Trent Kort covered his tracks well.

**Footnotes**

[1] Daniel Todd is another sort of original character - in canon, Kate had three brothers. Daniel in this AU is the middle brother, older to twin sisters Caitlin and Juliana. Daniel is an FBI agent.
Chapter 28

Chapter Summary

It's 4 a.m. at the Gibbs townhouse, and we check in on each of the residents; Tony DiNozzo has a weird, and very disturbing, dream.

4 a.m., Eastern Standard Time, Wednesday morning

Washington

Leroy Jethro Gibbs

Gibbs lay on his cot, having just woken up. He looked at the alarm clock Abby had gotten for him that past weekend; it said 4:01.

He had always said that sleep was overrated, but even Gibbs needed it.

Tuesday had been more eventful than he planned and it finally caught up to him after his conversation with his agent, Tony DiNozzo.

Gibbs glanced over at the cot next to his; DiNozzo was apparently sound asleep.

Won't bother him, Gibbs thought. He'll need that extra hour of sleep. May give him 15 more minutes.

Gibbs turned over and closed his eyes. Moments later he was dreaming of another, happier time, a sunny afternoon, when he was married to a beautiful woman named Shannon and they were spending precious time with their beautiful daughter named Kelly.

Tony DiNozzo

Tony hit the cot an hour and a half earlier, just like his boss ordered. He fell asleep not long afterwards, and dreamt of beautiful ninja model cheerleaders.

He wondered, in his own dream, why he was in the background while McProbie of all people was in the lead role, being simultaneously protected and pursued by the Cheerninjas.

And why did one of the Cheerninjas run off to rescue Kate...or was it Kate...from the Evil Pin-Up Doll Assassins - led by that chick he followed through that wild car chase?

Why was Ziva holding Kate - or was it that Doctor sleeping up in Gibbs' bedroom? - hostage? And what was the deal with Dr. Kate sleeping with the Cheerninja Detective from Boston? Why did McProbie break in to see them playing patty-cake, like Roger and Jessica Rabbit?

"Tony."

There she was - blonde Kate, brunette Maura, the scene changing rapidly between the boss's bedroom, a cave and one of them driving his car with him next to Sacks and Rivkin in the back seat.
"You need to spend some serious quality time with an old Spencer Tracy movie," Kate/Maura said. "Maybe an old Doris Day film."

"Or at least with the SI Swimsuit Issue," the other Kate/Maura said, with the scene having shifted back to the car. This time, though, in the back seat was Rizzoli, ogling a SI issue with a Kate on the cover.

"Get his mind out of the gutter, Rizzoli," one of the Kate/Mauras said to her.

"Right," Rizzoli said, and showed Tony pictures of Ducky, McGee and Gibbs in provocative poses modeling swimsuits.

"Hey! This is my dream, not my nightmare!" Tony said, and then found himself standing in a park. Gibbs and Mike Franks were there in their old NIS gear, with a dead woman lying on the ground.

"No, DiNozzo, this is the nightmare," Gibbs said, pointing behind him. "Turn around."

Tony turned around, to see Ari Haswari with guns pointed to Kate and Maura's temples, and everyone else he knew - and Rizzoli - dead, holes in their foreheads.

He felt the chamber of a gun to his own temple and saw Ari fire his pistols. In horror he saw Kate and Maura fall to the ground.

"There is nothing you can do to stop me," Ari said, grinning, as Tony heard two more gunshots behind him. "Thank you, Ziva. Now, step aside."

Ari walked up to him, gun in hand - with Kate's blood splatter all over it and up to his elbow.

"This is a game to you," Ari said with the most disturbing, joyous, evil expression DiNozzo had seen in reality or in the movies. "But you will not stop me."

Ari's face was the last thing Tony saw...

...before he woke up, with his cell phone pressed against his temple.

He sat up abruptly, finding himself on a cot, in Gibbs' basement.

The boss was asleep, his boat was still there, and he remembered where he really was.

It was 4:02. Tony knew he needed sleep, but he was afraid Ari was waiting for him there, to finish the job.

Just like he was on this side of reality.

**Caitlin Todd**

Kate had been up longer than she wanted, and was annoyed that she was up in the middle of the night. She looked at her alarm clock; it was 4:01.

At least she didn't have to deal with Tony's shenanigans, she thought. Although there was that faint rumble downstairs, and when she went to the restroom earlier she swore she saw DiNozzo's goofy face peering around the corner at the bottom of the stairs.

She didn't have to get up for another five hours...unless some dead petty officer or Marine was found somewhere.
Kate turned over on her side, making sure her pistol was secure underneath her pillow. She made a note of her surroundings, including the windows, and the closets, which had had the doors removed for Kate's peace of mind.

*I'll have to get Jane issued a pistol in the morning for her own peace of mind,* Kate thought, as she drifted off to sleep.

**Jane Rizzoli**

*We've got to get a new bed,* Jane thought.

She and Maura had...enjoyed themselves...in the shower, and decided afterwards to get some sleep.

Jane glanced over at Maura. She knew her friend and partner better than anyone else, well enough to know when she really was asleep and was faking sleep - like now.

But Jane wasn't going to bother Maura; she was going to try to get some shut-eye herself. It was 4:03 and 9 o'clock would be there before they knew it.

Besides, the pistol that Frost had Angela pack in one of Maura's shoe boxes - besides being a stroke of genius - gave Jane additional peace of mind. The same pistol that was on the bookstand on Jane's side of the bed.

**Maura Isles**

*It's 4:03,* she thought to herself. *I wonder what the odds are of waking up at this hour of the night...I wonder if Jane's asleep, or if she's pretending to be asleep like I am.*

*I'm so glad she's here, next to me...this is a really strange place to be.*

*I know the man who lent us his room is going out of his way to do this and it's better than being in a hotel room or in a car or in my bed with six FBI agents watching me and Jane not there...*  

*God, I'm nervous.*

*And safe. Now that Jane's here with me.*

**Mike Franks**

The old, retired NIS agent woke up, 4:02 a.m.

He checked for his pistol, found it was still at his side, and loaded.

He looked around at the living room, and saw the other two men sound asleep.

*Fine by me,* Franks thought. *I can't sleep.*

He got up, and walked from his cot to the stairs. Franks saw Agent Paris Summerskill, above, at the top of the stairs; she nodded to him, he nodded back, and they proceeded on their sweeps of their respective floors of the house.

**Tim McGee**

It was 4:03, and Franks inadvertently woke up McGee.

McGee, groggy, only had two thoughts: *Tony is an idiot. And it's 4:03, and I've got some time to*
Which is what he did.

**Frankie Rizzoli**

Frankie also was woken up by Franks, though he stayed in his cot.

He presumed the man was making sure things were alright; he listened, and heard footsteps on the upper floor. Probably Summerskill.

Just when Frankie was about to fall asleep his thoughts turned to his sister, Jane and her friend Maura in the same room in the same bed.

And what the hell that meant.

*Jane...?...Maura...?...* 

*...Jane and Maura?*

**Paris Summerskill**

It was 4:03, and Paris' mission was simple: secure the upper level of the house from any and all invaders.

It was dark, and reminded her of the mission in Colombia where her work partner, Roy Haines, was nearly shot to death by thugs hired by a cartel that had tried to infiltrate a Naval base in New England.

She and Roy were in a house, like this one, and she barely got to him in time.

*If this Ari guy is as bad as Hetty says he is, can I get to these people in time?* Paris thought, as she wandered the hallway, and opened each door, checking to make sure everyone was alright.

**Next chapter:** 4 a.m. in Boston, Fairfax and New York, and 1 a.m. in Los Angeles.
Chapter 29

Chapter 29 is all Rizzles-related, as we check in overnight on Angela Rizzoli; Sean Cavanaugh; Vince Korsak; Barry Frost; and original character Daniel Todd, an FBI Agent related to NCIS Agent Kate Todd.

Chapter 29
4 a.m., Wednesday morning/Thanksgiving Eve

Boston, Massachusetts

Angela Rizzoli

Angela simply could not get much sleep.

On Monday, she had coffee and dinner with her daughter Jane at their friend Maura's home, where Angela herself had been living for some time. It was a normal day.

Monday night, Angela learned that Maura and Jane "had to go" to Washington for a reason neither wanted to discuss, other than to say it was "job-related."

Things went from an overnight trip to D.C. to learning that Jane and Maura were going to have to stay in Washington indefinitely.

When Angela learned why - mid-morning, from Detective Korsak - she turned into an emotional wreck. Lieutenant Cavanaugh told Stanley to give her the rest of the day off, and Angela went home to Maura's now-empty house.

During the day, her son Tommy showed up with a host of FBI agents, and the empty house filled up, mainly with feds and Boston police officers.

She took some solace in the fact that Tommy would be there with her, and she could call Jane and Maura any time to talk. Still, when the FBI told her they needed Maura's belongings for an extended stay, Angela began having panic attacks.

Angela was calmed down only by her other son, Frankie; Cavanaugh; and FBI Agent Todd, who told Angela about his sister, Kate, that she was a former Secret Service and current NCIS agent, and that she would be right there with Jane and Maura 24/7.

Throwing herself into the last-second effort to get Maura and Jane's belongings to them helped Angela take her mind off Jane and Maura's absence. Knowing that Tommy was going to stay with her and that Frankie would still be around helped ease her mind; so did Stanley's kind offer to take the rest of the week off - with pay - and Boston PD's pledge to give her "whatever she needed."

She had talked with Jane three times on Tuesday, and Maura twice. Both seemed frustrated that they couldn't stay in Boston and concerned about something.

Neither said as much, but Angela knew something was bothering them - especially when she talked
with Jane last night.

Jane's last words to her were "get some sleep, Ma," which is what Angela tried to do.

By 4 a.m., however, Angela was pacing the house, attracting the attention of the two FBI agents walking the property, while trying not to wake Tommy, sound asleep upstairs.

She was worried about everything from Frankie Sr.'s refusal to contact her yesterday to how she was going to pay the bills for Maura's house to whether she and Tommy would have to move in with Frankie.

Angela was, again, close to becoming a nervous wreck, so she tried to calm herself down by making a pot of coffee.

As the pot brewed, Angela ruminated on what she had been told by Cavanaugh and Agent Todd about the man threatening Jane and Maura.

Nothing was said about Jane and Maura's personal lives as any reason for their exile.

But she knew that it played into things.

She knew what some of the officers had said about her daughter over the years, going back to when Jane broke into the force.

And she knew that the reason that Jane and Maura's relationships with men always fizzled out wasn't the men's fault.

Whatever was going on, whatever this maniac was doing, it had something to do with Jane and Maura, together.

You see, you can't fool a mother.

And whatever was going on between them, Angela Rizzoli knew about it long before Ari Haswari ever did.

**Sean Cavanaugh**

The head of Boston PD's Homicide Division found himself asleep at his desk.

He looked at his phone, saw it was 4:01 a.m., and thought about just staying where he was.

Cavanaugh was a division head, however, and it wouldn't look good for a Lieutenant walking around on a work day without a change of clothes, a shave and a shower.

He knew his problems would be here waiting for him when he returned in a few hours, so Cavanaugh put on his coat, grabbed his briefcase and locked his door.

On the way out, he looked at the area where his detectives worked. It was almost empty, with only two people there, both asleep at their desks.

The first man he woke up was Barry Frost, Jane Rizzoli's current partner on the force.

"Huh...huh...er, Lieutenant," Frost said, after Cavanaugh gently shook his shoulder a few times.

"Frost," Cavanaugh said. "Go home, shower, get a bite to eat. Get back here at nine."
"Yes sir," Frost said, gathering his things as Cavanaugh walked toward Vince Korsak's desk.

"Korsak!" Cavanaugh said, tapping Korsak's shoulder a few times. The detective finally woke up, looked at his watch, and knew he overslept.

"Lieutenant," he said, "I guess the Carlton operation took more out of me than I thought..."

"This is a lousy place for a motel," Cavanaugh said. "I'll tell you the same thing I told Frost. Go home, shower, eat, come back here at nine."

"Yes sir," Korsak said.

"Frost! Hold up," Cavanaugh said. "We'll walk out together...and if you guys want to talk about anything work related, hold it until you get back here."

The three men took the elevator, and walked out the building, none of them bringing up the elephant in the room, and each of them thinking about nothing but it all the way to their homes.

Cavanaugh did stick a post-it note to his dashboard before he drove off, something he scribbled at work and didn't want to forget the next day

CALL NCIS ASK ABOUT EMPLOYMENT FOR JANE AND MAURA

and

JANE + MAURA RELATIONSHIP

Vince Korsak

Korsak stopped at a 7-Eleven on the way home, wanting to get some caffeine in him so he wouldn't doze off between now and the end of the day.

He was glad to see four third-shift Boston PD officers in the store, and made small talk as he made his 32 ounce coffee.

Yes, Detective Rizzoli is in Washington; yes, Dr. Isles is with her. No, he couldn't talk about why. FBI. Couldn't confirm threats...they'd have to ask Lt. Cavanaugh or the Chief...

There was the one smartass who kept asking if Jane was a lezzie and she and Isles ran off to San Francisco to get married; Korsak acted like the guy wasn't even in the room.

But Korsak himself was wondering if their absence had something to do with a relationship.

Cavanaugh may not tell some idiot officer, but would surely tell he and Frost what was going on.

Barry Frost

While Korsak stopped off for coffee, Frost went straight to his apartment.

He threw his gear on his couch, turned on his TV, found the 4 a.m. airing of SportsCenter and finished off a very cold pepperoni pizza.

All he could think about was Jane, and Maura, and how they were doing in Washington and why the feds were making them stay down there.

He was going to find out more about this Haswari guy, from somebody, when he got back to work
in a few hours.

And he and Korsak were going to get answers from Cavanaugh, not just for themselves but for Angela, Frankie and Tommy and Maura's team. Then, they all were going to figure out how to get Jane and Maura back home.

Daniel Todd

Daniel finished his email to his sisters Kate and Juliana, telling them what he could about the operation that ended David Carlton while bragging in his usual smartaleck-appearing-but-really-good-humored way.

He knew why Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles were in Washington, and why Ari had targeted them. He also knew that there were a lot of things Jane and Maura's friends and families didn't know, and that the local rumor mill was already working overtime.

Daniel dreaded the next few days.

Someone was going to come to him demanding answers - be it Angela Rizzoli, or her sons, or Korsak and Frost, or Cavanaugh, or perhaps Constance Isles.

He even heard that a T. Pike was nosing around; Daniel heard Pike was jealous of Maura, and thought he and Agent Gabriel Dean might have to sit Pike down and read him the riot act.

Jane and Maura were going to have to deal with a lot of issues, but if Agent Daniel Todd had a say, The Idiot T. Pike wouldn't be one of them.
Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

We check in with Mossad Officer Michael Rivkin; Officer Ziva David; and Director Eli David, with flashbacks uncovering more details about Rivkin and Ziva’s missions, and Ari’s obsession with Gibbs, Kate and Rizzoli and Isles.

4 a.m. Eastern Standard Time
Fairfax, Virginia
Nightlight Motel

Michael Rivkin

The time difference between Virginia and Rivkin's native Israel was seven hours. There it was late morning, and if he were in Israel he'd likely be on the job, eating an early lunch somewhere.

Here in America, it was 4:01 in the morning, and Rivkin, having woken up ten minutes ago, could not fall back to sleep.

It wasn't because of the time difference, either.

As soon as he woke up, he thought of the woman he had been pursuing the past several days: Ziva David.

Rivkin is her handler, and she in turn is the handler of her half-brother, Ari Haswari, and helping him in some way here in the States.

The same Ari Haswari who was raised and trained to be a mole working for Mossad within Hamas and other anti-Israeli organizations. The same man now believed to have turned against Mossad, and conducting his own personal crusade against two American agents while plotting the demise of his father and his country.

All of that was bad enough; Rivkin learned that Ari was targeting numerous American women who looked like one of the agents, and family members, colleagues and associates of the other agent. It began with stalking, and had graduated to hiring hitmen to kill the women.

Rivkin remembered being part of the Mossad delegation sent a month ago to the office of the Israeli Prime Minister. He remembered the meeting beginning cordially, and quickly descending into shouting, cumulating with an argument between the newly-installed Director of Mossad - Eli David - and the PM himself.

"Standing by silently and doing nothing to stop this monster will do nothing but harm relations with the United States!" the PM screamed. "Have you not forgotten the importance of America as an ally? Have you not forgotten your son's attempt to kill me and the American President?"

In the end, the PM's orders were simple.
"Do nothing to fray Israel's standing with America," the PM said to the Mossad delegation. "Do everything to maintain it. If that means working with them to stop the terrorist and saving American lives, then you will do it. If that means taking down a rogue agent to save Americans and especially Israelis, then YOU WILL TAKE HIM DOWN!"

The PM knew what that meant to Director David, and the PM was also the type of man who did not want to needlessly sacrifice innocent lives.

That meeting led to an agreement between Mossad and the FBI to create a Mossad Liaison Officer position. Rivkin was appointed to the position, although his real mission was to find the director's daughter, Ziva - who was at the meeting with the PM, and disappeared five days afterwards.

That put Rivkin in America, and at the moment in this cheap motel room, with the FBI agent Seeley Booth asleep in the other bed.

He took the laptop monitoring Ziva's location, and the walkie-talkie linking him to the FBI agents sitting in the parking lot and behind the motel, with him in the bathroom.

Rivkin pulled the curtains to the side, left the door open, and made care to not splash any water on the computer while he showered, keeping an eye on the screen and his ear on the walkie-talkie the entire time.

Ziva David

The young woman was up at 4 a.m. sharp.

Sleep was overrated, according to the American idiom.

If she was to accomplish her mission, she could not really afford to sleep, although even a young, athletic, trained officer like herself couldn't avoid it.

Three hours would suffice for today, she thought as she jumped in the shower. Perhaps with the American Thanksgiving holiday tomorrow, I could get a few more.

In the shower, Ziva considered why she was here at all.

Tel Aviv, late October

"I need eyes and ears on Ari," her father, Director Eli David, said to her after the meeting between Mossad and the Israeli PM. "The Prime Minister is...concerned about how his activities may threaten relations with America. Ziva...I fear Ari has gone rogue, and is threatening American citizens."

"Can the Americans not protect their own citizens?" Ziva asked.

"Ziva, Ari has developed a network, which so far he has used to harass two American federal agents; invade an American federal intelligence agency; kidnap an agent, in an attempt to gain knowledge of the security detail for the American President; and now, stalk, harass and threaten the well-being of nearly three dozen Americans."

"Abba...do you believe Ari is capable of such things."

"Yes he is capable...and yes I believe he has gone that far," he replied. "I did not raise him to threaten America; I raised him to imbed himself with our enemies so we may
stop them if not destroy them. And now...it is our responsibility to stop him. Israel herself demands it, and we will comply."

"Abba...I find it...difficult...to believe that Ari has committed such atrocities-"

"What you and I believe is irrelevant," Eli David said, sharply. "What is relevant is that we stop him. You will go to America to follow him, and you will imbed himself with him and his network. I will send Officer Rivkin to help you, but at first it will appear as if you have gone rogue."

"Rogue?"

"You will be a mole within your brother's network," Eli David continued. "Officer Rivkin will convince the Americans to tail you. There are 'safe houses' you will set up for Ari and his people; we will be able to track him, and you, through those and other means. At the proper time, you and Officer Rivkin will connect, and prepare to take him down before he can accomplish his objectives."

"And what objectives are those, abba?"

"So far, we know he plans to finish his personal crusade against the two American agents in some way," Eli said. "It would be good to prevent their deaths and those of the other Americans. The greater mission is to protect Israel, and prevent Ari from carrying out any mission against the American President, or American military, government or civilian assets, whether he is acting on his own or jointly with other known terrorist organizations.

"Ziva. You will find out the extent of his operations and his plans. You will report to Officer Rivkin at the right time, and from there, Mossad will move to stop Ari."

Ziva disappeared a few days later, and was in America before Halloween, dining with Ari at a restaurant in San Francisco.

She convinced him of her loyalty to him, and in turn he introduced her to his network of associates. Ziva's first "mission" for Ari was to wiretap the home of a San Francisco plastic surgeon and leave threatening notes in the woman's kitchen - which disgusted Ziva to no end.

Ziva also left electronic trails for the FBI to find, so the woman wouldn't have to fend for herself.

During the past few weeks, Ziva has participated in numerous missions while leading Rivkin and his FBI associates along; three of Ari's goons had been captured - including the two she abandoned at the Starbucks - and, she hoped, a whole slew of them would be in American custody by the weekend.

11 a.m. Israel Standard Time
Tel Aviv, Israel, Mossad headquarters
Eli David

Elin Bodnar, the new Deputy Director of Mossad, handed the file over to his superior.

"We have confirmed," Bodnar told Director Eli David, "that the former director was killed on orders of Ari Haswari."

Eli David sat at his desk and read through the file, while Bodnar remained standing.
"Ari's...'network'...seems to be more substantial than we thought," Eli David said. "Elin. We will need to contact both Officer David and Officer Rivkin, through back channels, without the knowledge of the Americans."

"The Americans are already on edge," Bodnar replied.

"Yes they are," Eli said. "I did not want to...engage...NCIS this soon. But what we learned of the threats to its director and associate director make it unavoidable. I will send you and Officer Rivkin intel on Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs."

"May I ask why he is so important?" Bodnar said.

"Elin, sit," Eli David said, and Bodnar took a seat in front of the director's desk. "To understand Ari's obsession with this man, you must understand his anger at me. Ari, as you know, hates me; our intel suggests that his interactions with Gibbs have led him to associate this agent with me."

"That makes little sense, Director," Bodnar said. "Why not go after you directly?"

"Perhaps he will, but not yet," Eli said. "He for now is obsessed with Gibbs and his subordinate, Caitlin Todd. And in turn, those related to and associated with Gibbs, including his team, and women who look like Todd. The real question, Elin, is why he is obsessed with them; that is what we must uncover."

"It would suggest, for one, that he truly has gone rogue," Bodnar said. "Mossad officers are trained to be extremely disciplined. If this is what Ari has...become...then it suggests he may have become mentally deranged."

"Perhaps," Eli said. "Or, he is very sane and psychopathic. Not quite a 'loose cannon', as the Americans might say."

"But even more dangerous," Bodnar said. "Director, how do you see his obsession with Gibbs and Todd?"

"It is the reason he has gone beyond plotting to kill the American President, to plotting to carry out attacks against American assets, like on September 11th, 2001," Eli said. "This appears to be personal...related to his anger at myself. He is angry at these women because Agent Todd, to coin another American idiom, 'stood up' to him when he kidnapped her to gain intelligence on Marine One during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington in May.

"In turn, he seems to want to kill her, and to threaten and kill women who resemble her. With Gibbs, this man confronted him early on, after he imbedded himself within NCIS to steal a sample of smallpox. His interactions with Gibbs, we believe, led Ari to hate him, to the point of wanting to kill him. Todd is Gibbs's subordinate at NCIS."

"And the two are intertwined, at least in Ari's mind," Bodnar said. "To understand Ari's obsession with killing innocent American women, one must know of his anger at Agent Gibbs?"

"Not just that," Eli replied. "One must also know of Gibbs' first wife and their daughter, killed years ago, and how important they were - and are - to the man. Ari seems to be targeting Todd and these other women who resemble her, and other women Gibbs has been associated with, because of the wife and daughter."

"Other women such as?"

"Abigail Sciuto, a forensics specialist on his team whom he regards as his own daughter. Jennifer
Shepard, the Associate Director of NCIS, whom Gibbs worked with and had a relationship with once. And Agent Todd, whom he may have repressed feelings for."

"At least he has the time to...contemplate such things," Bodnar said. "Whereas we, in Mossad, are occupied with more urgent matters."

"It seems, Elin, that the Americans' matters and ours are becoming one and the same...at least so far as Ari Haswari is concerned," Eli David replied. "I want to know more about Gibbs's wife and daughter. And I want files on Caitlin Todd and on these two women Gibbs is sheltering."

"Which two women?"

"A detective from the Boston police department and the medical examiner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," Eli David said. "It appears those two women are in a relationship that Ari has become aware of. For some reason, they remind him of Gibbs and Todd. He has threatened them to the point where the Americans are having them stay with Agent Gibbs for the duration.

"I want to know how they responded to Ari's initial threats, and how aware they and their colleagues are of Ari's operations in Boston. I want us to tail them throughout Washington, just as we are tailing Gibbs and Todd."

"Which is a violation of protocol," Bodnar said. "The Americans will protest the moment they find out we are operating in their country outside of the agreement with the FBI."

"Irrelevant," Eli David said. "The alternative is death. Better that we monitor these Americans, and save their lives, than to obey the letter of the law as Ari does what he pleases."
Chapter 31

Chapter Summary

The latest chapter in the fanfic, in which we check on Leon Vance and on Kate Todd’s twin sister, Juliana, with a guest appearance by G Callen.

1 a.m. Pacific Standard Time, Wednesday/Thanksgiving Eve
Los Angeles California
Leon Vance

Leon's job as Operations Manager for the Office of Special Projects made for some very long days at the office.

This day, full of meetings and debriefings, turned into a late night that, by the watch on his wrist, had lasted into the early morning.

1:01 a.m., Thanksgiving Eve.

And he hadn't called his wife since right after six, to tell her he wouldn't be home for dinner.

Just as he picked up his cell phone to call her, it rang.

"Jackie," Leon said.

"Leon, where are you?! I've called and you haven't picked up. I'm worried sick about you."

"Honey, when did you-" Leon looked at his phone. Five messages since 7 p.m. Great.

"You better have a good excuse, Leon," she said. "You still at the office?"

"Yes I am," Leon said. He usually was home by 7 o'clock, and she and he both knew if he wasn't, it was related to his job.

"You better be chasing down a supervillain, to not be home this late," Jackie said.

"You could say that-supervillain?"

"Your son Jared tried to play Superman today," Jackie said. "He was on top of the bookshelf, ready to pounce on the dog. Good thing I was there to catch him. Told me not to let Lex Luthor escape. Leon, those cartoons you got him are getting him carried away--"

"I'm sorry, Jackie," Leon said, chuckling. "I'll take away the Superman and Batman cartoons and let him watch WWE instead."

"You most certainly will not!" replied Jackie, who couldn't help but laugh. "Jared's only in first grade and already he's a handful. Maybe when he gets to second grade he'll be more calm-like Kayla."

"He's a growing boy, hon."
"And your mother said you were the same way when you were his age...honey. Are you coming home tonight? Or for Thanksgiving?"

Leon paused. He didn't like making commitments he couldn't keep, especially to his wife and kids.

This job, in general - and the Ari Haswari case in particular - made him wonder if he should take Tom Morrow up on his offer.

"I'll be there for certain, and not just Thursday, but tomorrow night," Leon said. "If the supervillains don't strike first."

"Leon...I know you will," Jackie said. "I hate when you have to stay late. I hate when you're not home at night. The kids hate it too."

"And I hate not being there with them, and with you," Leon replied. "I won't stay here a second later than I have to. Give Jared and Kayla a hug and a kiss for me in the morning."

"Only if you take them - take us - to see that movie Thursday night," she said. "I'll make darn sure you don't get any turkey so you don't fall asleep during the football game."

"Deal," Leon said. "Jackie...I love you."

"I love you too, Leon. Call us at seven."

"Will do. Love you."

"Love you too. Bye...hope to see you home tomorrow."

Leon hated hearing the click on her end of the line.

He had a change of clothes in his office, and the OSP building had a shower downstairs. He'd use it, but not now; it was too early to shower, and he wanted to get a few hours of sleep.

But he couldn't, not yet.

Leon wandered around the building, stopping off to speak to the overnight techies in the Ops Center and one of the security guards stationed in and around the property.

He wandered to the gym, decided against a late workout with the punching bag, then found his way to the armory.

Surprisingly, it was occupied.

**Juliana Todd**

Six hours ago, Leon Vance told his agents to go home, get a good night's sleep and be ready to work on Wednesday.

Four hours ago, they started leaving, even as Leon himself was videoconferencing with Hetty Lange, from her New York office.

Juliana was the only agent still onsite, and she didn't feel like going home nor sleeping.

At 1:20 a.m., she was in the armory, cleaning one of her pistols.

"I thought I told you to go home."
Julie looked up, and saw her boss - Leon Vance - standing in the doorway to the armory room, arms crossed while holding a cup of coffee.

"Sleep's overrated," she replied. "Besides, you're not exactly sawing logs yourself."

"Operation manager's privilege," Leon answered, putting his cup down next to Juliana's pistol. "Here. You probably need this more than I do."

"Thanks, but I'm fine," she said. "Sorry to work so late-"

"Don't tell me you're sorry when I know you're not," Leon said, with a smile.

"You're not mad?" Julie teased.

"Only if you refuse to go home and get some sleep," Leon answered, "and I have to deal with an agent who's a zombie because she's been up for 48 hours."

Julie then stood up, held out her arms and, eyes bugged out, started marching stiffly, mimicing a zombie. "Brains...brainnnss...BRAAIINNNSSS..."

"Careful, Agent Todd," Leon said, chuckling. "That could get you an afternoon-long psych evaluation with Nate Getz."

"Uggghhh," Juliana joked. "What did I say to you this afternoon about those evals?"

"You told me that you told Leon you loved them."

G Callen - Senior Agent on the Special Ops team, second only to Special Agent in Charge Lara Macy and to Leon - appeared in the doorway, holding two large coffees.

"Mr. Callen," Leon said, "I wasn't aware that my agents didn't require sleep. If I had known that, I would have scheduled accordingly."

"Well, even we need a little shuteye once in a while," Callen said, handing a coffee to Julie. "You're up late, yourself."

"Wish I were home, with the wife and kids, not that I don't appreciate the company," Leon said. "Got caught up with some briefings and video meetings, and ended up staying later than I planned."

"Everything alright?" Callen asked.

"Yes. There was an operation about an hour and a half ago, in Boston between the Boston Police's Special Operations Unit and the FBI to take down a man hired by Haswari to murder two area women, Detective Jane Rizzoli and Dr. Maura Isles-"

"Leon, are those the two women Gibbs and Kate are protecting?" Julie asked.

"They are. The man - David Carlton - literally went down shooting. The entire neighborhood was evacuated so he was the only casualty."

"That's great," Julie said. "Wish those women could go home."

"So do I," Leon replied. "They're still in danger in Boston, though. FBI, CIA, Director Morrow, Boston PD believe they're safest in Washington, and I tend to agree. Not the least because OSP is going to be going after Ari directly."
"Which you'll discuss in that meeting at 8 o'clock," Callen said.

"And I hope that neither of you" - Leon said, smiling, pointing to both Callen and Juliana - "are snoring during that meeting. That's why I wanted you to get a good night's sleep. The Haswari op starts in earnest tomorrow."

"Present company excepted?" Callen asked, smiling himself.

"I'm preaching to the choir, too, Callen," Leon said, pointing to his chest. "Besides, I'm not sure there's enough coffee in Los Angeles County to fuel three highly-motivated NCIS agents and operations manager who didn't get at least a few hours of rest."

"Then I guess this won't help," said Callen, between gulps of java. "Just got back from talking with Arkady. He says he's heard some of Ari's men have been in the area, talking with some known Chechen separatists."

"A Los Angeles operation?" Leon.

"More like he's looking to set up shop. Arkady said he'd get back to me in a few hours."

"That's all you know?" Juliana.

"Right now," Callen said.

"Callen, unless Ari shows up on the Sunset Strip before dawn, take a cot in the locker room, get a few hours of sleep. I don't want to see you awake any earlier than 0600. That goes for you too, Juliana."

Leon planned to take his own advice, but couldn't quite wind down when he hit the couch in his office. So he hit the switch on the lamp, and opened the personnel file for Juliana.

She, of course, was a Special Agent assigned to the Office of Special Projects, and the twin sister of NCIS Special Agent Kate Todd. Except for being a few pounds lighter, and but for the wear and tear coming from her secret ops job and from battling alcoholism, Juliana was a ringer for Kate in appearance.

In personality, Julie was a very different woman.

Julie was the wild child of the Todd family. She got in trouble numerous times in high school, though never to the point of breaking the law.

Where Kate was prim and proper, Julie was free and wild; if Kate dressed in slacks and turtlenecks, Julie wore AC/DC T-shirts and ripped jeans. As Kate developed a love for John Coltrane, Julie blasted Led Zeppelin, Metallica and Guns 'n Roses from her stereo. When Kate went to Sunday Mass, Julie was asleep in bed - or nursing a hangover.

Still, Julie was a good student and earned a scholarship to college. She was interested in working for the CIA or FBI and pursued criminal justice; she passed the FBI's training school but found the agency a bit too staid for her taste.

While Kate earned her way into the Secret Service, Julie tried out the CIA. There, she developed a love for alcohol that would later catch up with her; it caught up with her on a blown mission, that led to her exit from the agency.

However, her handler - Joan Campbell [1] - saw Julie's potential and didn't want her to fall through
the proverbial cracks. Campbell arranged for Julie to get a job working as an undercover cop with the Los Angeles Police Department and endorsed her to two associates from NCIS: Leon Vance and Hetty Lange.

Julie met fellow undercover detective Nick Cavanaugh [2]; though he was much older than Julie, they hit it off and abruptly married. Between their jobs, their age difference and her alcoholism, the marriage failed in under a year; Julie drank to deal with the pain, and was on her way towards being drummed out of LAPD.

Hetty entered into the picture, put Juliana into rehab, and thought that NCIS might be the place for her. Julie liked Los Angeles, but knew she didn't have any real emotional support in the LAPD - especially after the debacle with Taylor [3].

Not only did Hetty give a damn about her, but Hetty's offer of rehab and a job at NCIS beat the hell out of going back home to Indianapolis and - if she was lucky - getting a job as a Marion County police deputy.

Two months of rehab later, Juliana got a job as a probationary agent in Hetty's New York office. With tough love, Julie performed well enough and became one of the field office's best agents.

When her twin Kate was offered a job on Leroy Jethro Gibbs' Washington-based team, her recommendation fell on Gibbs' deaf ears. However, thanks to her performance and her own recommendation by Hetty, Director Tom Morrow took Julie's endorsement into strong consideration when signing off on Gibbs' request for Kate to be added to his own team.

After the incident in Washington with Ari Haswari, Julie investigated on her own - and ended up in a shouting match with Gibbs and Kate. When Ari kidnapped Kate a few months later, she and agent G Callen went down (without approval) to rescue Kate and arrest Ari; they arrived right after Kate was rescued by Gibbs, and that resulted in another screaming match.

Needless to say, Gibbs and Julie don't like each other very well.

And, Kate and Julie aren't exactly on speaking terms at the moment themselves.

After the OSP opened for business, and Gibbs found out Juliana was under consideration for the team, Kate informally lodged a protest with Morrow and Leon Vance.

It fell on deaf ears, as both men knew Kate was still upset with her sister. Julie was more than capable of the job.

And, she performed well, helping crack terrorist plots in Camp Pendleton, Okinawa and Honolulu. Her actions in stopping a female Hamas agent at Pearl Harbor resulted in a promotion to Special Agent.

Her time with OSP helped inform her opinion that it, and not Team Gibbs, should be responsible for the NCIS operation to take down Ari Haswari.

Leon agreed - although he saw things a little differently than Juliana, or the rest of his team.

Julie wanted OSP to babysit Kate and Gibbs. Leon, on the other hand, wanted OSP to spearhead the operation with Team Gibbs in a supporting role.

Director Morrow signed off on OSP leading NCIS's involvement, working jointly with the CIA and FBI, and Team Gibbs babysitting Rizzoli and Isles.
Julie, Leon realized as he finally began drifting off to sleep, wouldn't be happier with anything less than locking her sister in an Ari-proof safe.

This op was going to be dangerous for everyone involved, he thought, and it might prove safer to be in the middle of the action than to try to hide in safety on the sidelines.

Footnotes

[1] the same Joan Campbell as seen on USA Network's Covert Affairs.

[2] a character from the short-lived ABC series The Nine

[3] then-Captain Russell Taylor from The Closer and Major Crimes
Chapter 32

Chapter Summary

Gibbs gives Tony a final debrief before sending him out to tail Ziva; Frost looks ahead to Thanksgiving; Korsak and a fellow Homicide detective discuss Maura’s replacement, while Cavanaugh makes a note to follow up on another candidate.

Chapter 32

5:45 a.m., Washington

Gibbs' basement

Gibbs gave his senior agent, Tony DiNozzo, an extra 45 minutes of sleep.

When Tony finally woke up, he gathered his things and began walking towards the stairs, only to be stopped by Gibbs's hand gently and firmly grabbing his bicep - and Mike Franks standing at the doorway.

"Tony," Gibbs said, as DiNozzo turned around. "Take this" - Gibbs held out a $20 bill - "keep the change. Get upstairs, shower in the back bathroom, go get yourself breakfast, then meet Rivkin-"

"Boss, I'm sorry about this morning," Tony said, seriously and sincerely. "I know...what's up...with Ari and why everyone's here. I...you know I wouldn't do a thing to put Kate or anyone else or you in harm's way-"

"Tony." Gibbs let go of Tony's arm, and put his free hand on his shoulder. "I don't question your loyalty, to me and to this team. And I know you wouldn't hurt any innocent person, anyone we're assigned to protect...however, what went on up there earlier is inexcusable."

Gibbs pointed upwards; Tony knew his boss was referring to his spying on Kate, Jane and Maura a few hours before, and bragging about what he saw to McGee.

And, Tony knew Gibbs was, more than anything else, disappointed in him over it.

"I can't have that, not from my people," Gibbs said, looking straight at Tony, hand still on his shoulder. "I want you out of the house, just this morning. Avoid anything that might come from what you did. Take this bill, buy breakfast on me, keep the change, and think about what went on and what I said."

Tony took the bill and shoved it in his pocket.

"I overlook...a lot by you," Gibbs said. "And by the others. Despite that, you've done a good job since I brought you on. I think you could be a damn fine agent if you want to be.

"There's a maniac running loose and at least four people in this house are in danger because of him. And because of what you saw, you now know something about the two women we're protecting that I hadn't planned to tell you and the rest of the team just yet."

"About that..." Tony said. "Sorry, boss."
"It isn't a joke to brag about to your coworkers," Gibbs said, quietly and firmly. "It's who Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles are, and though I can't fully understand it, I can understand loving someone dearly. I understand what it's like to lose someone you love, and I don't want either of them to experience what I did."

"Boss?" Tony realized Gibbs was hinting at something major he hadn't, to his knowledge, told his team.

"I'll tell you tonight," Gibbs replied. "I know you're going to wonder what it is. Today, I want you to concentrate on Ziva, and to think about this: I can't afford to have my best people acting like frat boys.

"I need them - you - at my best, acting like federal agents, and professionals. Protecting people whose lives are threatened by a terrorist. Which is what you and I and McGee and Kate are doing. That's an order."

"Yes sir," Tony replied.

"Now get your gear, shower, eat, meet Rivkin at this address," Gibbs said, handing Tony a piece of paper with the address of the Fairfax motel Rivkin and Ziva were staying at, and Rivkin's phone number.

"Check in with me throughout the day, every two hours. Come back here tonight, then eat breakfast with us and dinner at Ducky's tomorrow."

Tony nodded - knowing Ziva and Ari could throw a monkey wrench into things at any time - grabbed his things, and headed upstairs, to the just-built bathroom, adjacent to the sunroom/back porch.

Mike Franks waited for Tony to pass him at the top of the stairs, then made his way down the stairs, with two cups of freshly-brewed, black, piping hot coffee.

"Read my mind, Mike."

"Figured you'd want this," Franks answered, handing Gibbs a cup. "Boy looks a little humbled."

Gibbs drank half his cup. "What would you have done?"

"I might've put the fear of God into him," Franks said. "I might've killed him already, too."

Gibbs chuckled. "Couldn't kill him for that," he said. "I can't have him pulling that crap. Not now. Not with Ari running around."

"I think he got your message," Franks said. "Might want to talk to him about how he treats Kate and his own 'probie' while you're at it."

"Kate's fine," Gibbs said. "She can give as good as he can dish out. McGee will take care of itself - one way or another."

"Alright," Franks said. "What time is breakfast? And which one of us is cooking the eggs...and what's that crap in the fridge?"

"Ask Kate," Gibbs answered. "Bacon and eggs aren't her thing."

Boston
Sleep finally arrived for Barry Frost and Vince Korsak, but it didn't stick around very long. By 6 a.m., both detectives were awake. Both showered, ate breakfast at home, and got dressed to go to work early.

While Korsak fed and watered his dogs, Frost called his mother, to check on her, and to tell her he'd see her and her roommate, Robin, tomorrow evening for Thanksgiving dinner.

Barry and his mom were close, and - although she hadn't said a word to him about it - Barry knew Camille and Robin were more than roommates. He didn't raise the issue on the phone, of course; Barry planned to bring it up himself over dinner.

He hoped the discussion would go smoothly, and that somewhere along the way, she might give him advice on how to approach Jane, about whatever was going on between her and Maura.

The day before, Barry heard some of the detectives in Homicide - and some of the "uniforms" (uniformed officers) around headquarters - gossiping about both women. Why they were absent, where they had gone.

No one so far had brought up the feds, or protection, or terrorists.

Korsak heard the same rumors throughout the previous day himself, repeated by the loudmouth uniform he saw at 7-11 a few hours earlier.

As he pulled into the Dunkin' Donuts for some coffee and a donut, Korsak recalled seeing Maura's replacement, T. Pike, the previous day overhearing a conversation two of the uniforms were having about Jane and Maura.

Korsak was relieved to see a friendly face: fellow detective Roz Framus. [1]

"Early morning, Roz?"

She grinned back at Korsak; both were friendly and had worked several cases together over the years.

"Trying to get work out of the way early, so I can get to see family for Thanksgiving," she answered. "You?"

"I got plans tomorrow, too," he said. "Got work to square away today, like you."

"How's Jane?" Roz asked. "And Dr. Isles. Are they both alright?"

Korsak paused.

Roz heard the gossip, too. She knew Korsak had been Jane's partner for years on the force - until he was reassigned after he save her from being killed by Charles Hoyt - and probably knew what really was going on with Jane.

He wouldn't throw her under the bus by saying more than he had to.

Korsak knew Roz and Jane had similar experiences making a place for themselves on the force. He suspected they may have had similar life experiences, too.

"They're both fine," Korsak replied. "Cavanaugh's supposed to give a formal update sometime today. I can't really say any more than that."
"People were really talking yesterday," she said. "Most of it was crazy. Said they got married and moved to San Francisco or Key West or Provincetown...I heard some of it waiting in line at Stanley's cafe. Did Jane's mom hear any of it?"

_I hope not_, Korsak thought. "I don't know," he said.

"Vince...whatever it is, those of us on the force with any sense know them not being at work has to be serious," Roz told him.

"Try telling that to the _idiots_ on the force."

"Always more of them than you'd like to be around," she replied. "Speaking of...I saw T. Pike while in line."

"Pike?"

"Listening in on another couple of idiots, uniforms, running their mouths...guy never heard gossip he didn't like."

"And he's in line to replace Dr. Isles," Korsak told her. "Didn't you have some run-ins with him yourself?"


"Escalated it, in fact, didn't you?"

"And he was all apologetic: 'I'm sorry, I was just kidding', blah blah blah. Guess when you're friends with the governor you can get away with a b.s. apology."

"You'd think that would be a strike on his record," Korsak mused.

"And that he'd keep his mouth shut and his ears to himself," Roz said. "But you can't teach a brownnosing fool like him any sense."

Korsak glanced at his watch. "Shoot," he said. "I need to get going."

"Me too," Roz said.

They walked out of the restaurant towards their cars.

"I wonder if Macy would want to come out of retirement," Korsak said as he unlocked his car door.

"Since that plane crash?" Roz said. "You know...there _is_ someone who might be a great replacement for Dr. Isles."

"Like who?"

"Macy oversaw a pathologist - I'm sure you know her - Jordan Cavanaugh." [3]

"Jordan...name rings a bell."

"It _should_," Roz said. "She's Lt. Cavanaugh's first cousin."

Korsak stopped to think; Sean Cavanaugh had a brother on the force - Max [4] - who ran a bar, and left Boston under suspicion of killing a cop.
Though he was cleared, Max had stayed out of Boston; Jordan - his daughter - left Boston herself, after the plane crash, and presumably was with her dad.

"You know where she ended up, Roz?"

"No...but it might be worth looking into."

"Exactly what I'm thinking," Korsak said. "Want to touch base this afternoon? I'll talk to the lieutenant; he may be ahead of us."

"Sure," Roz said, unlocking her door. "You know Pike's gonna raise hell. He's already jealous over Dr. Isles getting the job over him after Macy left. And there's that drunk Papov to consider, too."

"Who would you rather have, though?" Korsak said. "Pike? Papov?"

"Neither," Roz said. "I've heard some things about Jordan, to be honest. Consistent with someone who cares about the people she's supposed to serve."

"Meet me at Stanley's cafe, 11 a.m.," Korsak said. "I've got to get to work."

Boston Police Department, Downtown

"Zip-da-dee-doo-dah, zip-da-dee-day, my oh my it's a wonderful day..."

T. Pike, on his first full day as the Acting Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, was singing his lungs out.

He skipped and pranced through the building, making his way to what he now considered to be his office, and his alone, now and for the foreseeable future.

Pike stopped two uniforms, addressed himself as the "new medical examiner"; when asked what happened to Dr. Isles, Pike replied, "I don't know. But I heard she and Detective Rizzoli were having an affair, or eloping, or vacationing together in Provincetown instead of doing their jobs. What have you heard?"

A short distance away, Lt. Sean Cavanaugh looked on. He got to the building five minutes ahead of Pike, intending to get ahead of things on what could be a very long day.

Pike already had managed to piss him off.

Keep it up you son of a bitch, Cavanaugh thought. Two strikes against you already. I don't care how friendly you are with the governor, your bullshit isn't gonna fly. Not with Jane. Not with Maura. Not with me.

He took a pen out of his jacket pocket and wrote a third item on his pad.

CALL JORDAN

Footnotes
Note: I want to credit Mediancat for the idea to bring in Jordan Cavanaugh as a supporting character...whose role in this series is yet to be revealed...


[2] The Chief Medical Examiner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on Crossing Jordan; in
verse, he is Maura's predecessor.

[3] Jordan Cavanaugh, a forensic pathologist (and the featured character) on Crossing Jordan. Macy was her boss on the show and in this AU, where she also is Lt. Sean Cavanaugh's first cousin.

Chapter 33

Chapter Summary

Chapter 33 of the fanfic finds DiNozzo checking in with Rivkin at a diner; Gibbs and Franks over breakfast; Korsak, Frost and Cavanaugh checking on an anonymous tip about a cold case; and the tipster - CIA agent Kort, working undercover - serving killer Charles Hoyt his final meal.

Chapter 33
Fairfax, Virginia
Waffle House

Tony DiNozzo trudged his way into a slice of Americana that he rarely partook of.

The NCIS agent's tastes were more refined, more sophisticated - at least by his standards - than the motley group of people he found himself eating breakfast with.

You know, he thought, this might make a pretty good flick...who would I cast?...late '80s - since that's when it looks like this place was built. Robert DeNiro as the guy in the corner table with the bad sportcoat? Jack Nicholson as the crazed trucker; maybe Geena Davis as the smartalec but kind-hearted waitress with crow's feet; a young Tom Cruise as the college student trying to chase away his hangover with a greasy breakfast.

How about...casting the FBI-looking guy who just walked in, headed this way? C. Thomas Howell? And the Israeli-looking guy behind him...who looks like...

"Rivkin?"

Seeley Booth - FBI - and Michael Rivkin - Mossad Officer/ liaison to the FBI - piled into DiNozzo's booth, to Tony's complete surprise.

"Mr. DiNozzo," Rivkin said. "We meet again."

"A little earlier than I expected," Tony said, between bites. "Where's Sacks?"

"Ron has...other duties," said Booth. "Said to tell you had nothing to do with that damned car chase last night. Seeley Booth, FBI."

"Tony DiNozzo, NCIS," Tony replied. "Here for the cuisine or the atmosphere? I gotta say...there's a movie that this place reminds me of but for some reason I'm having a helluva time remembering it exactly."

"We are here to, as they say in America, 'fuel up',' Rivkin said. "Our 'friend', regrettably, is not here to enjoy this unique 'experience'."
"Every visitor to the Land of the Free should spend at least one meal at a diner like this," Tony said. "Where is our 'friend'?

"Across the street," Booth said. "Mickey D's."

"Maybe I should've joined her," Tony replied, looking at his overcooked eggs and toast.

"Then we'd be spying on you and her both," Rivkin said.

**Washington**

**Gibbs' townhouse**

"Probie!" Mike Franks yelled downstairs to the basement from the kitchen. "Where're the eggs? And butter?"

"Look behind the vegetables," Gibbs yelled back, as he walked into the laundry room leading towards the kitchen and dining area.

"Vegetables?" Franks said. "This ain't your idea for sure...you see what Kate loaded your fridge with?"

"She's staying here too, Mike," said Gibbs, as he grabbed a cup out of the cupboard. "Coffee ready?"

"Yep," Franks replied. "Eggs and sausage work for ya?"

"Fine by me."

Frankie Rizzoli, Jr. made his way into the kitchen, awakened by the smell of sausage cooking on the stove.

"Smells great, Mr. Franks," he said. "Hope you got enough for everyone."

"Call me Mike, son," Franks said.

"Frankie, go wake up McGee," Gibbs said.

"What about the girls?"

"Let them sleep in a little bit longer," Gibbs said. "You sure you don't want to do the same?"

"I'm hungry, Gibbs," Frankie said, "but I'm gonna leave some room for round two."

"Round two?" Franks said. "That rabbit food the women are gonna eat?"

"More like I want to eat breakfast with Jane and Maura before I head back."

"Ahh," Franks said. "I understand. You're definitely gonna want to load up on some real food then."

"Boss?"

Tim McGee made his way into the kitchen, and started looking for a plate.

"Hey! Leave some for me."

To the four men's surprise, Agent Paris Summerskill came down the stairs from the upper floor,
freshly showered and dressed.

"Thought you may want to eat with Kate and Jane and Maura," Gibbs said.

"I saw what she had in the fridge," Paris answered. "What Mike has cooking is more appetizing."

"Then get yourselves a plate everyone," Franks said. "Breakfast is served. Make sure you eat up before Kate wakes up."

"Why?" Frankie Rizzoli asked.

"She hates greasy food," Franks said. "She let me know about it, too. Whatever you do...don't cook real bacon in the same skillet she uses for that soy crap."

**Boston**

**Boston P.D., Downtown, Homicide Division**

Detective Barry Frost found that his fellow detective, Vince Korsak, had beat him to work, and was already hard at work - with Lt. Sean Cavanaugh over his shoulder.

"How long you been here, Korsak?" Frost asked.

"Got here five minutes ago and saw this email in my inbox, addressed to me, you, Lt. Cavanaugh- and to Jane."

"What about?" Frost said as he walked to Korsak's desk, standing over his other shoulder.

"Whomever sent this email claims to have gotten information from Charles Hoyt about a cold case," Cavanaugh said. "A missing family of four."

"I think I remember that case," Korsak said. "The suspect was a college student. The bodies were never found."

"Whomever this...person is, claims to know where those people ended up," Frost said. "I can start by tracking the I.P. address."

**Maura Isles' home**

Two FBI agents and eight Boston Police Department officers were either in Dr. Isles' house or walking the grounds, making the ratio of feds and uniforms to Rizzolis 5-1.

To Angela Rizzoli, mother of Jane Rizzoli, the house may as well been empty.

"Ma," said the other Rizzoli - Angela's other son and Jane's other brother, Tommy - "eat. Stop picking at your food."

"I can't help it," Angela said, looking sad and miserable. "I miss Jane and Maura already. And Frankie too."

"Me too, Ma," Tommy said. "But not eating isn't gonna do you any good. You still have a job to go to, Maura's depending on us to take care of her house while she's gone."

"I don't feel like eating," Angela said, pushing aside her plate.

"Ma. Come here." Tommy stretched his arms out, and motioned for his mom to come close for a hug. "Maura and Jane are depending on us to watch the house, the cafe, the department while they're
Angela, forlorn and downcast, hugged her son tight, then finished her breakfast, before cleaning up and getting ready for a Thanksgiving Eve at Boston P.D.'s cafe.

**Somewhere in Boston**

"Where the **** is my food!"

Charles Hoyt, sitting up in his bed and laying in his waste, yelled for his breakfast.

His "new" guard - undercover CIA agent Trent Kort - brought in a plate of eggs benedict, a muffin and Canadian bacon and a glass of orange juice, prepared by Kort himself.

It was the only way he could assure that the drug was added to the juice and the eggs benedict without anyone else knowing.

Hoyt, in his ungrateful way, gobbled down the food and the juice; Kort thought that one could almost think the man wasn't dying of cancer.

"Was your breakfast adequate, Mr. Hoyt?"

"Adequate? *Best ****ing breakfast* I've had in a while. Thank Ari for me. Of course, as you know, I don't have all that long to live. Better enjoy it while I can, right?"

The serial killer cackled. Kort smiled, but not in response to Hoyt's attempt at humor.

Nor at what he anticipated the drug was going to do to him in roughly four hours.
Chapter 34

Chapter Summary

FBI agents Tobias Fornell, Fritz Howard and Gabriel Dean compare notes; T. Pike starts clearing out Maura’s office in front of her team; Hoyt asks Kort why Jane hasn’t shown up in his room yet; and Jane, Maura and Kate talk about breakfast, decor and Gibbs’ boat in the basement.

Chapter 34
Quantico, Virginia
FBI Headquarters

"Why did you follow that police officer down from New Jersey?"

"What is your role in Ari's network?"

"How did you meet Ari in Somalia?"

"Were you at that apartment in Boston where Ari had his summit? What did you promise him?"

The Somalian smirked at each one of FBI Agent Tobias Fornell's questions. As had been his custom since his capture in Maryland the previous night, however, he said nothing.

Fornell was getting nowhere at the moment. So he got up, walked out of the interrogation room, and got himself a cup of coffee.

"It's next to impossible to get that guy to talk," Fornell told fellow agents Gabriel Dean and Fritz Howard. "Let him sit there for awhile."

The three men walked to another part of the building, where Ron Sacks and two other agents were interrogating two men captured at the Starbucks in Fairfax the night before - the same ones Ari's half sister, Ziva, abandoned in the Starbucks parking lot.

"How's Brenda?" Fornell asked Howard about his new girlfriend, the deputy chief of the Los Angeles Police Department's Priority Homicide Division.

"She's a tough girl, hanging in there," Howard replied. "Taylor's giving her hell; so are some of her detectives."

"She must really want that job to put up with all that b.s.," Dean replied.

"Brenda's a damn good person and good at what she does," Howard said. "A bit blunt...what about that woman you were dating up in Boston, Gabe? That detective?"

"Went nowhere," Dean said. "She found someone else."

"She is Detective Jane Rizzoli," Fornell said. "One of the two women Agent Gibbs of NCIS is protecting from Ari. The other is Dr. Maura Isles."
"Jane's partner," Dean said.

"Partner on the force?" Howard.

"Life," Dean said.

"Ohhhhh," Howard replied. "Toby, I heard you had to talk with both of them yesterday?"

"Had to tell them what the FBI knew," Fornell said. "Went over like a lead balloon. I'm going to try to talk to them again this afternoon, to smooth things over."

"Want me along?" Dean said. "I've known Jane for awhile. We didn't have any problems when she told me about her other relationship and we get along well enough. I could help mediate."

"I'll take you up on it," Fornell replied. "Because when I left the Navy Yard, both were royally pissed off at me and so was Gibbs himself."

**Boston**

**Maura Isles' office**

T. Pike was technically and actually the acting Medical Examiner for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, but going about his business as if he was the permanent replacement for the actual M.E.

In his mind, Maura Isles was history.

Except when Pike chose to use her and Jane Rizzoli to further his own career.

But, the interview with The Boston Dispatch could wait, and so could those "meet and greet" conversations he was striking up with any uniform and plain-clothes detective he saw, to "introduce" himself and gossip about Jane and Maura.

Right now, T. Pike's ass-kissers were in the process of boxing up all of Dr. Isles' belongings and moving his own things into her office. Right in front of her team.

As they looked on, they heard hint after hint that the people boxing and unboxing in the office might be Pike's own hand-picked team. One guy said he had "waited for this since med school"; another said "Dr. Pike asked me to join his team"; a young woman was over heard saying "Dr. Pike knows the governor, and he can do whatever he wants."

The de facto leader of Maura's team - Susie Chang - had heard, and seen, enough.

"Stay here, keep taking notes and keep taking video," she told the others. "I'm going to Lt. Cavanaugh's office. Now."

**Elsewhere in Boston**

"Where's Jane? When are you bringing in Jane?"

Kort wasn't certain if it was the drugs, or the cancer talking, or if Hoyt was being his own damned self.

After finishing his breakfast and thanking Ari for his good fortune, he began nonstop yelling at Kort about Jane Rizzoli and when she and Dr. Isles would come to his bed.
He had to tell her about the nest of eagles that drowned in the lake, he said. He had to see her one last time, he said. He had to have Dr. Isles sit in with Jane, he said.

A few more hours, and Kort would be rid of his miserable excuse for a human being.


**Washington, D.C.**
**Gibbs' home, upstairs**

"Where's Jane?"

Kate Todd knocked on the door to Jane and Maura's room. Maura motioned her in, and pointed to the shower; Kate stepped out, and walked down stairs to check on the pot of coffee brewing in the kitchen.

She knocked on the door a few minutes later; by then Jane had showered and dressed. Though she and Maura were women, Kate didn't want to barge in while they were getting ready, and was glad to see they were ready to go.

On the other side of the bed, Jane's dog Jo Friday was sound asleep, while Maura's tortoise, Bass, was in his cage. "We'll feed the pets after we eat," Maura told Kate. "I'd like you to meet Bass anyway."

"Uh...okay," Kate said. "I hope you brought your appetite, and I hope what I prepared for you is alright. I haven't had time to stop by the supermarket this week; I had to empty my fridge at home when moving in here."

"I hope that Frankie and the guys downstairs didn't eat all the *bacon* and *sausage*," Jane said.

"Jane!" Maura said. "I'm certain it'll be fine. I took a quick look last night while everyone was moving our things in. It'll be fine for today and we can always go to the market later."

"I'm sure it's fine, Kate," Jane said.

"You're a bacon and eggs girl, I take it?" Kate asked.

"Maura and I have...different tastes in food," Jane said. "I eat burgers and fries, she's munching on some plant-"

"I ate mint leaves with the sweet potato fries that night," Maura replied. "Very tasty and very nutritious."

"That sounds interesting-and tasty," Kate said.

"You two sound like two peas in a pod," Jane said. "Seriousity, thanks for the effort you and Gibbs put into all of this. I know it's as awkward in some ways for you as it is for us-"

"Believe me," Kate said, hands on her hips. "It's not a bother. As long as you're here, we're going to make this your home as much as anyone's."

"I take it all the 'flowery stuff' here wasn't here before," Jane said of the decor.

Kate laughed. "Absolutely *not,*" she said. "Gibbs is a guy, and a Marine. He's a minimalist; just enough to do the job, and definitely with a man's touch. We worked for hours Tuesday night to get
this ready; he did most of the lifting and moving, and I told him where to go."

"You bossed around your boss?" Jane said. "Bet that was weird."

"He gladly delegated authority on this project...and besides. He's a guy. He wouldn't have the first clue as to what to do on his own," Kate replied, with a wink and a smile.

"It looks lovely and once again, thank you for your hard work," Maura said. "But it does look a bit sparse."

"That's where we figured you two might want to fill out the decor," Kate said.

"Guess what we're doing tonight," Maura said, looking at Jane with a grin. "Decorating!"

"Ugh," Jane said, flopping down on the mattress, while Maura and Kate laughed. "There is one thing, and please don't take this the wrong way. Can I send Frankie back down here this weekend with the mattress from Maura's bed?"

"Doesn't this mattress...OH," Kate replied, not getting what Jane meant at first, then understanding.

"It's a guy's bed," Jane said, "and I'm sure Gibbs doesn't want to sleep on that cot for days or weeks or however long Maura and I are gonna be here."

"Well, if you really want your mattress here - and I understand why - we can figure out how to get it down here," Kate answered. "That mattress? No room for it in the basement, with his boat."

"His what?" Jane and Maura said, in unison, a couple of moments later.

"His boat," Kate said. "Gibbs builds boats. Woodworking is his hobby. He builds boats. In his basement. Names them after his ex-wives."

Jane and Maura looked at each other.

"Are we talking a boat boat or a boat in a bottle?" Jane.

"A boat boat, like you'd take out on the water and put actual, real-life people in," Kate replied.

"What an unusual hobby," Maura said. "Does he sail them anywhere close?"

"No. He burns them."

"Burns them?" Maura asked.

"And how does he get them out of the basement?" Jane said. "If they're as big as an actual...boat...he ain't carrying them on his back up the stairs."

Kate laughed. "That, Gibbs didn't tell me. And I doubt he'll tell anyone. But, after breakfast, I promise we'll go downstairs and look at it."

"Then we better eat," Jane said, springing up from the mattress, and rushing out the room towards the steps. "And there better be some bacon and sausage left!"

"Jane," Maura said, hurrying behind her. "The soy sausage in the freezer is much healthier than regular sausage, and the taste very close to its meat- and fat-flavored counterpart."
"Counter *what*? Maura. Is this a meal or a science experiment?"

"Well, the science behind the preparation of soy-based foods is fascinating-"

Kate was the last one out the door, and turned off the lights.

*Whatever Ari does,* she thought, *these women are definitely going to be different, and interesting.*
Chapter 35

Chapter Summary

Jane and Maura talk with Lt. Cavanaugh about their "exile" in D.C., Ari's network in Boston, what T. Pike is up to and breaking personal matters to family and colleagues.

Chapter 35

Gibbs' townhouse

It was 9 a.m., and only Tim McGee had left the house, in his case to go to work. Everyone else who had been in the house the night before - except for Agent Tony DiNozzo - was still there, and ready for the second breakfast of the morning.

Gibbs sat at the head of the dinner table and noted it was as crowded as he had seen in a long time. The man was not in the habit of entertaining guests, and though he accepted visitors, they almost always had to meet him in his basement, where he usually was working on his boat.

Next to Gibbs was Mike Franks, his former boss, and NCIS Agent Paris Summerskill, temporarily reassigned from the New York field office. They already had ate, and were at the table mainly for conversation - and coffee.

Two of the other four people at the table were Detective Jane Rizzoli and Officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr., from the Boston Police Department. Jane was one of two women now under Gibbs' protection because of Ari Haswari - the other being her long time friend-turned-lover-girlfriend Dr. Maura Isles - and though Jane still wasn't happy about it, was beginning to accept the reality of the situation.

Maura also was seated at the table, next to Jane, who was next to Paris. The other person seated at the table - NCIS Agent Kate Todd - sat across from Maura, next to Frankie, who sat next to Franks.

Maura and Kate ate fresh fruits, yogurt and cheese, all taken from Kate's apartment; Jane and Frankie ate the last of the bacon, eggs, gravy and biscuits, while Gibbs, Franks and Paris drank coffee (having eaten earlier).

Conversation wise, Kate and Maura talked about exotic-to-Jane foods, healthy living and jogging trails around the neighborhood. Jane and Frankie talked mostly about family and work. Paris and Franks talked about New York and Paris's boss, Hetty Lange, and "how it used to be" when NCIS was NIS, or Naval Investigative Service.

Gibbs said very little, but observed everyone keenly.

Jane was more calm at the end of breakfast - having spent some significant time with her brother - than she was before, and she was pretty calm then.

Right as Jane finished her plate, she got a phone call from her own boss - Lt. Sean Cavanaugh, head of the Homicide Division where Jane worked. "Excuse me, I gotta take this," Jane told the table. "It's Cavanaugh."

"Lt. Cavanaugh?" Frankie replied. "You want me there with you?"
"Hello?" Jane said.

"Jane," Cavanaugh said. "You and Dr. Isles there?"

"Yeah. Frankie, too."

"I need to talk to both of you alone, not Frankie, and your friend Agent Todd," he replied. "I'll talk with him later today, but right now you both."

"Uh...okay. Frankie - Cavanaugh wants to talk with the three of us" - pointing to herself, Maura and Kate - "said he'll talk to you later."

"Okay," Frankie replied, though extremely curious about the conversation. Kate followed Jane and Maura upstairs to their room.

"You know what that's about?" Frankie said to Gibbs.

"Some of it will come from Lt. Cavanaugh," Gibbs replied, "and some from your sister."

"Cavanaugh!" Jane said, upstairs, with Maura's ear pressed against the cell phone, and Kate standing against a wall, arms folded. "When are we going home?"

"Jane," he said, "I wish I could tell you today. Or next week. Or Christmas. It's out of my hands; the feds have you there for a reason-"

"Boy, that makes me feel better," Jane said sarcastically.

"It does?" Maura abruptly said to her. "I'm glad! You've been so agitated over this."

"Maura!" Jane interjected. "Cavanaugh. That's all I've heard: terrorist coming after us, go to Washington, talk to Gibbs, oh, now that you're here you get to stay because of the terrorist, and oh yeah Gibbs is protecting you. And you can't go back home. How in hell is that supposed to make me feel better?"

"Jane," Maura said. "There has to be a perfectly good reason for all of this and things we haven't been told yet-"

"I'm not-Jo! Jo Friday!"

Jane's terrier, Jo Friday, jumped on Rizzoli's lap and started wagging her tail. "Maura, take the phone-"

As Jane petted Jo Friday, Maura took the cell phone, then put it on speaker.

"Gee why didn't I think of that before," Jane said.

"Why didn't you?" Cavanaugh said from the speaker. "This involves Dr. Isles as much as it does you. Are you in a place where you can talk freely?"

"Yes," Maura said, looking at Kate, who nodded back.

"I don't have long. Someone emailed us with a message allegedly from Charles Hoyt about a cold case from several years back."

"Hoyt?" Jane said. "What does HE want?"
"Someone he ain't gonna get," Cavanaugh replied. "The email said we could find the bodies of a family of four at the bottom of a lake. Korsak and Frost are checking it out now."

"I should be-"

"There, I know, Jane," Cavanaugh said. "There are things you don't know. Things you are going to be told, this afternoon, at NCIS. Three hours from now, video conference, I'll be on it and some others. Agent Gibbs will tell you the details about it when you get to NCIS.

"Part of the conference will debrief you on the network Ari Haswari has in Boston. That's the biggest reason why you're there and not here."

"A network?" Jane said, looking at Kate, who looked surprised.

"Just as much a surprise to me as to you," Kate told her and Maura.

"Ask Gibbs," Cavanaugh said. "Pike is the acting M.E. and is running his mouth already. This stays between us: if I have any say, he won't be the M.E., acting or otherwise, much longer."

"Who would you get?" Maura asked. "Garret Macy?"

"Macy's at Boston General," Jane mused, "and they say he's got a good gig there...Cavanaugh, are you going to try to bring in your cousin?"

"Jordan Cavanaugh?" Maura asked. "I've heard of her. She worked under Macy. Rather unconventional at times, always with the interest of the victim in mind."

"There were a few complaints about her, Maura," Cavanaugh said, "but I can't think of anyone else who's as qualified as you or Macy to fill in while you're gone. I can't stand by and let Pike do your job and Papov's not much better."

"What about nepotism-" Jane.

"Your brother works with you, your mother works for Stanley," Cavanaugh said, "and the medical examiner, interim or not, is a state position. And Dr. Isles you are now and for the foreseeable future THE M.E. for the Commonwealth. Whoever fills in for you is interim, even if it's my cousin."

"Pike's going to be politicking to take my job," Maura replied. "Probably already is."

"Already is indeed," Cavanaugh said. "Once the FBI debriefs the governor on your and Jane's situation, he'll be less inclined to buy whatever crap Pike wants to throw at him to try for your job."

"Does that...crap...include stuff about us?" Jane said.

"Us being you and Dr. Isles...or you and Maura?" Cavanaugh said.

"You know what I'm referring to," Jane said, while Maura looked on, suddenly a little apprehensive.

"Jane...Maura...I know, and I told you that on the phone yesterday," he said. "You two, together, personally, it's not an issue with me. Pike? He probably suspected as, to be honest, a lot of people have."

"But some of the bullshit he's throwing around has to do with Maura and my relationship," Jane said.

"Jane, Maura...yes," Cavanaugh replied.
"Do Korsak and Frost know?" Jane asked.

"No, but they suspect something. I'll debrief them. You don't have anything to worry about from Frost and Korsak. They have your backs, both of you. And if you want, I'll talk to Angela and Tommy, and Frankie-"

"Cavanaugh, we appreciate that," Jane said. "I can talk to Frankie myself. Maura and I need to talk to Ma and Tommy ourselves, too, though I don't know how we're going to do that-"

"I had to pull some strings to get Frankie down there," Cavanaugh replied. "You don't want to have that kind of conversation...over video or phone. If I can work it out, I'll get Angela and Tommy down there. Maybe at NCIS."

Jane thought back to yesterday's conversation - at NCIS - with FBI Agent Tobias Fornell.

"Perhaps a park, or a cafe, might be a better place," Maura said.

"Look, I've got to go right now," Cavanaugh said. "Duty calls. Everything in the past day has been...rather sudden, I know. But we've got your backs, and the people you're with have your backs, too-"

Kate nodded to Jane, while typing "Pike, Boston" into her Blackberry [1].

"-and there are damn good reasons you are where you are right now. I don't put any of my people - that includes either of you - in harm's way. Don't get too used to D.C. because you're both back here the second I can get you here. Three hours. I'll debrief you on Hoyt, and the lake, and Pike then."

The call ended, and both Jane and Maura looked at Kate.

"What?" Kate said.

"...nothing," Jane replied. "Guess we gotta wait until that video conference at noon...didn't Gibbs tell us we could wait until noon to show up there?"

"I think he did," Kate said. "If you guys aren't feeling up to it-"

"It sounds like we need to be there," Maura said. "And we're both fine, especially after eating breakfast and getting some rest-"

"You two and your yogurt and blueberries," Jane said. "I'm going back down there, to talk to Frankie. And get another sausage biscuit. None of that soy crap-"

"Soy is good for you!" Maura said, following after Jane as she ran down the stairs.

Kate stayed behind, long enough to call McGee at the Navy Yard.

"McGee," she said. "Check on a Pike in Boston. Medical examiner."

"What am I looking for?" he replied.

"Bio, background, anything to answer why the lieutenant at Boston police and Dr. Isles would not want him to fill in for her, and if this guy might have something on her or Rizzoli."

"You talk with the boss?"

"No, why?"
"Gibbs told me before I left to check up on that guy."

"Damnit...email what you find to my Blackberry and to Gibbs."

Footnotes

[1] Kate used a Palm Pilot on the phone. I chose to have her use a Blackberry, as the series is set in 2007-08 and Palm Pilots were on their way out by then.
Chapter 36

Chapter Summary

Rizzoli & Isles discuss Gibbs' boat-building, Mike Franks, and Gibbs' first ex-wife and only daughter with Kate Todd; Frankie Rizzoli and Lt. Cavanaugh discuss Rizzles.

Chapter 36
Washington
Gibbs' basement

Maura Isles and Jane Rizzoli looked, and looked, and looked some more at the framework of the boat that Leroy Jethro Gibbs had been working on for several weeks.

"In his basement," Jane said.

"Yep," said Kate.

"Not in a garage."

"Nope."

"Not in a shed, not in his back yard."

"No."

"The basement."

"Yeah."

While Jane stood flabbergasted at the frame, Maura looked over it closely.

"He's done an excellent job," Maura said. "Gibbs must be an excellent builder. I'd love to see the boat when he finishes it; the craftsmanship must be extraordinary-"

"I'd love to see how he gets it out of the basement," Jane said.

"Me too," Kate replied.

"You mean, you don't know?" Jane asked. "I figured you and everyone else on your team would know his secret exit-"

"Secret exit?" Maura asked, stepping away from the frame, then looking around the basement. "I don't see a secret exit. I only see the steps leading to the laundry room."

"Maura, it's crystal clear. He carries it up the stairs, on his back, and out the front door," Jane said sarcastically. "Then he finds a lake somewhere and sails it - right?"

"You know...I don't know," Kate said.

"He doesn't tell you what he does with his boats?" Maura said.
"I thought I told you before," Kate said. "Tony's been here more than I have. He's as curious as anybody I've met and he doesn't know how Gibbs gets these things out of the basement."

"What do you think, Kate?" Maura asked.

"What do I think?"

"Yes."

"I think...he builds the boats, names the boats after his ex-wives, then dismantles them, puts the...thing in his pickup, goes somewhere where he can't be seen or bothered and burns it."

Jane looked at the framework, for the umpteenth time.

"That's it?" she said. "No...there has to be a secret exit, like the Batcave, a ramp, he attaches the boat to his truck, drives it somewhere out in the country, then sails it on the seven seas."

"No, I don't believe so," Maura replied. "Kate's hypothesis is most likely."

"Are you guessing, Maura?" Jane.

"Jane, how many times have I told you I do not guess?" Maura.

"You don't guess?" Kate asked.

"Sure she does," Jane joked, in a good-natured manner. "Dr. Isles. Would you guess that Gibbs has a secret shrink ray, he aims it at the boat and puts it in a bottle-"

"No 'shrink ray', Rizzoli. And no secret ramp, either."

Gibbs appeared out of nowhere, again, just as had the previous morning at NCIS headquarters.

"Where-where did you come from?" Jane asked, while Kate looked on in bemusement, and Maura took the scene in, trying to figure Gibbs out.

"Not important," Gibbs replied. "What's important is where we're going. Get your gear. Headed to the Navy Yard. First day at NCIS for you both, Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles. Congratulations. You're part of my team."

With that, Gibbs turned around, and walked up the steps.

"Get our gear?...wait...we already have jobs," Jane said to Gibbs.

"You still have them," Gibbs replied, as he walked up the steps. "And now you have new ones. Gotta pay the bills on your house and your apartment, right?"

Gibbs disappeared, leaving three surprised women in their wakes. Kate took the lead, motioning for them to follow her. "I'll..try to fill you in on the way," she told Jane and Maura. "Though Gibbs will have to do most of it when we get to the Navy Yard."

"I'm riding shotgun," Jane said.

**RI&K**

Frankie Rizzoli, Jr. was supposed to return the U-Haul to Boston today.
Since arriving at Gibbs' house the night before, however, after unloading Maura and Jane's belongings - and finding out they were going to sleep in the same room, in the same bed - he thought about almost nothing else besides:

Why were they sleeping together?

Were the rumors true?

What might the rumors have to do with them having to stay here?

He punched the number for Lt. Sean Cavanaugh on his cell phone.

"Lieutenant? This is Officer Rizzoli?"

"Officer. How's Jane and Maura?"

"They're fine. They're getting ready to go to that Navy Yard with the NCIS people."

"Good...you on your way back up here?"

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about...Lieutenant, since you talked to Sgt. O'Reilly, could you talk with him again? I need at least another day here with Jane-"

"Another day? Something going on?"

"Sir...I think we both know what's going on."

"...Officer...Frankie...you mean them together."

"Yeah. Them. Together."

"Officer. I can't have you stay down there indefinitely with Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles but I don't see any reason why you can't spend another day or two. Stay there, don't worry about the U-Haul or O'Reilly."

"Thanks, Lieutenant."

"Now...Frankie. Your mother's going to be expecting you here for Thanksgiving so if you want to stay longer than today you need a good explanation. All this is hard enough on your Ma, you being away for the holiday probably won't help matters-"

"I...I'll figure something out, sir."

"And as far as your sister goes...whatever you think about their being...together...they're both the same people you've always known them as."

"I know that, sir. I think."

"You THINK? I KNOW. And so do you, Frankie."

"I know I need to talk to her about it, but I don't know what to say-"

"Whatever it is, Frankie, don't make it something you'll regret later on. Right now, she needs you bad. She needs us, and so does Dr. Isles, and we're going to get them both back as soon as we can. For now, today, be there for them both. Especially Jane. Understand?"
"Yes sir...I gotta go. They're leaving."

Gibbs saw Frankie on his phone.

"Going back home, Officer?"

"Not yet, Agent Gibbs...I'll move the U-Haul."

"Need to talk to your sister, Frankie?"

"Uh...yeah. That's part of it."

"Go easy on her. She's already been through a lot...back the U-Haul in after I pull out of the drive. I'll have Kate wait for you. You can ride with them, and see NCIS for yourself."

"Yes sir."

Frankie pulled the U-Haul into the street, waiting until Gibbs pulled his car out of the driveway before backing it back in. Frankie jumped in the back seat of Kate's car with Maura, and the four drove off towards the Navy Yard, while Mike Franks and Brent Langer guarded Gibbs' home, with Paris Summerskill getting some sleep upstairs.

"Frankie...before you give away the Rizzoli family secrets to Agent Todd, I have a couple of questions for her," Jane said.

"Shoot," Kate replied.

"First, that boat downstairs...did he 'name' it? Shannon? Who's she...and second, what's up with that Mike Franks guy?"

Kate laughed at the mention of Franks, then rolled her eyes, then laughed again.

"He must be a real character," Jane said.

"Mike...Mike Franks...I've learned more about Gibbs in the past few days than I knew from the time he recruited me after I resigned from the Secret Service," Kate said.

"Mike Franks was his boss, when NCIS was still NIS, Naval Investigative Service. Gibbs was his 'probie' and I see a lot of Franks in Gibbs, at least as far as work goes. Mike resigned, moved down to Mexico, met someone, had a girl with her. He came up here to help Gibbs, because of Ari."

"Sounds like a decent guy so far, if he dropped what he was doing to come help his...probie...defend himself against a terrorist," Frankie said.

"Didn't he seem a little...weird to you?" Jane said, to Frankie and Kate. "Frankie. You stayed downstairs with the guy, and Kate, you were here with him yesterday."

"Seemed fine to me," Frankie said.

"He's...not a bad guy, or a creep if that's what you're asking," Kate said. "He's more laid back than Gibbs, at least away from the office, and I suspect that if Franks was still working he wouldn't be that way."

"He'd be like Gibbs?" Jane asked.

"Probably," Kate said. "Gibbs clearly respects him...but I agree with you. There's
something...different about him. And I haven't figured out what that is yet."

"What about Shannon?" Maura asked.

"Shannon," Kate said, "is Gibbs' first ex-wife. He's had four. I thought - we, our entire team, thought - he had three. He didn't tell any of us about the first one."

"Why?" Jane.

"She was different than the last three," Kate said. "Shannon may have been the love of his life. She and Kelly - their daughter - were killed...Kelly saw something, that led her to and Shannon being put under NIS protection while Gibbs was in the Middle East. The agent driving them was shot in the head, causing their SUV to wreck, killing them both."

"Oh my god," Jane said.

"It's...it's a big deal in his life," Kate said. "And this doesn't go beyond this car, any of you."

"Not a problem," Jane said, knowing Maura and Frankie would agree.

"Guys...you gotta explain this boat thing to me," Frankie said.

"In a minute," Jane said. "Kate...you don't think he's going to burn that boat downstairs, do you?"

"Jane," Kate replied, "I think he's going to finish it, put it on his back, take it up those stairs, hook it up to his truck, drive out to the ocean, put it in the water and sail it."

Shortly thereafter, Kate's car arrived at the Navy Yard; she, Jane, Maura and Frankie made their way inside, and up to the third floor, and to the bullpen where Gibbs' team worked.
Chapter 37

Chapter Summary

At NCIS HQ, Jane and Maura have a very PG-rated moment - to the embarassment of Jane's brother, Frankie, and the shock of Kate Todd and Tim McGee - then receive their first assignment as the newest members of Gibbs' team.

Chapter 37
Washington, Navy Yard
NCIS headquarters

Just over twenty-four hours earlier, Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles walked onto a near-empty third floor, expecting to get some answers about the man who regressed from harassing to stalking to threatening Maura.

From then to now, they met an NCIS agent who looked almost exactly like a younger Maura; found out who the man was; why his continued threats made it necessary for them to indefinitely stay away from their native Boston; and had the truth about their relationship revealed to a growing circle of strangers, comrades, family and friends, both old and new.

Now, Jane and Maura were on the second day of their strange, unexpected sojourn.

"I wonder how this day is gonna turn out," Jane said to Maura, as they stood, on the third floor of NCIS HQ, outside the bullpen of the Major Case Response Team, next to the windows facing the Navy Yard.

"Why are you such a Gloomy Gus?" Maura replied, noticing Jane's mixed sad and stoic facial expression.

"A gloomy what?" Jane said.

"Gloomy Gus."

"What's a gloomy Gus," Jane said, her right arm crossing her chest, her hand grasping her left arm.

"A gloomy Gus is a term Kate taught me," Maura said. "She told me while you went to the vending machine that you looked like a 'gloomy Gus'. The official dictionary definition is 'a person with a sullen, unhappy appearance or demeanor; a person with a pessimistic outlook'. Its origins come from a 1937 comic strip character created by the American cartoonist Frederick Burr-"

Jane flashed a partly-fake, partly-sarcastic grin at her partner.

"Hey! Look at me! Now I'm Joyful Jane!" she said, spreading her arms and jumping around - getting the attention of her brother, Frankie, and Agent Kate Todd, watching from the bullpen - before reverting to her gloomy Gus demeanor.

"You can't be a gloomy Gus forever," Maura replied. "Did you know, that a 2003 study at Boston Cambridge University found that women in their 30s who had a perpetually negative and - dare I say..."
- pessimistic outlook lived five to 10 percent shorter lives than women with a positive, optimistic outlooks."

Jane responded with an expression that looked to Maura like a sad puppy who knew she would never, ever go home again.

Over in the bullpen, Frankie quickly made his way from the main monitor, heading towards Jane; Kate put her hand on his arm, causing him to stop.

"Officer," Kate said, "give them a few minutes."

"She's upset," Frankie replied. "And she's my sister-"

"You'll get your chance to talk with her," Kate responded. "And Dr. Isles."

"Yeah...I know," Frankie said, looking at Jane and Maura. "My sister, Jane...and Dr. Isles...my sister in law?"

"So stop being a gloomy Gus," Maura told Jane, "and start being Joyful Jane, the same wonderful, funny, determined, amazing woman I've known, who I chose to be my lifelong best friend forever, and my partner in life."

Maura took her hand to life Jane's chin, causing the detective to smile.

"Now give me a hug," Maura told her. And the two women embraced, and held each other tight.

"Oh my gosh," Frankie said, looking on. "I...I gotta...agent Todd they're gonna make out."

"They're not going to 'make out'," Kate replied, rolling her eyes, her hand on her hip. "Give them their privacy."

Jane and Maura pulled out of their hug, just enough to gaze into each other's eyes.

"Jane," Maura said softly. "I love you."

"I love you too," Jane said, stroking Maura's cheek. "Promise me you won't leave me here by myself."

"Now why would I do that," Maura replied, brushing the hair from Jane's face. "We're in this together."

Jane and Maura gazed into one another's eyes, their faces coming closer and closer.

"Oh god, they're gonna make out!" Frankie said, with his eyes wide open and mouth agape.

"Omigod, they're gonna make out," Kate replied.

Even agent Tim McGee - busy on three different projects - notice the couple near the windows.

Kate saw McGee walk towards her desk, with the same look of shock and embarassment he had a few months before, when Kate caught him underneath her desk repairing her computer's connection to the building's network.

"Thank god DiNozzo's not here to see this," Kate muttered to herself.

"A-a-agent Todd?" McGee stuttered, as Maura and Jane leaned in closer to one another, apparently
oblivious to everyone else on the floor. "They-they're going to-

"They're gonna make out," Frankie replied to Kate, then putting his hands over both eyes. "I'm...I ain't **ready** for this yet. Seeing my own sister make out. With **anyone**. I can't look."

With McGee standing in embarrassment and Frankie hiding behind his hands, Kate - barely noticing the familiar ding of the elevator in the background - resigned herself to being the one to stop the couple from making any more of a scene than they already had. She stepped out from her desk.

"Playing peek-a-boo, Officer Rizzoli?"

The booming voice of Kate's boss, Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs, walking over from the elevator, both surprised and relieved her.

Jane and Maura heard it; Maura continued to smile brightly, holding on to Jane and looking at her, while Jane slowly realized what was going on.

Jane looked over at the bullpen, and saw her brother with his hands over his face; McGee standing, his face bright red; Kate trying to look inconspicuous; and Gibbs looking impassively at her and Maura.

"Officer," Gibbs said to Frankie.

"UhnosiragentGibbs," Frankie said, standing up straight. "Justobserving."

"McGee!" Gibbs said to his probationary agent. "The search on T. Pike."

"Uh, uh, I have it on my computer and all I need to do is put it on the monitor," he said, rushing over to his desk.


"They're on the scene of the wreck, waiting on Ducky to arrive," she replied.

"Detective Rizzoli. Dr. Isles," Gibbs said, motioning for them both to walk over.

Jane fully noticed everyone looking at her and Maura, who had her face in Jane's shoulder.

"Maura...Maura...Maura!" Jane whispered - loudly. Maura, too, fully realized that everyone's attention was on them both, and broke the embrace.

"New assignments," Gibbs said, "for my newest team members."

"New assignments?" Maura asked as she walked over to Gibbs, with Jane rushing behind, and Frankie still looking on in shock.

"Detective Rizzoli," Gibbs said, handing her a badge. "Congratulations. Liaison from the Boston Police Department to NCIS."

Jane looked at her badge and I.D. "Wow...thanks," she said.

"And you, Dr. Isles," Gibbs said to Maura, handing her an I.D. "Liaison from the Office of the Medical Examiner to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to NCIS. Congratulations to you, too."

"Thank you, agent Gibbs," Maura said.
"You'll have paperwork to fill out later," Gibbs said. "Right now, get downstairs, both of you. Ducky and Palmer are waiting in the van. Jane, you'll help Stan and Paula investigate the wreck; dead Navy Lieutenant. Maura, you'll help Ducky and Palmer with the bodies."

"Bodies?" Jane said.

"Three at least," Gibbs said. "Two more in the hospital. Jane, Maura, crime scene shouldn't take all that long. You'll be back in time for the noon meeting upstairs at MTAC. Now...what are you standing around for?"

Gibbs pointed towards the back elevator.

"Kate," Gibbs said. "Take them down to Ducky and Palmer, then get back up here. And Officer Rizzoli; you want to observe? Then observe. Go with them."

"Yes sir," Frankie said.

"And remember what I said this morning," Gibbs said, quietly, though Jane could hear him. "Detective. Tell agent Burley to report back to me when you arrive."

"Yes Gibbs," Jane said, as she, Maura and Frankie followed Kate to the back elevator, which would take them to the van that Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard and his assistant, Jimmy Palmer, were waiting for them in.
Chapter 38

Chapter Summary

In which Jane and Maura go out to their first official NCIS crime scene (albeit with Burley and Cassidy, not the main team), and Maura and Ducky get into it with the county medical examiner over the bodies of two dead Naval officers.

Chapter 38

The Navy Yard, Washington

Jimmy Palmer drove the NCIS Emergency Response Van, as he always did on the Major Case Response Team's cases, to the crime scene in Arlington.

On this particular occasion, however, Gibbs and Palmer's official supervisor, Dr. Donald "Ducky" Mallard, put Boston police officer Frankie Rizzoli - and a map - in the front seat next to Palmer.

"Mr. Palmer has a tendency to get lost," Ducky told Frankie shortly before they left the Navy Yard. "I want you to help him find his way to our particular crime scene, and quickly."

"What about Jane and Maura and you, Doctor?" Frankie asked.

"There are places we can sit in the back," Ducky told him. "I want to get more acquainted with Dr. Isles, since she and I will be working together, and with your sister, since she will be one of our agents...I realize, Officer, you are anxious to speak with Jane, and with Maura, but at the moment I need you to help Mr. Palmer find our destination and on time."

As the NCIS van made its way across the Potomac, Ducky - sitting in the back with Jane and Maura - could hear Frankie directing Palmer, step by step. Maura had given Ducky a very brief work history, while Jane listened in, sitting on a folding chair.

"You sure this thing doesn't have a seat belt?" Jane said.

"Although Mr. Palmer usually needs assistance with directions, I assure you he does not have what one might call a lead foot, nor is he a dangerous driver," Ducky told Jane.

"I do realize it is a bit crowded here in the back" - Ducky sat on a bench, while Maura sat next to Jane on another folding chair in the narrow aisle - "and there is a reason agent Gibbs wanted your brother up front instead of me."

"Because he doesn't want us to talk too soon," Jane replied, speaking of her and Frankie.

"I would guess, Jane, that Agent Gibbs doesn't want you and Frankie arguing before we get to this crime scene, or during, or after," Maura said.

"Yeah," Jane responded, "because you know I'm...we're...all he's gonna want to talk about."

"Perhaps," Ducky said. "There is, of course, a time and a place, as the saying goes, for such a discussion. It will come later, though; I understand you two will ride back with Agents Burley and
Cassidy. Frankie will ride back with us."

"So we don't argue on the way back," Jane said.

"There is that meeting with Lt. Cavanaugh at NCIS later this afternoon," Maura said. "What Gibbs is doing makes sense, though I don't believe Frankie would do anything that reflects badly on the department."

"I'm kinda glad he's here, and not Tommy," Jane said of her other brother. "Tommy doesn't have to worry about Boston PD's 'reputation' -" 

"Jane, didn't you tell me that Tommy isn't as judgmental as you and Frankie?" Maura asked.

"Maura! I didn't say that!" Jane said.

"Jane! Maura! Dr. Mallard!" Frankie said from the front seat. "We're two blocks from the scene."

"Thank you, Officer Rizzoli," Ducky said. "It appears we will be at the scene momentarily."

"Maura! I didn't say judgmental," Jane told Maura. "I said...he, and me both, are more judgmental than Tommy."

"And how is that different than 'Tommy is not as judgmental as Frankie and I'?"

"Alright alright...you got me. I said me and Frankie are more judgmental than Tommy, okay?...Tommy accepts everybody, Maura."

"Yes he does," Maura replied. "He's not going to have a problem with us, and I think he'll help when it comes time to talk with Angela."

"I know," Jane said, as the van came to a stop, and Palmer turned off the engine. "Maur, I hope I'm wrong about Frankie."

**Pentagon City, just southwest of the Pentagon, in Arlington, Virginia**

Three vehicles rested in the intersection of South Hayes Street and 12th Street South, right in front of Best Buy, and it was a mess.

NCIS agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy were already on the scene, along with uniformed officers and detectives from Arlington County Police Department and the United States Pentagon Police.

Jane, Maura and Ducky piled out the back - all wearing NCIS gear, as did Palmer, and officer Rizzoli (who wore a special 'visiting law enforcement' I.D. badge made up for him by Tim McGee).

The scene was, in essence, a Camry losing a battle with an Expedition and a F-350.

Cassidy was taking pictures of the scene:

* two dead Naval officers in the Camry, which took the brunt of the collision

* the Expedition, which scrunched the front of the Camry and had its front fender torn completely off and its right front and rear doors shot at

* the F-350, which hit the Camry from the back, flipped over, and rested 60 yards from the car and SUV, with bullet holes in its back window
"What a helluva mess," Jane remarked as she and Ducky made their way to Agent Burley.

"Stanley, this is Detective Jane Rizzoli," Ducky said.

"Stan Burley, NCIS," he replied, shaking Jane's hand. "As you two can see, it's a pretty bad wreck. Two dead Navy officers in the car, another dead girl thrown from the truck, the two people in the SUV survived but have been taken to Arlington Central Hospital four blocks away in serious condition."

"What happened?" Jane asked.

"Four eyewitnesses say the Camry, going north and the Expedition going south had the green light; the truck was going west and had a red light," Burley said, as Jane and Ducky followed him towards the scene.

"The eyewitnesses say the truck was being chased by a red car, maybe a Corvette, and was shot at multiple times; the truck hit the Camry, flipped over, and a passenger was thrown out. The car hit the SUV head on."

"Whomever was in the car didn't stand a chance," Jane said.

Frankie ran towards her, Burley and Ducky. "The driver of the truck's awake, sitting in the back of that ambulance," Frankie said. "And he's talking to those detectives, or trying to."

"Let's see if he'll talk to us," Burley said, motioning for Jane and Frankie to follow him.

Meanwhile, Maura and Palmer were investigating the bodies of a Navy Lieutenant and Ensign, along with the medical examiner from Arlington County, Kate Clinton. [1]

"Looks to me like these folks were in the wrong place, wrong time," Dr. Clinton remarked. "Simple open-and-shut case, to me, and I expect I'll find that when I get them to the morgue."

"You realize"—said Ducky, now standing behind Dr. Clinton, to her surprise—"these two men are Naval officers, and therefore under NCIS jurisdiction?"

"You are?" Clinton asked.

"Doctor Donald Mallard, Chief Medical Examiner, NCIS," Mallard said, extending his hand, which Clinton didn't reciprocate. "These people with you—"

"We've met," Clinton said. "Palmer is your assistant, and Isles is from Massachusetts. Chief Medical Examiner or not, you're a long way from Boston, Ms. Isles, and you're in my jurisdiction."

"DOCTOR Isles, Dr. Clinton, and she is working with NCIS, as is Mr. Palmer," Ducky replied, sternly. "While it is true that we are in Arlington County, it is equally true that these two dead men are Navy, and however the prosecution of the case is split up, it is clear they at least are under NCIS jurisdiction, and therefore they'll be heading to my morgue first."

"Dr. Clinton," Maura said, as she and Palmer examined the two dead officers' pupils, "the cause of death may not be as clear cut as you think."

"You mean to tell me they didn't die of a head-on wreck?" Clinton asked, mostly exasperatedly, somewhat sarcastically. "What on Earth killed them then?"

"The wreck probably did kill them, Doctor," Maura said. "But did you look at their pupils at all?"
"Their eyes were closed when I got to their bodies," Clinton said. "What about it?"

"If you had looked at both men's pupils," Maura replied, "you would have noticed dilation."

"Dilation?" Clinton replied.

"The driver, the Lieutenant, and his passenger both have dilated pupils," answered Maura, who proceeded to briefly describe the numerous causes of dilated pupils.

"You think they were poisoned or something, Isles?" Clinton asked.

"I would need toxicology reports, and a full autopsy, to confirm such a hypothesis," Maura said.

"What's your best guess?"

"I do not guess."

"Huh?"

"I do not guess, I do not leap to conclusions, I do not speculate, I do not theorize," Maura said to Clinton. "I make my determination based on the evidence. At this point, I can say that both of these bodies have dilated pupils consistent with some degree of drugs, alcohol, and/or poison, and to render a proper diagnosis will require blood tests as well as a full autopsy."

"And you're supposed to be THE Chief Medical Examiner of the state of Massachusetts."

"The Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and I do not understand what my status as Chief Medical Examiner has to do with-"

"I," Ducky interrupted, "am THE Chief Medical Examiner of NCIS, Doctor Clinton. Dr. Isles' point, is that the dilation indicates the possibility of some type of impairment. We of course will not be able to confirm what it is and to what degree until we run tests and perform a proper autopsy."

"And these two bodies are those of officers of the United States Navy, which means they are going to the Navy Yard, where our forensics specialist will do a full toxicology report, and where I, Mr. Palmer and DOCTOR Isles will administer the autopsy. Of that you don't have to guess, you can rest assured. Are we clear, Dr. Clinton?"

"Of...uh...I-" Clinton stormed off, in a huff.

Twenty minutes later, another NCIS van arrived, to transport the bodies of the dead lieutenant and ensign; Ducky rode with its driver back to the Navy Yard, Clinton protesting (in vain) while finding her Pinto to follow them.

Palmer drove the first NCIS van back to the Yard with Frankie riding along, while Jane and Maura got a ride with Paula in Stan's car.

[1] original character.
The latest chapter of RI&K goes to the Office of Special Projects in Los Angeles, where we recheck in with the team - including Leon Vance, Lara Macy, G Callen, Sam Hanna and Nate Getz - and meet its newest recruit: Kensi Blye. Leon also discusses Gibbs and Rizzoli & Isles with NCIS Asst. Director Jenny Shepard.

Chapter 39
Los Angeles
NCIS Office of Special Projects

Around sunrise local time, operations manager Leon Vance woke up on the cot in his office; called his wife; showered in the Office of Special Projects facilities; dressed; and went back to his office, to call his wife and kids, who were at home eating an early breakfast.

Vance loved Jackie, and Jared and Kayla, and hated to be away from them any more than he had to. Especially the day before Thanksgiving.

But the threat of Ari Haswari trumped everything.

Vance almost certainly wouldn't be able to get away from OSP today, and perhaps not for the next several days; today was the kickoff of the NCIS operation to find and take down Haswari.

As two of his agents showered and dressed, and the rest of his team slowly filed back into the building's Ops Center, Vance placed a couple of phone calls.

One, to the Assistant Director of NCIS, Jenny Shepard, discussing her role in the operation, and some unexpected news out of Washington.

"You mean to tell me that Gibbs not only is protecting one of the women on Haswari's list, he hired that woman and her partner as part of his team?" Vance asked, incredulously.

"That particular woman from the list is the head medical examiner for Massachusetts, and her partner is a Boston police detective," Jenny replied.

"So he happens to get some use out of them in the process," Leon said. "I can only imagine what my team will have to say about that."

"Jethro seems to think it's the best way to 'protect' them," she replied, "and Morrow signed off on it."

"It's reckless," Vance said, "and I'll tell him that myself. It'll make my team's job much harder, Jenny."

"That's not your only option, Leon."

"I'm keeping all my options open. None of them involve placing my team nor his and certainly not the people he professes to protect in any unnecessary danger," replied Vance, now angered at the
news about Gibbs' team.

And, thinking of one of his options: kidnapping Gibbs; his agent, Kate Todd – the sister of OSP agent Juliana Todd; Jane Rizzoli; and Maura Isles.

That would mean going over Morrow's head to appeal to SecNav, and potentially putting his own job at risk.

He thought if it came to that, Jenny would back him up, even though she once worked with Gibbs in Paris and was in a relationship with him.

Jenny, unknown to Gibbs (as far as Vance knew), had a key role to play in the early stage of the operation: contacting Ari's half-sister and supposed control officer, Ziva David. The contact was supposed to go down that afternoon, somewhere in Virginia.

Vance's other call was to Israel. He attempted to reach the new director of the nation's Mossad agency, Eli David – Ari's father.

Leon and Eli had a history, having been involved in a case in Amsterdam; Eli attempted to have Vance killed, his rationale being that Vance was expendable. Despite that 'unfortunate incident', Eli and Vance were and had been, to an extent, friends.

Again, however, where Ari Haswari was involved, all bets were off.

Perhaps, Leon mused, as he kept being passed from flunkie to flunkie, that was why Eli was 'unavailable' at the moment.

While Leon finished up some paperwork, his Senior Agent, G Callen, was raiding the refrigerator in the OSP's kitchen for something to eat.

"Bologna. Cheese," Callen griped, as psychologist Nate Getz wandered in to fill up his coffee mug.
"Not even any mayo, mustard, Miracle Whip…where are all those muffins and donuts at?"

"Mmm... donkno," Nate mumbled, chewing on a piece of a chocolate donut, and pointing towards the Ops Center. "Lllkoutther."

"Thanks, Nate," Callen said. "Leave any for me?" Nate shrugged.

When Callen found his way to the Ops Center, he found Vance; Special Agent in Charge Lara Macy; fellow agents Sam Hanna, Juliana Todd, Lauren Hunter and Mike Renko; technical specialist and junior intelligence analyst Eric Beale waiting for him. Nate followed in shortly afterwards.

All, even Vance, were eating muffins, donuts - or both.

Watching off to the side was a potential recruit: a young woman named Kensi Blye, a very recent graduate of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) in Georgia.

"You eat bologna and cheese for breakfast?" Juliana asked Callen.

"That's all I found. Somebody finished off the muffins and donuts," Callen replied, looking around, starting with her, and then his friend and partner, Sam Hanna.

"G, you know I don't eat donuts," Sam said.

"You're eating one muffin and have two more in your hand. Renko, Julie, you each have two donuts. So somebody hand one over."
"Alright...since we feel sorry for you, though that sandwich isn't gonna keep you from starving," said Julie, as she and Sam handed over a donut and muffin.

"Now that we know you won't pass out from lack of food, Mr. Callen," Vance said, "let's get down to business. In three hours we are going to discuss with Washington and New York the Ari Haswari operation.

"For those of you who were concerned about the Washington field team taking the lead" - Vance looked at Julie, then at Macy, Callen and Hanna - "rest assured; OSP has the lead. New York, San Diego and Norfolk will assist; Washington will be involved as well."

"Although some of Washington's people are his targets," Hunter said. "Shouldn't they all be in protective custody?"

"As long as Ari and his people continue to keep their distance and allow Gibbs and his people to work, the director and FBI agree they can continue to work," Vance told Hunter, and the team. "You can't keep Gibbs out of the loop completely, anyway, as long as he believes he and his people can assist. Director Morrow and Assistant Director Shepard both assure me neither he nor his people will act in any way that is detrimental to the operation."

"What everybody here's really concerned about is that Gibbs will go rogue," Hanna said. "Which is what he started to do before Morrow pulled him in:"

"After that asshole Haswari kidnapped my sister," Julie said.

"Mace, you prosecuted the guy; G, you served with him. What do you two think?"

"I investigated him, Sam," Macy replied, and everyone on the team knew the reason; while doing background on Gibbs in their preliminary work in the Haswari operation, Hanna and Hunter found that Macy investigated Gibbs as the prime suspect in the murder of Mexican drug runner Pedro Hernandez.

They took the information to Callen, then to Vance, who took it to Morrow.

Officially, Macy's investigation went nowhere, with virtually no evidence to support the charges.

Unofficially, Macy buried the evidence, which the team - and Morrow - were fully aware of.

The reason everyone looked the other way, of course, was that Hernandez was behind the deaths of Gibbs' wife and daughter.

And Gibbs himself was aware of what Macy had done, and that OSP, and Morrow, supported it.

And they all knew Macy didn't really like to talk about the matter.

"He'll do what he thinks is right," Macy said. "Especially when it involves his family."

"G?" Hanna asked Callen, who worked with Gibbs in Serbia and in Moscow - and had his life saved by the man during a mission in Serbia. "You probably know the guy more than anyone else here."

"I agree with Mace," Callen replied, "and I also agree that he won't screw up an NCIS operation just to screw it up. But if Ari goes after his team and his family..."

"All bets are off," Juliana said.

"How's that any different than us?" Renko asked. "We're family ourselves. Some crazy ass terrorist
goes after one of us, we all take it personally and go after the guy as a team. Looks like Gibbs is doing the same thing for his own people."

As the OSP discussed the case, Vance split off and made his way to Blye.

"As you can see, Ms. Blye, this isn't exactly a standard mission," Vance said. "In fact, it's one of the biggest any team in the agency has ever tackled. We may be able to use you right away...assuming you're still interested in working for OSP?"

"Is that a job offer?" Blye asked.

"It is," Vance said. "Ms. Macy and Mr. Callen have signed off on it. I know San Diego, Pearl Harbor, and Okinawa have offered you positions as field agent; I also know OSP offers you much more what you're looking for than a conventional field office. So...what do you say?"

Blye looked him in the eye, and stuck out her hand.

"I accept," the young woman told him.

"Congratulations," Vance said, handing her a badge and I.D., identifying her as a probationary field agent. "I'll introduce you to the rest of the team."

Kensi followed Vance.

"Everyone. This is Kensi Blye. She just graduated from FLET-C, and is the daughter of a Marine. She's also our newest member, as a probationary field agent. Kensi: Special Agent in Charge, Lara Macy; Senior Field Agent G Callen; Special Agents Sam Hanna, Lauren Hunter, Mike Renko, Juliana Todd. Eric Beale, technical specialist and junior intelligence analyst; and, our team psychologist, Nate Getz."

After handshakes were exchanged, Vance continued.

"We're putting her to work," he told the team. "She will be part of the operation, and I'm putting her and Juliana together for an important part of it that we will discuss in a few hours: undercover work, monitoring the Major Case Response Team in Washington, D.C."
Chapter 40

Chapter Summary

A very long - and late - update for RI&K.

Chapter 40 is set in Boston, at Boston PD Homicide.

In Boston, four of Charles Hoyt’s victims are dredged out of their watery grave, just before T. Pike and Lt. Sean Cavanaugh get into a lengthy, loud and angry argument over Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles and over Pike’s actions of the previous few hours; five of Ari Haswari’s operatives are found to be imbedded at Boston PD and one presents a potential threat to Angela; Angela overhears Pike talking about Jane and Maura - and is disturbed by the implications; a reporter Pike spoke to is discovered to be a terrorist.

With bonus cameos by characters from Crossing Jordan and Criminal Minds.

Boston

"We found something!"

Overnight, Boston Homicide received two anonymous emails regarding serial killer Charles Hoyt, and his connection to a cold case involving a family which disappeared six years before.

The Wilsons and two of their children were last seen dropping off their eldest son for his first semester at Boston College. According to the anonymous emailer, Hoyt claimed they were resting at the bottom of a pond near Westgate Park.

The FBI confirmed to Homicide's head, Lt. Det. Sean Cavanaugh, that the information was legit, obtained by an 'operative' in the prison where Hoyt was being held.

Cavanaugh signed off on investigating the pond, wondering if Hoyt was sending Boston PD on a wild goose chase - and hoping there wasn't anything down there.

He placed a call to Detective Vince Korsak, on the scene at the pond with Detective Barry Frost and the recovery team.

"Korsak," Cavanaugh said. "They find anything?"

Korsak and Frost were watching the team pull a car out of the pond.

"Yes sir," Korsak responded. "There was a car. It's being pulled out of the pond now...at first glance, it matches the make and model of the Wilsons' automobile...Frost, go over there and take a look."

"Keep me on the line," Cavanaugh said, as Korsak followed Frost to the excavated car.

Once the water drained out of the car, it took only moments for both detectives to see the four skeletons inside.
"Four bodies, Lieutenant," Korsak said. "Looks like two adult-sized skeletons in the front...and...two child-sized skeletons in the back."

"Let's get that car here to the garage," Cavanaugh told Korsak. "And those bodies to the morgue. I'll tell Pike they're on the way."

As the car was hooked up to a tow truck, Frost and Korsak more closely examined the bodies.

"You alright, Frost?" Korsak asked, knowing Frost was squeamish around dead bodies.

"I'll manage," Frost said, although his expression suggested he'd rather be anywhere else other than the morgue. "I don't see any gunshot wounds, any stab wounds."

"M.E. will have to confirm the cause of death," Korsak answered. "These bodies are remarkably preserved for being in the pond for so long."

"Dr. Isles would have an answer for that," Frost said. "You sure we can't bring her back? Or at least ship these bodies down to Washington?"

"You know the answer; she and Jane are both down there for awhile," Korsak said. "And the bodies are going to the morgue...and Pike."

"That makes me nervous," Frost replied.

"You and me both," Korsak answered.

"Hey...isn't Dr. Isles still, technically, the M.E. of the Commonwealth?"

"Why, yes, but-

"But though she can't leave Washington and we probably can't send the bodies down there, is there a way she can still do an examination."

"How?" Korsak asked Frost, as they watched the bodies being loaded into the medical examiners' van.

"Wi-fi. Web cameras," Frost answered. "This whole...deal Jane and Dr. Isles are involved in is unprecedented. If there aren't any laws against it, I can set up a stream for Dr. Isles to look at the bodies, from NCIS."

"Frost," Korsak said, "excellent idea. I'll raise it with Cavanaugh when we get back. You work on setting up the connection."

"What about Pike?" Frost asked, as he and Korsak walked back to Korsak's car. "He's gonna be pissed."

"Let him," Korsak said. "We can make a case for Dr. Isles' judgment being superior to Pike's, and if Pike protests that would mean he is interfering with the investigation in a detrimental manner..."

"And, maybe, remove him from his position," Frost said.

"I didn't say that," Korsak said, the proverbial wheels turning in his head as he mused how to spin this to his supervisor.

**Boston Police Department, downtown**

**Homicide Division**
"And I had everyone - well, everyone from Dr. Isles' team - watching over her things since."

Susie Chang, senior criminalist on Dr. Maura Isles' team, debriefed Cavanaugh about Pike having his people move Maura's things out of her own office, replacing them with Pike's things.

"Do you know where the son-of-where 'Doctor' Pike is right now, Ms. Chang?" Cavanaugh asked.

"Somewhere in the building is all we can nail down," Susie replied. "Charlie said he saw Pike talking to a couple of reporters-

"REPORTERS?" Cavanaugh yelled. "REPORTERS-I'm sorry, Ms. Chang, I'm not yelling at you...why in hell would he be talking to the press?"

"I...I don't know," Susie replied.

"See what you and the rest of Dr. Isles' team can find out," Cavanaugh said, as his phone rang. "Excuse me."

Cavanaugh picked up. It was Stanley from the cafe.

"Stanley?...Pike's there? Saying what...WHAT?!...find a uniform, a detective, I don't care who, hold them until I get down there myself...and tell them NOT to let Angela overhear any of it!"

Down at the Division One Cafe, near the front entrance to the building, Stanley - who had ran the cafe for just under two months - saw Pike babbling on to a uniform, gossiping about Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles.

Stanley rounded up two uniforms and Detective Roz Framus [1], and told them what Cavanaugh told him; they then moved in on Pike, ordering him to wait. When Pike began yelling about Jane, Maura and Provincetown, Framus clamped her hand tight over Pike's mouth, trying in vain to prevent Pike from creating any more of a scene than he already had.

When Cavanaugh arrived, Pike elbowed Roz in the ribs and started yelling "JANE! MAURA! PROVINCE TOWN!"

"Get the bastard up to my office!" Cavanaugh told Roz and the three uniformed officers, sternly.

"WHERE ARE JANE AND-MMMMPPPPPFFF!"

"Why don't you simmer down," Roz said, strapping a strip of duct tape over Pike's mouth from a roll Stanley had tossed her way.

Admirt the commotion, Stanley tried to keep Angela preoccupied - ordering her to the stock room - and thought he had kept her from hearing any of Pike's ranting.

Just before Stanley got the call from Cavanaugh, however, Angela was out front working the counter.

At a nearby table, Pike started up a conversation with a customer, asking if she knew a lesbian couple by the names of Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles, that he heard they were on their honeymoon in Provincetown.

Angela had heard plenty.

After Pike was led out of the cafe, and Stanley left the stock room, she thought about what Pike had just said, and all that had gone on in the past day, and began softly crying.
Then she slipped out, and called her son, Tommy, at Maura's house.

**Lt. Det. Cavanaugh's office**

"Roz! Keep that son of a bitch outside until I'm ready for him!", Cavanaugh ordered Detective Framus; she stood outside his office with Pike, the duct tape firmly over his mouth.

Cavanaugh called his contact at the FBI: Agent Daniel Todd. [2]

"Agent Todd?...we found the car. Four bodies; the car should be in the garage anytime, and the bodies are on their way to the morgue...okay...Hoyt what? He wants to talk with Jane?...well that's obviously not going to be possible...how is Hoyt?...CIA guy's guarding him?...Hoyt's stable?...let me know if it changes...we can have your agents examine the car, and if you like have them in the morgue when our M.E. examines the body...the examination might be delayed somewhat...I'll tell you more when I can...thanks."

Ending the phone call to Daniel Todd, Cavanaugh yelled for Roz to bring Pike into his office.

She stripped off the tape, and Pike began screaming like a lunatic.

"THIS-YOU TAPEd MY MOUTH SHUT WITHOUT MY CONSENT-YOU BROKE LAWS-THIS WILL NOT STAND-"

"Shut. The. Hell. UP." Cavanaugh said, not with a yell, but loudly enough to be overhead by everyone nearby, including Detectives Korsak and Frost, who had just arrived from the pond.

"I AM NOT shutting the hell up!" Pike answered, as Framus and a uniform stood to either side of him. "I was accosted by your officers and your detective minding my own business and I DEMAND an answer-"

"You were running your damn mouth-" Cavanaugh interjected.

"I was minding my OWN business-"

"You've been away from your office-"

"I was merely catching up with old and new friends alike-"

"You were gossiping about two of my own people-"

"So THAT'S WHAT THAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT. RIZZOLI AND ISLES-"

"Quiet DOWN, Pike. Or I'll quiet you down myself-"

"Oh you will Cavanaugh? You've broken numerous rules already and I can have your job just LIKE THIS" - Pike snaps his fingers - "and I will after I call my lawyer-"

"Your LAWYER?"

"-but before I do, I demand answers of my own."

"Answers of your own?" Cavanaugh said, stepping out from behind his desk, walking straight up to Pike.

"Yes. Answers," Pike said calmly, before descending into a louder and louder rant. "I, sir, am the NEW Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of MASSACHUSETTS and there is NOTHING
you will do about it? Got it? The governor has MY back. It is the position I RIGHTFULLY
DESERVE and have. As far as the charges of gossip, I was merely talking to people."

Frost and Korsak, overhearing the rant, moved from their desks right outside Cavanaugh's door.

Pike was on a roll.

"However, I did ask those I spoke with about the status of your Detective and the woman who
formerly held my own job," Pike said, slickly.

"Your job? She was and still IS the Medical Examiner," Cavanaugh retorted. "You're the interim
M.E."

That set Pike off.

"INTERIM," Pike screamed, at the top of his lungs. "RIZZOLI AND ISLES. RIZZOLI AND ISLES.
ALL I HEAR. WHERE ARE THEY, LIEUTENANT? DID THEY FINALLY GET MARRIED?
ARE THEY OFF, PAID BY THE STATE, TO HONEymoon in PROVINCETOWN? I
KNEW IT...WE ALL KNEW IT-"

Cavanaugh grabbed Pike by the collar, pushed him towards the back of his office, and shoved him
up against the wall.

"Lieutenant!" Framus yelled.

"SHUT UP you son of a BITCH!" Cavanaugh yelled.

"I knew it," Pike smirked. "Two dykes-"

"Watch your mouth, Pike."

"TWO DYKES...TWO DYKES...JANE AND MAURA ARE DYKES-"

Cavanaugh grabbed Pike by the throat with one hand, and clamped his over hand over Pike's mouth.

"You shut the f*** up and you listen to me," Cavanaugh said, as Korsak and Frost burst in.

"While you were out running your mouth all over the department, and your people were laying
around doing nothing except remove Dr. Isles' belongings out of her own office without permission-
"

"MY office, Cavanaugh-" Pike said, after Cavanaugh removed his palm to hold him up against the
wall.

"PIKE!" Cavanaugh continued. "You may be the acting M.E. of the commonwealth. You are not
the official M.E. and the status of Rizzoli and Isles does not excuse your actions-"

"My actions, sir?" Pike replied. "YOU duct-taped ME. YOU are holding ME in a way that would
get your badge removed. I WILL get your badge removed. I WILL get you sued. AND YOU WILL
TELL ME WHERE JANE AND MAURA ARE HONEymoonING-"

"SHUT UP!" Cavanaugh yelled, as Frost, Framus and Korsak separated he and Pike.

"You spread those rumors about Jane and Maura knowing they're lies!" Cavanaugh said, through
clenched teeth.
"Are they?" Pike smirked, as Korsak's cell phone rang. "I know you're trying to remove me - I know about your cousin Jordan - and I will add THAT to my list of complaints, nepotism. Interference. Call the Governor. NOW. He'll set you straight...no pun intended, and no disrespect to your detective and the woman who kept me out of my rightful position."

"Lieutenant," Korsak said. "It's an agent Todd from the FBI. Says he tried to call your cell and your desk in the past few minutes, no response, he called my cell."

Cavanaugh took the cell from Korsak.

"Cavanaugh."

"Lieutenant," Pike said, from his cell, as he found a parking spot near the Boston PD downtown building. "Is T. Pike in the building?"

"You could say that," Cavanaugh said, looking at the man.

"Tell Cavanaugh I'm going to be busy today," Pike said in the background, "and he nor his people are to bother me. If something's down there, I'll get to it Monday."

"You need to find him and put him in custody," Todd said. "He is now a person of interest by the FBI. We've been tailing him for some time, and we know he was spreading rumors about Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles. We also know that Ari Haswari has people imbedded in your department and with Pike's team. We believe that Pike may have passed on information about them to Ari's operatives and we want to question him."

Cavanaugh motioned at Frost and Framus.

"Take him into custody," Cavanaugh ordered, "and keep him quiet. I'm talking with the Feds."

"THE FEDS? WHO?" Pike screamed. "THIS IS BULLSHIT! I WANT MY LAWYER-"

"Frost! Framus! Put the bastard in a holding cell!"

"Sir?" Frost asked.

"Just do it," Cavanaugh ordered. Frost and Framus literally drug Pike out of Cavanaugh's office, and two uniforms were needed to put the angry M.E. into a cell.

"Sir?" Korsak asked Cavanaugh, as Pike was being taken down the hall. "What...what in hell is going on?"

"In a few minutes, Vince," he replied. "Agent Todd."

"We've been monitoring T. Pike since he placed a call to an operative of Haswari's last night," Todd said. "Pike promised him a job on his team, and the operative should be there right now. He answers to Andy Ramin, but his real name is Abdul Hasim, and he has ties to Hamas."

"Good God," Cavanaugh said.

"There's another suspect, too: posing as a uniformed officer. Stephen Pharris. White male, blonde, 5-10, 180. Knows Ramin, and we've seen them together before with other suspected operatives."

"How recently?"

"Last week. We've just learned the meeting they went to included a man known as Ahmed Hashid,
who's worked with Haswari in Israel. Hashid is a specialist in kidnapping-"

"What?"

"-a specialist in kidnapping family members and associates of people Hamas wants to eliminate or get close to," Todd continued. "Jane Rizzoli's mother works in your building, correct?"

"The cafe-VINCE! Get to the cafe-secure Angela."

"Secure Angela? Sir?"

"That's an order! Follow me."

Cavanaugh - his ear glued to Korsak's cell phone, Todd on the line - and Korsak ran down the stairs to the Division One Cafe.

Just in time to see a uniform escoring Angela out the front door.

"Officer! Officer!" Cavanaugh yelled. The officer turned around; Korsak and Cavanaugh both recognized him as Stephen Handley, on the force for three years.

Officer Handley explained he was going to escort Angela back to Maura's home.

"There's something...something I need to talk with my son about, personally," Angela said, insisting she be allowed to go home.

"I'm sorry, Angela but we need to keep you here for the moment," Cavanaugh said.

Over her protests, Korsak escorted Angela up to Homicide, where she sat at Jane's desk - under guard.

Frost and Framus were waiting for Cavanaugh there.

"Angela," Cavanaugh said, quietly, "I'll tell you everything I can but I need you to be patient. Roz, stay with Angela."

Korsak and Frost followed him back into his office; Cavanaugh had Agent Todd hang up and call back on his desk phone.

"Lieutenant," Todd said, resuming the conversation, as the three detectives listened in on speakerphone. "We're trying to find out how many people Haswari has imbedded into Boston PD; we think it's no more than five; the uniformed officer, the member of Pike's team, and three men working in maintenance. Our office is emailing and faxing descriptions now."

"Are they the only ones?" Cavanaugh asked.

"That we know of," Todd replied. "We think they may be part of a bigger network in Boston, one that's involved with a new terrorist network Haswari is part of: the Fighters of God."

"Never heard of those bastards," Cavanaugh said, and Korsak and Frost shrugged their shoulders.

"You wouldn't," Todd said. "Brand new. Looking to make their mark. Long story short, Hamas, Hezbollah and al-Qaeda washed their hands of Ari because of his, ah, tendency to put personal agendas over their own. This FOG group is looking to make their mark and will, ah, abide him."

"How much," Korsak asked.
"Enough to help him with his personal agendas in exchange for his help with a bigger attack on the U.S. homeland," Todd replied. "Including Jane Rizzoli's mother."

"These guys are part of this Fighters of God group?" Frost asked.

"We think so," Todd asked. "I know what it must be like for you, worrying about Detective Rizzoli's mother."

"Do you," Cavanaugh said.

"Yes I do, sir," Todd said. "My sister is one of Ari's prime targets; FBI's had to put my entire family under protection, even one of my other sisters, in Miami."

"You..you're Caitlin Todd's brother?" Korsak asked. "The same Caitlin Todd who's guarding Jane and Dr. Isles?"

"Yes, Detective," Agent Daniel Todd replied.

"Small world," Korsak said.

"Agent Todd," Cavanaugh interrupted. "Is Angela Rizzoli under threat?"

"Yes," Todd said. "We're sending agents over now. Find Pharris, Hasim, and the three maintenance guys and a lot of the threat will disappear. Then we'll be back to where we were last night."

Over the next twenty minutes, Boston PD uniforms and detectives went on a frantic search for the five men.

Pharris was found with another officer on the street and tried to take his partner hostage, only to be flipped over and knocked out after his head hit the sidewalk.

Hasim was found trying to hack Maura Isles' computer, and taken to a separate holding cell before the FBI arrived.

The three maintenance men - two Somalis, one Yemeni - were captured without incident by detectives, uniforms and FBI agents.

All five, and Pike, were taken to the FBI building in Boston for questioning.

The other members of Pike's team were held for questioning by Boston PD, with FBI observing the interrogations; two told Cavanaugh that Pike had spoken with WJZT reporter Tom Martin and a reporter from the Boston Dispatch, Luwanda Carroll, about 'gender discrimination', and that Pike had given information about Jane and Maura to both reporters.

While Frost and Korsak ran background on Carroll, Cavanaugh placed another phone call, to the Governor himself, and placed Todd in on the conversation. Todd and Cavanaugh explained the situation with Pike and with the terrorists to the Governor, who said he would remove Pike "immediately".

The Governor was less obliging when Lt. Cavanaugh requested his cousin Jordan - a former assistant M.E. under Maura's predecessor, Garret Macy - be considered as Maura's replacement.

The Governor merely promised Jordan Cavanaugh would be given due consideration, but that for the purposes of the Wilson autopsy, Dr. Vladmir Papov was now the acting M.E.

As the Governor left the call, Frost and Korsak burst into his office. They were joined by an agent
from the FBI's Boston field office, Emily Prentiss [3], who had accompanied the FBI agents sent to round up Pike and Haswari's men.

"We have a problem," Frost told Cavanaugh.

"Daniel," Prentiss said, "and Lieutenant Cavanaugh. Luwanda Carroll is not who she claimed to be."

"Meaning what?" Cavanaugh said.

"Meaning Luwanda Carroll is actually Neda Hashemi, a former Hezbollah operative involved in actions against U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan."

"Neda Hashemi?" Agent Daniel Todd asked. "Emily...she was last seen at Al Jazeera-

"-imbedding herself at Al-Jazeera's studios," Prentiss said. "She helped Haswari hack into the network, used its facilities as he posed as a reporter."

"For what purpose?" Korsak asked.

"To fish out two of the women on the 'Kate list'," Prentiss replied.

"Pike talked with her," Cavanaugh said. "We need to find out what he told her."

"Lieutenant," Todd replied. "Agents just escorted him in. Get here, I'll meet you out front. We'll do the interrogation personally."

[1] from the NBC TV show Crossing Jordan, introduced a few chapters ago.

[2] original character; the in-verse brother of NCIS agent Caitlin Todd and her in-verse twin sister, Juliana Todd (who works for NCIS's Office of Special Projects in Los Angeles).

[3] from Criminal Minds, before she joined the Behavioral Analysis Unit.
Chapter 41

Chapter Summary

Cavanaugh tells Korsak why he was so riled up by T. Pike, then informs Boston PD Homicide of Jane and Maura's situation and the threat to them; Boston FBI discuss the case and the past threats to Maura (and others); and Tony DiNozzo, Michael Rivkin and Seeley Booth get caught by an unmarked Virginia state trooper while tailing Ziva.

Chapter 41
Boston P.D., downtown

Detective Vince Korsak stopped Lt. Det. Sean Cavanaugh as he locked his office door.

"Detective. I've got business at the FBI," Cavanaugh said.

"Sir. I understand that. What went on in there?" Korsak asked, referring to the argument between Cavanaugh and the now former acting medical examiner, T. Pike. "That's the most I've ever seen you riled up about anything."

"Vince, you hear what that bastard said?" Cavanaugh asked, as Frost walked up to him and Korsak, listening in.

"Yes, and I know what Pike was ranting about and I know what he was doing all over the building," Korsak said. "I think I have to bring up what he was doing: he was asking people questions about Jane and Maura and talking about them."

"Yeah, Vince, Barry, everyone gossips. We gossip. Everyone gets talked about to some degree," Cavanaugh explained. "It's not that he was gossiping, it's who and what he was gossiping about and where it could lead."

A few other detectives and uniforms in the vicinity stopped what they were doing, to listen in on Cavanaugh and Korsak's hushed conversation.

"You didn't seem quite yourself, sir, though I understand why you'd react that way," Frost said. "I'd be the same way."

"Then I shouldn't have to explain it to either of you," Cavanaugh replied.

"Did you react that way because of Jane and Maura?" Frost asked.

"Jane and Maura are in danger," Cavanaugh said. "Pike talking about them made things worse."

"We know that, Lieutenant," Korsak answered. "But we're about the only ones. All people know is that you and Pike got into it over him gossiping."

"That's their problem," Cavanaugh said, dismissively. "Now I've got to get to the FBI."

"Sir?" Frost said. "With all due respect. Before you leave to interrogate Pike. You need to make some kind of announcement."
"Announcement?"

"Tell the department the truth," Korsak replied. "They've heard Pike's side and only his side. Tell them what's really going on."

"Korsak's right, Lieutenant," Roz Framus said. "Some of the other detectives and uniforms are already saying you may have overreacted to Pike."

"Tell them why, sir," Korsak said, "and you'll be back in control of this thing."

Cavanaugh then gathered everyone in Homicide, in the bullpen, and over the next 10 minutes explained Jane and Maura's situation, and why they were under federal protection, and the threat posed by Ari Haswari. Then Cavanaugh promised to answer questions later, that he had an appointment to keep.

As he walked into the elevator, Korsak and Frost followed him in.

"You guys have a case to get to?" Cavanaugh asked.

"There are a couple of other things," Korsak said, as he and Frost explained their idea about Maura looking in on the autopsy of the Wilson family via a live stream.

"You'll have time to set it up, Barry, because apparently Papov's gonna be delayed until tonight," Cavanaugh replied. "Call their people, see what you can do."

"They have an agent McGee who's apparently a tech wiz," Frost said. "I'll contact him when I get back up to the bullpen."

The elevator opened to the first floor, and Frost stayed on, going back up to the Homicide bullpen where he proceeded to email McGee.

"What's the other thing?" Cavanaugh asked, as he walked out of the building to his car.

"Jane's interim replacement," Korsak said. "What about Roz Framus? She's willing to fill in."

"Let me think about it," Cavanaugh replied. "If McGillicutty will cut her loose, and she's willing, it's fine with me."

FBI Boston field office

"Lieutenant Cavanaugh is on his way from Boston P.D.," Agent Jessica Calder told Agent Daniel Todd, as they both walked to Interrogation Room #7.

There, the warden of the prison Charles Hoyt housing convicted killer Charles Hoyt was being interrogated by two of their fellow agents. In the nearby Room #11, Rod Mason - the guard suspected of collaborating with Hoyt - was being interrogated by the agent in charge of the Boston office.

"Pike's in Room #14," Calder said.

"That's on the other side of the building," Todd replied, "and just so happens to take us past the main entrance. We'll wait for Cavanaugh there."

"Daniel, who's handling the Pike interrogation," Calder asked.

"I am," Todd said. "I was going to have Cavanaugh tag-team with me. But our friend in Homicide
sent us a text, saying that Cavanaugh and Pike got into it. I don't want to screw this up, so I'm going to have Cavanaugh observe. I'm sure he has questions, and I'll oblige, but I'll ask them."

"With that trademark Todd family snark?" Calder asked, jokingly. 

"Snark? We're as sweet as honey," Todd said, sarcastically. "Well, maybe my older sister. The twins? Depends on whether you get the conservative or the wild child."

"Oh? Are they nicer than you or Rachel?"

"Oh, Kate and Julie have their special blend of snark," Daniel Todd replied. "But I'm going to give to T. Pike straight up."

As agents Todd and Calder awaited Cavanaugh, Agent Tom Hampton sighted them.

"How's everything at the Isles house?" Todd asked him.

"Peachy," Hampton replied. "Another lovely email to Dr. Isles' work account from 'A Real Informer', full of the same crap."

"Letter?" Calder asked.

"'A Real Informer': A.R.I. short for Ari," Todd said. "Ari's been sending emails to Dr. Isles, and my sisters, and the other women on the Kate list for weeks. In short, he describes what they did the previous day or days, tells them he's watching them, asks them if they've made peace with their god, asks them if life is worth living."

"Most of it's through email," Hampton added. "Much harder for us to track him that way, than if he sent snail mail."


"Oh my god," Calder replied. "What a creep."

"Dr. Isles got at least two a day," Hampton added. "One day a few weeks ago, she and Detective Rizzoli arrived at her home, to see a note nailed to her door. The contents the same as an email sent to her that morning, written in blood. We're still trying to trace it."

Daniel Todd's cell phone rang. "Excuse me," he said. "I need to take this call. Jessica, keep an eye out for Cavanaugh."

As Calder and Hampton discussed the emails, Todd spoke with Agent Brett Spicer, handing the investigation into Boston Dispatch reporter Luwanda Carroll.

"Her background info is fake," Spicer told him. "Fingerprints correspond to Neda Hashemi."

"The freelance terrorist."

"Now working with this FOG group, apparently," Spicer replied. "You can't fake fingerprints, but they faked everything else. Seattle Western has no record of her ever taking a single credit hour. All her references come up cold-"

"Didn't those newspaper people check out her references?" Todd said, incredulously, and somewhat loudly.
"Not enough," Spicer said. "Her editor says he called all four of them, and spoke with somebody, but when we called we came up with nothing. Three of the numbers were burn phones, the fourth was to a pay phone in Tacoma. Email addresses are throwaways, and didn't even correspond to those used by the organizations the false references were supposed to represent."

"Maybe the editor spoke with Ari's people," Todd mused, before sighting Cavanaugh coming through the main doorway. "Look into it and get back to me. I've got an interrogation to look into."

Virginia

Tony DiNozzo, FBI Agent Seeley Booth and Mossad Officer/Liaison to the FBI Michael Rivkin had been chasing Ziva David for the past few hours.

They were just outside of Fairfax, and Tony couldn't hold his pee in any longer.

So he used the empty plastic Pepsi 2-liter bottle, and hoped the trucker driving next to their car didn't see him and call the cops.

Tony's phone - in the cup holder in the front seat - rang in mid-stream.

"Booth," Tony said. "Get that, wouldya? I'm kinda occupied."

Booth took the phone. "Seeley Booth...yeah, DiNozzo's here...Tony."

Booth held the phone up to Tony's ear, while Rivkin - who was driving - chuckled.

"Boss?"

"DiNozzo. Busy?"

"Kinda, Boss. Trying to keep from spilling it on the carpet going 70 miles an hour...boy is that Ziva a fast driver - hey Rivkin, do me a favor and don't pull any fast moves until I'm done-"

"Like this, Agent DiNozzo?" Rivkin said, then swerving just a tad to his left. "Do not worry. I am certain your aim is true, and I have hand sanitizer."

"DiNozzo!" Gibbs barked, through Tony's phone. "Status report."

"Right boss!" Tony replied. "Boy, I had more in me than I thought. Two-liter's getting full-"

"ZIVA, DiNozzo!"

"RIGHT BOSS!" Tony said, louder; Rivkin and Booth were laughing. "Ziva's going south, and quickly."

"Any idea where?" Gibbs asked.

"Rivkin?" Tony asked Rivkin, who grabbed the cell from Booth's hand (and Tony's face), and put it on speaker.

"Agent Gibbs," Rivkin said. "My guess is she is headed to meet an associate."

"Any idea who?"

"A woman known only as 'Ginger', whom she's contacted before," Rivkin said, as Tony finished his business besides him, looking back and forth between Rivkin and the trucker, who had a cell phone
"Holy caught in the act," Tony muttered, sighting an unmarked police car up ahead.

"Do you know who this woman might be?" Gibbs said.

"Mossad has overheard phone conversations between she and Ziva, all traced to this part of the state of Virginia," Rivkin said.

"You think Ziva's headed to meet with her?" Gibbs said, as Rivkin's car passed the unmarked vehicle, which turned its blue and red lights on moments later.

"Very possibly," Rivkin said. "We intend to find out."

"Keep me in the loop," Gibbs said, "and tell DiNozzo to zip up."

"Right boss," Tony yelled, as the unmarked car pulled right up against Rivkin's back bumper, then pulled alongside his side.

Booth and Rivkin pulled down their side windows, and flashed their badges; the trooper pulled down the passenger side window to talk.

"Pull over!" the trooper ordered.

"Federal agents!" Booth yelled. "We're on pursuit."

"Feds?" the trooper yelled. "Badges."

Booth, Rivkin, and Tony showed their badges.

"We're in pursuit of a suspected terrorist," Booth yelled. "I and the driver are FBI, the passenger is NCIS."

"Trucker back there says your passenger exposed himself."

"He was peeing, and we're on an extended stakeout," Booth yelled. "Pinto up ahead."

"We need to stay with that vehicle," Rivkin yelled, as Ziva's Pinto sped up, quickly gaining distance on Rivkin and the trooper. "IF we lose her-"

"I'm sorry but I need you to pull over," the trooper yelled back.

"Rivkin, we don't have time for Roscoe P. Coltrane," Tony said. "Hey Booth where's the top for this thing?"

"I don't see it," Booth answered.

"You are right, Agent DiNozzo," Rivkin said. "We don't have time for our LEO...so I am going to make like the Duke boys."

With that, Rivkin put the pedal to the floor, speeding up 25 MPH in seconds.

"Booth, I suggest if you have friends with the local law enforcement, you call them now and tell them to tell Roscoe to get off," Rivkin said.

"You mean let up," Tony said, stuffing napkins into the open top of the full two-liter bottle. "AND
TELL THEM TO OVERLOOK THIS

Tony rolled down his window, put the bottle just below the door handle, and let it go, as Rivkin's car reached 90 miles an hour, with Ziva gaining distance and the unmarked Virginia state trooper in hot pursuit.
Chapter 42

Chapter Summary

In Chapter 42, Maura Isles and Ducky Mallard conduct an autopsy - with Jane Rizzoli observing - and Gibbs and Abby Sciuto make an appearance. My take on the banter that one typically sees in the autopsy rooms on NCIS (between Gibbs and Ducky) and Rizzoli & Isles (between Jane and Maura).

Chapter 42

Washington, Navy Yard
NCIS headquarters
Chief Medical Examiner Donald "Ducky" Mallard's office

Dr. Maura Isles was accustomed to having her own office, separate from her morgue, and with windows and open space to boot.

Dr. Donald Mallard's accommodations were different.

At NCIS, his office was the morgue and autopsy room. He kept a desk in the expansive single area away from the slabs; his assistant, Jimmy Palmer, had a smaller desk nearby.

Since Maura was here, with Jane Rizzoli, in Washington for the time being, she was going to have to make do with the same accommodations Ducky had.

By Maura's reckoning, there was quite a bit of room for improvement to be had.

NCIS maintenance had already brought down a desk for her to work at, putting it adjacent to Ducky's desk.

It, she decided, was the most boring, staid, generic wooden desk she had ever laid eyes on; and where would she put her ceremonial tribal masks? And would Dr. Mallard even approve of having them mounted?

She didn't have time, though, at the moment to put anything on the desk, much less to decorate it nor to whine about it to Jane. That would have to wait.

For now, Maura had a job to do: work with Ducky on the examinations of the bodies of the Navy Lieutenant and Ensign, both males, found in a three-way wreck near the Pentagon.

Not that Jane didn't try to get her going.

"Wow, Maur," she said, after walking down with Agent Stan Burley, who was talking with the Arlington County chief medical examiner Kate Clinton nearby. "They didn't give you a big office, did they?"

"They gave me the same accommodations as Dr. Mallard," Maura said - very quietly, as not to let anyone else overhear. "I will make do."
"I can't wait," Jane said, then paused.

"You can't wait for what?"

"To walk down here one day and your death masks are all over the place."

"Jane!" Maura said. "This is not my office. And, they are not 'death' masks. They are ceremonial tribal masks from Africa."

"-representative of the traditional culture and art of various cultures on the so-called 'dark continent'," interjected Dr. Mallard himself. "I could not help but overhear, and I realize, Dr. Isles that our accommodations may not be as expansive as you are used to."

"Dr. Mallard, they are fine," Maura said, somewhat embarrassed at getting caught saying something she rather would have kept to herself (and Jane).

"Dr. Isles, I assure you we will not just 'make do', we will do what we can to make you comfortable, and help you do your job," Ducky replied, in a reassuring tone. "That may include bringing in some of your ceremonial tribal masks to help 'spruce' up this place, which is, I confess, rather grey."

Jane, thinking she got caught dissing Mallard's office, tried to bail herself out.

"Uh, Dr. Mallard, I don't think it's grey at all," she said to the older doctor, as Palmer began gathering the instruments Ducky and Maura would use in cutting open the bodies, and Clinton continued talking with Stan. "There's...lots of light in here and it looks rather...silver."

"Jane!" Maura said under her breath, giving her a 'drop it' glare.

"Sorry," Jane replied. "Maura's morgue doesn't have windows, either." - which earned her another 'look' from Maura.

"Morgues are not intended to be open, welcoming spaces, Detective - or is it Agent? Rizzoli," Ducky answered.

"Liaison from Boston Homicide to NCIS," Jane replied. "I think."

"May I call you Jane?" Ducky asked. "I typically address our agents by their first names. It should avoid the confusion regarding your official status, and I might add it is more pleasing to the ear than 'Liaison'."

"That would be fine, Doctor," Jane said, Maura looking straight at her to make sure Jane answered correctly.

"You may both call me Ducky," Mallard said to Jane and Maura. "As I was saying, the morgue does not serve the same purpose as a funeral home, where people come to remember the deceased and celebrate his or her life. It is a storage area, and here, also a place to conduct an autopsy. The term morgue is derived in part from the word mortuary-"

"-which is itself derived from a 14th century Anglo-French word mortuarie, which refers to a gift to a parish priest from a deceased parishioner," Maura interjected. "Also, from the Latin word mortuus, plural of mon, or 'to die' and from the medieval Latin word mortuarium-"

"Etymology lesson, Ducky?"

Ducky and Palmer were thrown off, but only momentarily, by the man asking the question.
It was Agent Stan Burley, not Special Agent in Charge Jethro Gibbs, interrupting the story or rumination of the medical examiner, in order to get an update on the bodies in Ducky's morgue. He was followed by Kate Clinton, the Medical Examiner of Arlington County, Virginia.

"Stanley," Ducky replied. "I was momentarily thrown off by your voice. I must say you have your Jethro down pat."

"Often imitated, never duplicated," Burley said of Gibbs. "Learn anything yet about our dead lieutenant and ensign?"

"Maura, Mr. Palmer and I were about to begin our examination," Ducky said. "Stanley, Jane and Dr. Clinton, you three are more than welcome to stay and observe."

"Dr. Mallard," Maura replied, turning to Ducky, as Palmer finished gathering and preparing their instruments. "Thank you for allowing me to work here, and the arrangements are fine. We can discuss particulars later, but if you like, I would certainly be happy to have some of my African masks brought down."

"I would be pleased if you did so, Dr. Isles," Ducky answered. "In the meantime, that reminds me of a story that might enlighten your partner" - Ducky glanced at Jane - "of the meaning and importance behind those masks..."

And for the next ten minutes, as Ducky, Maura and Palmer cut into the bodies - with Stan and Clinton observing - Ducky told his story, with Maura breaking in every so often with questions and observations; Palmer grinning, trying to add his off-topic observations (and immediately told to quiet down by Ducky); Jane giving Burley and Clinton her "oh Maura" look; Burley giving Jane and Clinton his "oh Ducky" look; and Clinton looking besides herself.

"Do you people do anything other than banter?" Clinton asked, incredulously.

"Is it bothering you, Dr. Clinton?" Ducky asked.

"It...I only discuss matters related to the case with my assistants," she replied. "I do NOT banter about foolishness."

"You mean you do not talk to your bodies?" Maura asked.

"Talk...to...my...bodies?" Clinton replied, surprised at what Maura had just asked her. "Why would I do such a thing-is that something youdo?"

"What if it is," Jane interjected, glaring at Clinton.

"Yes, Dr. Clinton," Ducky said, as he inserted himself into the conversation - partly to prevent any potential argument between Jane and Clinton. "Do you speak to your bodies? I do."

"What does that mean, Mallard, and Isles?" she asked. "I cut them open, talk to my assistants, make voice notes, record what I observe. What does talk to the bodies mean? Seances?"

"Maura doesn't have seances, lady, and she's very competent at her job," Jane said.

"Detective!" Burley interrupted, stepping between Jane and Clinton. "I'm sure Dr. Clinton merely wants to clarify what Ducky meant - right, Doctor?"

Clinton shrugged her shoulders, looking at Ducky and Maura like they were nuts and Jane like she was full-on crazy.
"Dr. Clinton," Ducky said, "when I refer to talking to the bodies I mean exactly what I say. I talk to the bodies. In the course of the examination, they tell me things about the case the agents may not have picked up at the crime scene. And, our job is so impersonal and invasive, talking to the bodies helps me remember the souls which once inhabited those bodies. I am sure you can relate at least to the latter."

Clinton shrugged her shoulders. "Whatever works for you, doc," she said. "What are their bodies saying now? What about their eyeballs, that Dr. Isles thought were so damn important?"

"Yeah, Maura," Jane said - looking at Clinton - "what's so 'damn important' to get the attention of both the Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Medical Examiner of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service?"

"The pupils," Maura replied.

Before Clinton could reply with a smartass comeback, Ducky followed up.

"Dr. Clinton, Jane, Stanley, did any of you know that your eyes have spinchters?"

"Uh..." Stan said.

"What?" Jane asked.

"Of course," Clinton said.

"It's true, Jane," Maura replied.

"You WOULD know that, Maura," Jane told Maura, "and I'm sure you would too, Ducky."

"Jane, you have over fifty sphincters in your entire body, as do we all, with uses entirely unrelated to bowel movements," Maura continued. "The iris sphincter and the iris dilator, which we see here in the ensign. The sphincter response is triggered by the parasympathetic nervous system and the dilator by the sympathetic nervous system-"

"I'm sympathetic to the fact that they're both dead," Jane remarked, sarcastically; Clinton chuckled.

"We all are, Jane," Ducky interjected. "Dr. Isles is referring specifically to the parasympathetic nervous system, which regulates autonomic bodily processes when our bodies are at rest, and the dilator by the sympathetic nervous system, which controls physiological responses requiring a quick response."

"Like firing a weapon in self-defense?" Jane asked.

"Exactly," Ducky replied. "Now, psychotropic drugs can exert a similar effect on both of these systems. Certain drugs that trigger a parasympathetic or sympathetic response have a high chance of triggering pupil dilation."

"Any drug that influences the adrenal glands can trigger certain parasympathetic responses," Clinton mused. "Like a stimulant."

"Exactly," Maura said.

"Have you taken samples for testing yet?" Clinton asked.

"Mr. Palmer did so, to our forensics specialist, Abigail Sciuto," Ducky answered. "All we need to do is wait for the results."
The door to the morgue/autopsy room whooshed open, but it wasn't Palmer walking through.

"You, Stan and Doctor Clinton will have to get the results without Jane and Maura, Duck," said Gibbs, as he walked to the group. "You two will be in MTAC when Abby gets the full results."

"Do we need to go now?" Jane asked Gibbs.

"Not yet, Detective," he replied. "I do want to hear your thoughts on the ensign and lieutenant's pupils, Dr. Isles."

"Certainly," Maura said.

"You noticed the dilation at the scene," Gibbs said. "You think it's drug-related?"

"Oh boy," Jane muttered.

"Detective?" Gibbs.

"Uh...she doesn't like to guess..." Jane replied.

"I would need to wait for the results, and conclude the autopsy, before making a final determination," Maura said.

"Dr. Isles - Maura - I can appreciate that as a scientist, even if Jethro and Jane, and even Dr. Clinton and Stanley, are not as understanding," Ducky said, "but perhaps we can teach you that there is a place for a medical examiner to make an educated guess-"

"We can start now," Gibbs interjected; right then, Jane decided she liked the former Marine's ways, even if this particular time it went over her friend and partner's head.

"Well, Agent Gibbs, one's pupils can dilate in response to changes in lighting, growing larger when it is dark, to compensate for the lack of light," Maura replied. "They can also expand for other reasons, including sexual arousal, and in performing complex cognitive tasks."

"Maura...really?" Jane rolled her eyes. "It was morning, a clear sunny sky, they were dressed for work and I doubt either of them were brainiacs trying to figure out the cure for cancer."

"How do you know that, Jane?"

"Seriously? Maur-"

The door whooshed again, and this time both Palmer and Abby Sciuto walked through, Abby holding a sample in her hand.

"Gibbs Gibbs Gibbs! Ducky! Twin Kate! Cool Stan! Mean Jane! And you're Dr. Clinton? Hi! Abby Sciuto."

"Mean Jane?" Jane whispered in Maura's ear.

"You were a little mean to her yesterday," Maura said to Jane, under her breath, of her and Jane's visit to Abby's lab. "Perhaps if you hadn't mocked her taste in music."

"I didn't mock her music," Jane said. "But Green Satan?"

That earned Jane a soft elbow to her bicep from Maura.
"I'm still running results, but what I found so far is interesting," Abby stated. "I found traces of MDMA and paroxetine in the lieutenant, and MDMA in the ensign."

"MDMA?" Gibbs asked. "Ecstasy?"

"Ecstasy," Jane replied. "This is similar to a case Frost, Korsak and I worked back in May. Some college students, killed head on in a crash. Finals Week."

"I remember," Maura replied. "The crash occurred at night. They were returning from a off-campus party."

"And I've investigated a few ensigns and lieutenants who were on Ecstasy, while I was agent afloat," Burley replied.

"I've seen it too, in civilians," Clinton answered. "This is my first instance of seeing it in Naval personnel."

"Abs," Gibbs said. "Your best guess. How much Ecstasy were they on?"

"Pending final toxicology reports? Maybe enough to impair them," Abby said.

"And what about the Paroxetine in the lieutenant?" Gibbs said to Abby.

"Paroxetine - known more commonly as Paxil - is an anti-depressant, Gibbs," Abby replied. "It's used to treat depression, panic disorder, social anxiety, OCD, post-traumatic stress."

"Post-traumatic stress?" Gibbs mused. "Stan. Let's track his background and Jane, help him when you and Dr. Isles finish your other business. Including MTAC."

Jane looked at her phone.

"Noon's approaching pretty quick, Maur," she said to Maura. "We better get up there."
Tony DiNozzo, Michael Rivkin and Seeley Booth try to keep up with Ziva and not get pulled over by Virginia state troopers; Vince Korsak’s fellow detective spots a uniformed officer giving up info about Maura and Jane; and Paddy Doyle orders one of his goons to force a college student to hack into NCIS and FBI to find out where Maura is staying.

Chapter 43

Virginia

Interstate 95, just north of Fredericksburg

"Throwing that 2-liter bottle full of pee out the window isn't exactly going to help our case, DiNozzo," yelled FBI Agent Seeley Booth.

Booth was in the back seat of a car driven by Mossad Officer and Liaison to the FBI, Michael Rivkin; NCIS Special Agent Tony DiNozzo was in the front passenger seat of the same car.

They were following a car driven by a person of interest: Mossad Officer Ziva David, the half-brother of terrorist Ari Haswari. She had been his control officer for quite some time, and had been working with him in his U.S. operations. Ziva had also been secretly communicating with Rivkin and selected persons within the U.S. intelligence community.

Ziva was going up to 85 miles an hour south on I-95, and Rivkin was following right behind her, trying not to get made.

He got made, alright - by a Virginia State Police trooper, allegedly by a trucker who saw DiNozzo relieving himself in an empty two-liter soda bottle.

The trooper pulled alongside Rivkin, ordering him to pull over; despite all three men showing their badges, the trooper was now on Rivkin's tail, lights flashing and sirens blaring.

"The Sheriff is blowing this operation!" Rivkin yelled in frustration at DiNozzo. "All because you couldn't hold your bladder!"

"That guy didn't even see me," DiNozzo fired back.

"Someone saw you," Rivkin replied. "Now we are in this mess."

"Both of you. Shut up," Booth yelled from the back seat. "I'm on the phone with my boss, trying to get this cleared up."

Up in the distance, Ziva was gaining distance.

"She's gotta be going 100," Tony said, before looking at the speedometer: Rivkin was still going 80, and Roscoe P. Coltrane behind him was keeping pace.
Ziva wouldn't be by herself for very long, however.

A quarter mile ahead, another state trooper sped out into the road and nailed Ziva's car.

"Booth!" Tony said. "Deputy Enos just nailed Ziva."

"I'm working on it," Booth answered.

"What if she pulls over?" Tony said. "What if WE pull over?"

"Don't DO that!" Booth said. "Whatever you do, Rivkin, do not pull over."

"Why not?" Rivkin asked.

"As long as we're driving, I've got a good chance at getting the Bureau to call off the state police-director?"

Booth found himself on the line with the director of the FBI, explaining the situation to him, before hanging up.

"They patched me through to the director himself," Booth said. "He said give him a few minutes to make this go away, but under no circumstances to pull over."

"As Agent DiNozzo said, what if Ziva pulls over?" Rivkin said.

"We keep going; we can always turn around up the road. We pull over right now, these guys got us," Booth said. "When his superiors tell that deputy to back down, he will. Until then-"

"Look," Tony said.

Up ahead, about a fifth of a mile, were four Virginia state patrol cars, just ahead of Ziva and the patrolman tailing her.

"Better hope they get the message to back down," Tony said. "Rivkin. You sure Ari's not watching all this somehow?"

"I am not 100 percent certain, but if I had to guess I would say if he was, she could swing it to where she was in a hurry and got the attention of a policeman looking to issue a speeding ticket-"

"Spin it, Rivkin," Tony replied. "Not swing it."

The four patrol cars began to peel off. Booth's phone rang, and he answered.

"Booth...Director...they got the message? Good...yeah, that guy's still on our tail and the other guy is on David's...how soon...20 minutes?...might not have that long...waitaminute."

Enos's lights stopped flashing, and his patrol car backed off of Ziva, who began speeding away; Enos then slowed down enough to get alongside Roscoe, and through a series of hand gestures, made it apparent that Roscoe was to do the same.

Moments later, Roscoe's lights stopped flashing, and he slowed down, giving Rivkin some breathing room.

"Twenty minutes, Booth?" Rivkin said. "This took a little more than thirty seconds."

"Twenty minutes for FBI out of Richmond to get here," Booth replied. "Those guys were serious.
The four other troopers were there to run us and David off the road. If the director hadn't gotten on the phone with the state police superintendent in time, they would have.

"Then it is a good thing they did not," Rivkin said.

Ziva continued her pace, pushing her car up to 90 miles an hour, en route to wherever she was going.

Rivkin kept pace right behind her, keeping a distance of 50 to 70 yards.

**Boston**

**Division One Cafe, Boston Police Department**

Homicide Detective Vince Korsak had a lot on his plate at the moment, but he always kept his word whenever he gave it.

He promised to touch base with Roz Framus, another detective in homicide, and the two of them went downstairs to get some coffee.

They saw a long line stretching into the hallway, and the operator, Stanley, and his assistant, Angela Rizzoli, trying to keep pace.

"Busier than usual, Korsak," Roz said.

"Looks like everyone is getting their drinks to go," he replied. "We should be able to find a table."

Korsak and Roz sat down, debriefing about T. Pike's actions and Cavanaugh's reactions; the reason for Jane and Maura's absence; Frost setting up a webcam in the morgue; the FBI rounding up Pike's 'team'; and Maura's team's reaction; and rumors about Maura and Jane's replacements.

Meanwhile, Frost was in the morgue, setting up computer equipment that would enable Maura to examine the bodies dredged up from the pond a short time ago; in an hour, if he wasn't called out to work a case, Frost planned to call NCIS agent Tim McGee to test the feed.

Back at the cafe, Roz and Korsak noticed the line had died down, and decided to get some coffee.

"Angela's not happy," he said. "Let's go over and talk to her. If Stanley doesn't complain-"

"Korsak. Keep talking."

"Talking-"

"About the Celtics. You know damn well Rick Pitino is more suited to be a college coach-"

"Detective?"

"Vince. Someone is watching Angela. And talking about her on his cell. I can read lips," she whispered, before speaking up. "I'd rather have Pat Riley..."

"Oh yeah? Pitino is a proven winner," Korsak said, and proceeded to ramble on while Roz read the uniform's lips.

She waited until the uniform was finished, and got up from his table. Then she made her move.

"Officer! Officer!...Officer! Stop!"
The guy didn't even make it out to the street before Roz tackled him, then grabbed him by the neck.

"You working with Paddy Doyle?" she said, grabbing him by his collar, as Korsak and three other uniforms ran to pull her off.

The uniform tried to take advantage, swinging at Roz and hitting her in the cheekbone; she ducked his next swing, hit him in the abdomen, then pushed him up against the wall.

"Book him," she said.

"Roz? What are you doing?"

"Lip reading. This bastard may have given up Jane and Dr. Isles to Paddy Doyle."

**Elsewhere in Boston**

Paddy Doyle was the most notorious criminal in the Boston history, connected to some degree to virtually every agency, organization and business in town, and feared greatly by many. He was at the top of Boston PD's Most Wanted List. He had avoided both local and federal law enforcement for years - thanks in part to his stooges, snitches and "helpers" in those agencies,

He was the father of Maura Isles, the medical examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

And, after learning what had happened to Maura and Jane Rizzoli over the past 24 hours and the past several weeks, Doyle was angry.

He cursed up a storm at one of his safe houses, and was as incensed as any of his lieutenants had ever seen him. The one underling who dared to suggest that Maura wasn't coming back 'home anytime soon' was rewarded with the butt of a rifle to the head - and a trip to the hospital.

Eventually, the crime lord calmed down, and started thinking instead of ranting.

"Jennings," Doyle said to one of his chief lieutenants. "Find that kid at BCU. Bring him to the house near the Charles."

"What do you want him to do, Paddy?"

"I want him to search the damn FBI, and NCIS computers," Doyle said. "NCIS. Naval cops. Naval cops are harboring my daughter and that cop and I wanna know why!"

"We'll have him there within the hour, Paddy," Jennings said. "Kid's a known hacker - we'll cooperate with us, easy. But can't we...get one of the cop's family and-"

"And what, Jennings? FBI's guarding Maura's house. That cop's mother and brother are living there with ten FBI agents. We own this town but I can't risk going up against the feds! And the guy I got off the phone with told me Boston PD is on alert looking out for them, too."

"So, we get our guys close to the mother-"

"Too risky," Doyle said. "Maybe later, when things die down. Right now, get the kid, make him search those computers. I want to know what city she and that cop are in, what house, the street. Make sure the kid covers his tracks."

"Then what, Paddy?"

"Then we go down there and get Maura and bring her back to Boston ourselves."
Chapter 44

Chapter Summary

Chapter 44 of RI&K: the meeting on Ari Haswari begins in MTAC; before that, Jane and Maura discuss MTAC's theater-like appearance and movies in general, and they learn about the victims dredged up from the pond in Boston and Charles Hoyt's involvement.

Next: the heart of the meeting.

Chapter 44

Wednesday, Thanksgiving Eve
Washington
Navy Yard, NCIS Headquarters
Multiple Threat Alert Center

Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles were two of the last people to walk into the spacious MTAC room, just upstairs from the bullpen where Gibbs and his team worked, and near the office of NCIS Director Thomas Morrow.

Morrow, Gibbs and several other people already were there, most of whom were technical analysts, and some whom Jane and Maura recognized.

Kate Todd stood next to Gibbs, and waved at Maura and Jane; Maura waved back, and Jane half-grinned, half-waved, before resuming staring at the big screen in the back of the room.

"Maur. Look around," Jane whispered. "This is a movie theater."

"It is?" Maura replied.

"IT'? 'IS'? Really?" Jane answered. "You don't recognize a movie theater when you see one?"

"Well, now that you mention it, it sort of resembles a movie theater, one lined with computers and analysts working on important government projects," Maura replied, with a smile.

"Sort of?" Jane. "Maur. They have a movie theater."

"Actually, they have what is called the Multiple Threat Alert Center," Maura stated. "According to the agency's official literature, the 'Multiple Threat Alert Center', or MTAC as it is commonly referred to, provides intelligence and information on a wide range of potential and real threats to U.S. Naval and Marine personnel, installations and other assets in the United States and around the world. The Multiple Threat Alert Center is an outgrowth of the former Navy Antiterrorist Alert Center, commonly referred to as ATAC--"

"Maurapedia!!!" Jane whispered. "When was the last time you went to a movie?"

"Went to a movie?" Maura replied. "Actually, one does not 'go' to a movie. One can watch a movie,
"You mean you've never gone to see a movie?" Jane said. "In the sense that everyone else means it, not the dictionary sense."

"Oh." Maura replied. "Oh, of course. Many times, particularly when I was a child, although not recently. I do attend performances, plays, in Boston and when I can, Broadway and off-Broadway--"


"Which one?"

"Neighborhood. Or a cineplex, like at the mall."

"Well," Maura mused, "I have shopped at all of the area malls, and I have seen their cineplexes from the outside, but no, I have not seen a movie at one of those malls. Does this room remind you of those cineplexes?"

"Yes...yes it does," Jane muttered, crossing her eyes. "You've surely been to the Capitol, or the Somerville, back in Boston?"

"Of course."

"Last movie you saw?"

"The last movie I saw at a traditional movie theater was Rocky Horror."

"Rocky Horror??? YOU???

"I merely observed...what was the last movie you saw, Jane?"

"It wasn't Rocky Horror, and it was at the cineplex," Jane continued, as various faces began appearing on the big screen. "Me and Frankie took Tommy to see two: The Bourne Ultimatum, with Matt Damon. And Transformers."

"Were those period pieces?"

"Period pieces?!?--NO. Maura. They were blockbusters. Tommy had a great time, Frankie too. So did I."

"What were they about?"

"Action. Suspense. Crap blowing up."

Kate ran up to the couple. "They're about to start," she told them.

"Is there a popcorn stand, Todd? I don't want to miss the trailers."

"Why would there be trailers--oh," Maura said, before catching herself and realizing Jane was pulling her proverbial leg.

"No, Rizzoli," Kate replied. "No food allowed in MTAC. It's all business...but we do sneak in once in a while and watch movies...we've got a few minutes. You may want to say hello to your acquaintance, over there."

Jane and Maura spotted Gabriel Dean, the FBI agent recently reassigned from Boston to Quantico -
and Jane's last boyfriend.

Next to Dean, was FBI Senior Agent Tobias Fornell.

"I...we'll catch up later, Kate," Jane said, glaring at Fornell.

"Don't worry," Kate said. "Gibbs said to tell you both he put a leash on Fornell."

"Good," Jane replied. "You sure you can't kick him out?"

"Jane," Maura said. "He was only doing his job--"

Before Jane had time to rehash the episode with Fornell from the day before, NCIS Probationary Field Agent Tim McGee entered the room, holding two large coffees.

"Dr. Isles, Detective Rizzoli," McGee said, handing them both large coffees. "On the house - well, on Gibbs."

"Thanks, McGoo," Jane said.

"McGee!" Kate, Maura and McGee himself said, in unison, correcting Jane.

"Doctor, Detective, Lt. Detective Cavanaugh in Boston and Detective Frost are requesting your assistance on an autopsy in Boston," McGee said.

"On whom, Agent McGee?" Maura asked.

"All I was told was that the bodies are a family of four, dredged up earlier today from a pond, who may be victims of The Surgeon. Charles Hoyt," McGee said.

"Hoyt?" Jane and Maura looked at one another.

"Detective Frost and Senior Criminologist Chang are working on the connection now," McGee continued. "It should be ready no later than an hour, maybe after this meeting concludes."

"Susie?" Maura replied. "Will Pike be involved?"

"No," McGee answered. "Cavanaugh says he will discuss that with you later today. After the meeting."

The screen split; Gibbs motioned for Jane, Maura and Kate to join him and Morrow, while Dean and Fornell stood nearby.

As McGee left, a red-haired woman made her way into the vast room.

"Running late, Jenny?" Gibbs called to her.

"Business...Jethro." she answered.

She was Jenny Shepard, the Assistant Director of NCIS and the most powerful person in the agency behind Morrow himself. And, not too long ago, part of Gibbs' team in Paris, and his lover.

On the screen, Jane and Maura recognized Cavanaugh, standing next to another man, whom Kate recognized as her brother, Daniel, an FBI agent assigned to Boston.

Also on the screen, from Los Angeles, was the director of NCIS's Office of Special Projects, Leon
Vance; flanking him was the Special Agent in Charge of the OSP's L.A. field office, Lara Macy; her senior agent, G Callen; special agents Juliana Todd (Kate's twin and Daniel's sister), Sam Hanna and probationary agent Kensi Blye.

In a corner was the director of NCIS’s New York City field office, Henrietta Lange, and her special agent in charge, Roy Haines.

The special agents in charge of NCIS's Norfolk, San Diego and Miami field offices also were onscreen, as were representatives from the CIA, the NSA and Homeland Security.

A black square represented Mossad Officer Michael Rivkin, his agency's liaison to the FBI, who was still chasing Ari Haswari's half-sister, Ziva David, and speaking via audio. With Rivkin was FBI agent Seeley Booth and Gibbs' own senior agent, Tony DiNozzo.

And, unexpectedly, the image of the Secretary of the Navy appeared in another corner.

Jane and Maura heard the door open, and turned around to see NCIS agents Stan Burley and Paris Summerskill rushing down.

"Everyone's here, it looks like," Morrow stated. "Thank you all for coming. The purpose of this meeting, of course, is to discuss the actions and intentions of the terrorist known as Ari Haswari. The dangers he poses, not just to individuals here in the room and to specific civilians outside of it, but to the United States itself.

"We will discuss the new terrorist group he has aligned himself with. We also will discuss how this agency, with help from the FBI, CIA, NSA and Homeland, will track down Haswari, prevent him and this group from carrying out his goals, and capture him."

Morrow looked at Jane and Maura. "And," he said, "we will also address a no-less important matter, at least to some of us here: the reason that two civilians are now under federal projection here in Washington, why they are unsafe in their home city, and how we plan to resolve that."
Chapter 45

Chapter Summary

The beginning of the big meeting in MTAC at NCIS HQ, in which we recap how Ari Haswari first encountered Gibbs and Kate in this AU - and why he hates Gibbs and Kate (individually and as Kibbs) so much.

Chapter 45

Washington

Navy Yard, NCIS headquarters

Multiple Threat Action Center room

"Everyone's here, it looks like," said Thomas Morrow, the Director of NCIS, as he stepped in front of the large, theater-like screen in the back of the spacious MTAC room.

"Thank you all for coming. The purpose of this meeting, of course, is to discuss the actions and intentions of the terrorist known as Ari Haswari. The dangers he poses, not just to individuals here in the room and to specific civilians outside of it, but to the United States itself.

"We will discuss the new terrorist group he has aligned himself with. We also will discuss how this agency, with help from the FBI, CIA, NSA and Homeland, will track down Haswari, prevent him and this group from carrying out his goals, and capture him."

"And," Morrow continued - now looking directly at Maura Isles and Jane Rizzoli - "we will also address a no-less important matter, at least to some of us here: the reason that two civilians are now under federal projection here in Washington, why they are unsafe in their home city, and how we plan to resolve that..."

Jane wanted nothing more than to go back home to Boston right then; nothing she had been told by anyone was sufficient enough to convince her she and Maura had to stay out of Boston.

Maura, on the other hand, was less strident than Jane. She, not Jane, was the one who got all those emails, those phone calls, and had that horrible, bloody letter nailed to her front door - which was itself...desecrated in blood.

Maybe staying in Washington was a good idea right now, she thought. Especially with Jane at her side.

"...With that introduction out of the way, let us proceed," Morrow said, before introducing Leon Vance, the operations director of NCIS's Office of Special Projects.

Vance's image took center stage on the big screen, with the other participants reduced to small squares along the borders.

"I'll begin by giving the background on the terrorist, Ari Haswari, and the details of his campaign and his targets," Vance began. "Ari Haswari is the son of Eli David, the newly promoted director of
the Mossad agency of the State of Israel. Haswari was groomed from an early age to be an undercover double agent, imbedded within Hamas.

Five years ago, Ari's mother, a doctor working in the Gaza Strip, was killed by a retaliatory missile strike from Israel. Ari believed Eli David was behind the strike, in order to coerce his son into joining Hamas.

Ari then turned against his father, as a double agent working with Hamas and other terrorist organizations - including Al-Qaeda - against Israel and Mossad, looking for the right opportunity to strike back at his father. Haswari's connection to NCIS began a year ago...."

And it was a part of their past Gibbs and Kate wish they could have done over, as they and their team were involved - and they both let Haswari get away.

Hamas ordered Haswari to find the body of a terrorist who fumbled Hamas's plan to spread the smallpox virus at the Norfolk Naval Base. He in turn infiltrated the Navy Yard and NCIS headquarters hiding in a body bag, before taking medical director Donald "Ducky" Mallard and his assistant, Gerald Jackson - and later, Kate - hostage.

Kate remembered how she and Ducky tried to trick him - and how she couldn't bring herself to stab him when she had the chance. Ari shot Gerald in his shoulder as retaliation, and Gerald never got over it; his resignation was why Jimmy Palmer now assisted Ducky.

Tony DiNozzo accusing Kate of not being able to stab Ari because she identified with him - the classic Stockholm syndrome scenario - made her feel worse.

Because at the time, to a small degree, it was the truth.

Kate had to live with not killing Ari the first time, and sometimes it haunted her days, and sometimes her nightmares.

Gibbs brought down some of the dead terrorist's effects in an effort to end the standoff, and was rewarded by Ari with a bullet in his shoulder, after Haswari 'offered' Gibbs a chance to kill him. Haswari escaped in the subsequent raid on the autopsy room, killing an agent and wounding another in the process.

Vance continued to speak on the big screen.

"Haswari used this incident to convince himself that Gibbs and Eli David were the same type of man, and from there Haswari's hatred of Gibbs grew into an obsession. A few months later, Haswari led a Hamas cell that planned to kidnap the President of the United States and the Israeli Prime Minister, and kidnapped agent Todd, ostensibly to force her to reveal the location of the helicopter that would transport the president and prime minister..."

And that was his part of his plan, Kate remembered.

The other part was that Ari was obsessed with her. Possessive. Creepy. He thought because of what she didn't do to him the first time, she would willingly cooperate with him this time.

Give up the location of Marine One.

Tell him where the President and Prime Minister were.

Cooperate with him.
Go to bed with him.
Be his forever.

Even if he put a bullet through her forehead, none of that was going to happen.

Kate remembered that crazy shell game.

She remembered Marta, the woman who worked with Ari, who threatened to murder Tony if Kate didn't call him and say she had food poisoning. The same woman who asked her if she was willing to die for not disclosing the helicopter the leaders would be on.

The same woman who snapped and pointed a gun at Kate, and grudgingly handed it over to Ari, then spat when Ari admitted that Kate was right: there was no way to tell the real Marine One helicopter from the others.

And got shot through the forehead with Kate's own gun after trying to warn her colleagues.

Ari asking Kate for her help, her loyalty, her friendship.

The predatory, psychotic look in his eyes when she said no - just as NCIS Special Ops agents arrived in the vicinity.

Ari spitting at her, throwing her the phone, telling her to call the Secret Service and FBI to inform them of the cell's plans.

Gibbs met Ari later that night - alone - and Ari tried to claim the woman he killed was behind the kidnapping, and that he blew her brains out in self-defense. That he was really a Mossad agent, and that he was going to pin everything on Marta, and Gibbs shot him in the shoulder to "help him with his cover".

"...We believe this to be the beginning of Haswari's obsessed hatred of agent Todd," she heard Vance say.

It certainly didn't get any better from there, Kate mused, for her nor for the others the bastard ended up targeting.

The OSP team led by G Callen, Sam Hanna and Kate's sister, Juliana, found Kate tied up to a tree, with two notes taped to her chair.

One, revealing the location of the remaining members of the cell.

And the other, in which he wrote - in Marta's blood - 'you could have been my Marta. Now, you will become like Marta'

"Afterwards, the FBI permitted Haswari to leave the country and did not apprehend him, despite the knowledge that he was working with both Hamas and Al-Qaeda," Vance continued.

Jane looked over at Gabriel Dean and Tobias Fornell and mouthed 'what the f**k?!

"Haswari agreed to meet with agent Gibbs - again, we believe, in a final effort to gain his and perhaps agent Todd's trust - and stated he shot Gerald Jackson to keep his cover. Gibbs in turn shot Haswari in the shoulder, and that in turn sealed Haswari's hatred of agent Gibbs," Vance said.

Jane thought if she was there, she would have shot the bastard through the skull.
Afterwards, Ari's obsession with Gibbs and Todd, and secondarily with his own father, grew to the point where he was rejected by both Hamas and Al-Qaeda as 'unstable', forcing him to ally himself with a startup terrorist organization to continue his campaign. Vance then gave details on Ari's harassment of people associated with Gibbs and Kate, and those who looked like Kate herself.
Chapter 46

Chapter Summary

More from the MTAC meeting, including how Jane and Maura got involved in the mess, through frightening incidents at Maura’s home and Jane’s apartment. Also: just why Haswari is obsessed with Jane and Maura and how he links Gibbs and Kate Todd to them both.

Chapter 46

MTAC

Afterwards, Ari's obsession with Gibbs and Todd, and secondarily with his own father, grew to the point where he was rejected by both Hamas and Al-Qaeda as 'unstable', forcing him to ally himself with a startup terrorist organization to continue his campaign. Vance then gave details on Ari's harassment of people associated with Gibbs and Kate, and those who looked like Kate herself.

The now-infamous 'Kate list' appeared on the screen, with the names of numerous women, Maura among them.

"Ari has used this group's resources and personnel in beginning, and maintaining, a campaign of harassment and stalking of known relatives, coworkers and associates of agents Gibbs and Todd," Vance said.

"This includes Caitlin's twin sister, Juliana, whom you see standing next to me, and is an NCIS special agent assigned to the Office of Special Projects. It also includes one of their brothers, Daniel Todd, who is the assistant special agent in charge of the FBI's Boston field office, and, to a lesser extent, NCIS Assistant Director Jennifer Shepard, who has worked with Gibbs in the past.

"American women who look like agent Caitlin Todd - including a district attorney in Nevada; a plastic surgeon in San Francisco; and, of course, the chief medical examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts - also are part of Haswari's harassment campaign. In fact, Haswari's campaign has expanded to open harassment of a Boston police detective whom, for reasons we will explain shortly, reminds Haswari of agent Gibbs."

Gibbs glanced over at Jane, who was holding Maura's hand firmly.

"The campaign has devolved to open death threats, including notes written in blood nailed to the front doors of some of these women's residences, and thousands of emails sent with attachments of photos of gravesites, corpses, murdered victims, and notes encouraging said women to have their wills ready and be ready to meet their makers," Vance said.

Juliana didn't see all of the emails sent to her, as they had been intercepted by Vance himself, but she was aware of them.

The Todd family was now under constant surveillance; even Daniel had a couple of FBI agents tailing him. The ordeal led their (and Kate's) older sister, Rachel Cranston, to move to Washington from Miami, under similar circumstances as Jane and Maura.
Rachel, Juliana, Kate and every other woman on the list got those damned emails and phone calls. Not everyone got the bloody letters nailed to their door like Maura had.

It was an early Saturday morning, early October, and Maura looked forward to spending a rare day off with Jane.

Maura had the entire day planned - shopping, a concert in the park, lunch at the cafe, and a nice, romantic dinner - and Maura was going to level with Jane about how she really felt about their friendship.

She woke up, made coffee - the special blend her colleague from Philadelphia had given her, not that instant junk Jane usually settled for - and prepared breakfast.

Maura would never forget what happened next.

As she prepared her breakfast, wondering why Jane's mother, Angela, hadn't yet come in from the guest house...

...Jane rushed in to Maura's kitchen from the back entrance, trailed by Detectives Barry Frost, Vince Korsak, Roz Framus and Woody Hoyt; Officer Frankie Rizzoli; Lt. Detective Sean Cavanaugh; and several other uniformed Boston police officers, all of whom spread out throughout Maura's house.

"Jane? Jane! What is going on-" was all Maura could say.

"Frankie! Stay with Maura!" Jane barked, as she ran up the stairs.

Several tense minutes later - and only after Cavanaugh was convinced the entire property was clear - he and Jane sat down with Maura and explained, then walked her out and showed her, the reason behind the raid.

Her front door had **DIE KATE** smeared in blood - and a letter, written in blood, nailed to the door. The letter was consistent with other letters and emails Ari had sent, including threats to kill her.

The blood was eventually traced to that of a missing Idaho woman who happened to greatly resemble Maura; that attracted the attention of the FBI, which in turn connected it to Ari's campaign.

Several weeks later - after not getting the answers they wanted from FBI agent Dean and the Bureau - Jane and Maura decided to head to Washington, and NCIS, with Cavanaugh's approval.

And here they were, in Washington.

On the main screen, Vance continued his debrief, discussing the group Ari allied himself with: the Fighters of God, operating out of Somalia, consisting of former members of Hezbollah, Hamas, Al-Qaeda and other anti-American/Israeli/Western terrorist organizations.

"This group has more of a anti-Western bent than a fundamentalist Muslim one, though so-called "religious zealots" can be found within its ranks," Vance said. "We believe, as does Homeland, Langley, Quantico and the NSA, and the White House, that the Fighters of God present a potential major threat to the United States, Israel and NATO."

Jane glanced at Maura, who was intently paying attention to Vance, as was Jane herself.

Although Jane wondered if the guy would ever shut up, or at least take a break. *God I have to pee.*

"It is known to us and to other federal agencies, as well as Mossad, that Ari has offered his services
as an advisor and recruiter in exchange for its aid in his personal agenda,” Vance said. "A Mossad Officer, Ziva David - Ari's half-sister, and Eli David's elder daughter - is working as a double agent, having convinced Ari she is on his side, in reality working for Mossad on behalf of NCIS and the rest of the American intelligence community."

"I hope she's one of the good guys," Jane muttered, to Maura. "Boy I hope this guy takes a bathroom break-"

Maura shushed Jane. "Perhaps if you hadn't drank all that coffee before," she whispered.

"Oh gee, thanks for reminding me," replied Jane, who momentarily considered waving her arms and requesting a bathroom break, before deciding she could hold her bladder a bit longer.

"Thank you, Leon," Morrow said. "Agent Fornell, would you review the main points of Ari's campaign, and intent?"

Fornell stepped to the front of the room, while Gabriel Dean walked to Jane and Maura.

"You guys okay?" Dean said.

"I gotta pee" - Jane said, as Maura gave her a look - "but I can hold it. Oh look, Gabriel. My new favorite FBI Agent-"

"He's a decent guy," Dean replied.

"Don't start, Dean," Jane retorted.

Fornell's first three points were to the point:

1. Kill Gibbs
2. Kill Kate Todd
3. Harass/stalk and eventually kill others who look like Kate as a message to Gibbs

"Why the third point?" Dean asked the group. "Why is that such a big deal?"

Several moments later, Morrow spoke up.

"Haswari, to my understanding, has profiled agent Gibbs and agent Todd extensively," he said, "and based on his profiles he has concluded that agents Gibbs and Todd are either in a relationship or are harboring suppressed romantic and/or sexual feelings for one another."

Kate blushed, and not just out of embarrassment that her peers, and those over her whose respect she worked hard to earn, would think of her as having a personal relationship with her boss.

Ari, or Ziva, or whomever profiled her from Haswari's camp was right, just a tad.

She did find Leroy Jethro Gibbs attractive.

Kate had wondered what it would be like to be with him - just as she had wondered about Tony DiNozzo, and even Tim McGee.

Gibbs didn't blush, nor did he do anything other than stand impassively.

He liked Kate as an agent, and as a person, even since he hired her after their case together on Air
Force One. As she opened up to he and the other members of his team, Gibbs began to see that, someday, sooner than later, they might be close friends, even family.

A few times, he wondered if they might end up as more than friends, the same way he and Jenny Shepard had.

Jenny looked over at Gibbs; she read the "anonymous" email sent to her from Dubai, asking her to look into Gibbs and Kate's "friendship". She hadn't asked him about it yet, thinking Jethro would never take advantage of a subordinate like that.

But what if something just...happened?

Just like it did between Jenny and Jethro?
Chapter 47

Chapter Summary

The big meeting at NCIS's MTAC wraps up. We learn of Ari's horrible note to Maura Isles left on her front door, and how it led Jane and Maura to seek out NCIS, and put them in Washington. We also learn WHY they can't go back to Washington, and why Ari doesn't just up and go after them - and Gibbs and Kate - in D.C.

Chapter 47

MCRT

"The next point of concern relates to Detective Jane Rizzoli and Dr. Maura Isles," said Lt. Det. Cavanaugh, whose face expanded to take up the majority of the big screen. "We...I...recently learned that they both are in a dating relationship, which is not against Boston PD nor Commonwealth of Massachusetts policy, nor is it any kind of issue in and of itself. I have known them both for quite some time, and I hold both Jane and Maura in the highest regard, as professionals and as people."

Jane and Maura both couldn't help but smile; Cavanaugh really did have their backs.

"The FBI has informed me that the terrorist began observing, then stalking, then harassing Dr. Isles, and later Detective Rizzoli, because of their relationship," Cavanaugh continued. "Incidents at both of their residences made it obvious that they had been targeted."

Two nights after the 'incident' at Maura's house, Jane came home after a long night at work.

She found her apartment trashed, her bed tore up, and a note from "A Real Informer" stuck to the inside of her door, held by a knife; Jane's dog, Jo Friday, was found trembling in the kitchen.

Initially, Boston PD thought it was the work of Charles Hoyt; after reading the letter - and intercepting chatter between one of Ari's representatives and the prison guard caring for Hoyt - the FBI judged it was the work of Ari, "advised" by Hoyt.

That incident eventually led Jane to tell Cavanaugh - after days of getting the 'runaround' from agents Dean and Daniel Todd and others at Boston FBI - that she and Maura were headed to Washington to speak directly with agent Gibbs.

Unknown to Jane and Maura, Daniel Todd arranged for both to have agents watching them from the time they left their homes, through the flight down, to the moment they entered the Navy Yard.

"I have seen first-hand how the terrorist attempted to harass, intimidate and even make both of their lives a living hell," Cavanaugh said, "and how well they responded to it."

"I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles," said agent Daniel Todd, as the camera zoomed in on his face. "But I have had the pleasure of knowing special agent Caitlin Todd all of my life; she is my sister, and dearly loved not just by myself but by countless others."

Kate blushed, still embarrassed at the attention, but not ashamed of the man whom grew up from an immature, crazy teenager to a mature man serving his country as an FBI agent.
"Our observations of Ms. Isles and Ms. Rizzoli were...unfortunately necessary, especially given the terrorist was doing the same," Daniel Todd continued. "I observed that Dr. Isles didn't just look like my sister Kate, but that the terrorist noticed the close relationship between Dr. Isles and Detective Rizzoli, and judged them to be a romantic couple just as he believes agent Gibbs and my sister are.

"We also learned that the terrorist decided to make an example of Ms. Rizzoli and Ms. Isles; their relationship, which is still not yet public, reminded him very much of what he, incorrectly, sees in Gibbs and Caitlin," Daniel Todd continued. "In essence, he decided to go after them to send a message to NCIS and the FBI, to Caitlin and to Gibbs himself; he decided to target them for murder."

Jane and Maura held each other tightly. "This is where we learn why we can't really go home," Jane whispered.

"Haswari, we recently learned, admitted to subordinates and leadership within the Fighters of God - as well as his own half-sister - that he did not have the resources to conduct a campaign in Washington against Gibbs and Caitlin," Daniel Todd continued. "Haswari admitted, without outright saying as such, to do so would be a suicide mission, because he could not go against the heart of the intelligence community, and the U.S. military, without getting killed or captured.

"On the other hand, he had no such misgivings against conducting a campaign against Ms. Rizzoli and Ms. Isles in Boston. He had confidence he and his allies could successfully engage, and overcome, resistance not just from the Boston police but from Boston FBI and even from Paddy Doyle's organization."

"Paddy Doyle - the Boston crime lord," Kate said to Gibbs.

"Yeah," Gibbs replied. "Ari tried to get to him."

"Tried?"

"Tried. Ari settled for Hoyt."

Maura looked at Jane.

"Jane, Paddy's NOT working with him," Maura whispered in her ear. "He'd do a lot of awful things but he wouldn't work with a terrorist."

"I don't think he would either," Jane whispered back.

"Both Boston PD and FBI looked closely into Paddy's organization," said Cavanaugh, now shown to be sitting to Daniel Todd's right. "The terrorist judged that even though Paddy was a criminal through and through, he wouldn't turn against his own flesh and blood and not even against the Boston PD. Don't get me wrong, he's a bastard through and through; but he operates by an honor code, and that code doesn't allow for cooperating with terrorists - especially those who want to hurt his daughter."

"Having been rejected by Paddy Doyle, Ari Haswari then approached his next person of interest: the imprisoned serial killer, Charles Hoyt, known as 'The Surgeon'. He tried to kill Detective Rizzoli once, and she in turn helped put him away; Hoyt is currently in Central Boston Federal Medical Center. Haswari used his connections to make contact with this man - prison guard Rod Mason, who was assigned by the warden, Charles Price, to guard and care for Hoyt. Through Mason, Haswari offered Hoyt an opportunity to kill Rizzoli, and an escape from prison, in exchange for his cooperation."
"While he was working with Hoyt, the terrorist and his associates were also recruiting within the Boston area," Cavanaugh said. "We believe he has made allies with individuals within Paddy Doyle's organization, and attempted to imbed himself within Boston PD. We also believe there are individuals in the area who are willing to work with him."

"Thankfully, they are few enough that they are not a current threat to the Boston population as a whole at the current time," Daniel Todd said. "However, they are enough of a threat to Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles personally and primarily, and to their family and associates secondarily, that for their own protection the Bureau decided to have them placed in protective custody in the D.C. area."

The image of the Secretary of the Navy took center stage on the screen.

"Explain to me why they're not in a safe house right now, why they - and for that matter agents Gibbs and Todd - can go freely in the D.C. area, but not anywhere else," SecNav said.

"One, Ari is willing to kill them and only those four," Vance said. "If he kills others - even those on the Kate List - it doesn't give him the same level of satisfaction that killing those four gives him. Two, Ari's people are imbedded within Boston, and are willing to go after them as long as they are in the area. Three, Ari himself is unwilling to attack any of the four in D.C. because he believes that if he does so, he will incur the full retaliation not just of NCIS and the FBI but from their fellow agencies, and from the Pentagon."

"Quite correctly, I might add," Morrow said. "As is, NCIS is spread out across the country, offering protection to friends and family and certain associates of agents Gibbs and Todd, and assisting Boston P.D. in the Boston area to help protect family and friends of Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles."

"If I might interrupt for a moment," Tobias Fornell said. "All this assumes the current status quo remains. If Ari were to step up his operations in the D.C. area, our protection for the four would change accordingly. That includes protection in a safe house, in a secured location."

"We would not put any of them in danger," Morrow said. "Their being free to operate in D.C. is allowed only because of Ari's fear of confronting the heart of the U.S. intelligence and military community. We have planned for any and all changes in his strategy, and part of that involves assistance from our friends from the Israeli Mossad agency."

Michael Rivkin, listening via speakerphone from his rental car, entered the conversation, sitting in the passenger seat while Tony DiNozzo drove.

"Mossad offered its assistance after we learned of Ari's activities," Rivkin said, as his car followed Ziva David through the streets of Richmond, Virginia. "Part of that assistance, Mr. Secretary, comes from an agent imbedded in Ari's organization: Ziva David, Ari's half-sister and the daughter of the new director Eli David."

"Why should we trust her," SecNav asked.

"She helped Ari profile agents Gibbs and Todd and Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles," Rivkin said. "After learning of Ari's plans for them, she saw him for what he had become. Yes, she is his sister, he is her brother. But she is no soulless, heartless killer; it saddens her greatly what Ari has become, and will not hesitate to help prevent him from carrying out his plans. She is working with me, and with the FBI and NCIS, to track Ari. She informs us of his activities, as she can."

SecNav, after quizzing Rivkin, Daniel Todd, Cavanaugh and Vance, got to the most important question on his list.
"What is our plan to take this bastard out," he asked. "Anybody?"

"Mr. Secretary," Vance said. "NCIS and the FBI is working on tracking Haswari's location. He is currently all but impossible to find; he apparently communicates through encrypted email and audio and video, using connections that make him very difficult to trace. But not impossible."

"What the hell does that mean, Vance?" SecNav.

"It means, sir, we are making progress on finding him," Vance replied. "Once we break his firewalls, and once we can track him, our plan is to send in a Special Ops team, in conjunction with our New York, Norfolk, Miami, New Orleans and San Diego field offices, to take him and his men down."

"And we can more easily find his Boston network and shut it down," Daniel Todd added. "The FBI, NCIS Office of Special Projects and Boston Police's Special Operations Unit, are currently working on that. We are identifying members of his network, and its extent. We have already taken down a former Boston police officer who joined with Haswari, and anticipate similar operations in the near future."

"Well, I'd like to find the bastard sooner than later," SecNav said, "as would all of you. I want daily updates on your operations. I also want to say this has the attention of the White House, including the President, whom as you may know once had Agent Caitlin Todd on his detail. He, and the Vice President, have a special interest in this operation. Don't be surprised if they choose to get more personally involved."

Morrow then wrapped up the meeting.

"One additional item, for NCIS," he said. "If Jethro and Caitlin have to go into protection, our Major Case Response Team here in Washington will continue to operate. Stan Burley, who has worked with agent Gibbs in the past and was an agent afloat, once again is assigned to Gibbs' team. He is now Senior Field Agent, and if necessary will become the acting Special Agent in Charge.

"That is to assure strong leadership from an important team within our agency, and to help it handle its normal caseloads and the added investigations stemming from the ongoing, ah, thing with Ari Haswari.

"In keeping with that increased caseload, I also have reassigned agent Paula Cassidy to the Major Case Response Team, and have approved the appointment of Detective Rizzoli as the Liaison to NCIS from Boston Police, and Dr. Isles as the Medical Liaison to NCIS from the state of Massachusetts.

"For now, Gibbs and his team will work as normal, with the addition of these four qualified professionals, as well as others within NCIS and from the FBI when needed."
Chapter 48

Chapter Summary

Big, long, LONG chapter to get you through the weekend.

Reaction by some of the most important characters from the MTAC meeting:

Tony reacts to his demotion

Jane and Maura talk about getting out and about, then run into Fornell

NCIS Director Morrow asks Gibbs and Kate Todd point blank if Ari’s right about them being in a relationship

NCIS Special Ops discusses its plans to take out Ari Haswari

Stan Burley tells Gibbs Tony got screwed - and that Gibbs needs to make things right

Also, we check in on Lt. Sean Cavanaugh and FBI agent Daniel Todd in Boston - and on Paddy Doyle, who’s kidnapped a BCU student to force him to hack into NCIS and the FBI to find Maura and Jane - so Paddy can bring them back to Boston himself.

Chapter 48

somewhere in Richmond, Virginia

Tony DiNozzo was pissed.

Through no fault of his own - as far as he knew, anyway - the director of NCIS had just demoted him.

Stan Burley, not Tony, was now the Senior Agent of the Major Case Response Team, according to Thomas Morrow. If Gibbs had to go into hiding, Stan, not Tony, would lead the team.

He didn't find out in a face-to-face with the director himself, nor from his boss, Gibbs.

He found out listening on a conference call via speaker phone while driving a Mossad officer and an FBI agent all over Richmond.

And that pissed Tony off more than anything: they wouldn't demote him to his face.

Michael Rivkin had the sense to place a tracking device on Ziva's car earlier in the day, before they left the hotel. It enabled them to follow the "rogue" Mossad officer without relying on local police - and risking tipping off Ari's network - when they had to stop for gas.

While Rivkin used the men's room and contacted the Mossad director, Tony was pumping gas, checking out a cute blonde and a hot brunette at the opposite pumps.

"You alright?" Seeley Booth, the FBI agent riding with Tony and Rivkin, asked DiNozzo.
"Me? Hell yeah," Tony cracked. "Hot chicks on our ten and two, filling up. Gotta love fall, and leather coats."

Booth put a large coffee on the pump. "For you," he said. "I'll toss your ham and cheese and chips on the dash."

"Thanks," Tony said, mind somewhat on the women, mostly on the conference call.

"Listen," Booth said. "I'm sorry that your director said that, did that-"

"Did what?"

"Well...that he demoted you."

"Is that what that was?"

"Well, he named the other guy Senior Agent on your team-"

"And what? Demoted me? Put me on the bench? Made me second-string? Small forward instead of point guard? Nah, that's not what I heard. Not at all...leather's nice, but summer sure is a helluva lot better, ain't it, Booth? Bikinis, short skirts, skin-"

Booth smiled, knowing that Tony was deflecting what he really felt, and not wanting to push him too much.

"I've seen guys in the Bureau treated like that," Booth said. "Absentmindedly, or in the name of the mission, or by some jerk trying to show his-"


"Yeah, I scored double figures in the Final Four, but I'm used to playing with superstars. Used to not having the spotlight on me, used to having the spotlight taken from me-"

Was he like this when he played college ball, Booth thought. The guy yearned to be the top dog on his team after his boss, and lived for his boss's approval - at least that's what Fornell told me. He's deflecting left and right, but he's bothered by it.

"Hey, if you wanna talk, I'm a good listener," Booth said.

"Okay," Tony said, momentarily taking Booth by surprise.

"Which one is hotter? The blonde finishing up, or the brunette who's about to drive off?"

So much for that, Booth thought.

"Agent DiNozzo," Rivkin yelled, carrying a coffee and fruit. "You should go use the restroom. I will finish filling the tank."

"Thanks," Tony said, as he jogged into the convenience mart, leaving Booth and Rivkin outside.

"Is he alright," Rivkin said to Booth, about Tony.

"He's mad, over what his agency's director said at the end," Booth replied. "You saw it on his face. I saw it out here while you were inside."
"It is for the benefit of the mission," Rivkin said. "The other agent is the better qualified man to lead DiNozzo's team-"

"Maybe, maybe not," Booth replied. "But wouldn't you rather hear about a demotion or change face-to-face?"

"In Mossad, what one prefers is irrelevant," Rivkin answered. "Given the threats Israel constantly faces, the mission takes precedence. Our agents cannot afford to focus on their personal preferences. Agent DiNozzo may be...angry...but he will get over it."

_Not as easily as you think_, Booth thought.

"How close are we to Ziva?" Booth asked Rivkin.

"Thirteen point six kilometers," he replied, looking at his smartphone, which showed a map pinpointing their own and Ziva's locations. "She is driving around this city."

"You know where she's headed? Or have a best guess?"

"Actually, yes," Rivkin replied, as Tony exited the mart, with two two-liters of sodas, a bag of peanuts and a copy of the _Richmond Times-Dispatch_.

"Ready to get back on the road, fellas?" Tony said, jumping in the back seat, and pulling out the sports section of the newspaper. "Gotta find Ziva, right? It's all about the team. That's what Coach Cooper and Coach Ayers always told me."

"I suppose, Agent Booth, you are driving," Rivkin said, as he got in from the passenger side.

"Suppose so," Booth replied, getting behind the wheel, tossing Tony's sandwich and chips back to him, and starting the engine. Moments later, the FBI car was back on the road, speeding towards where Rivkin suspected Ziva was headed.

**Los Angeles**

**NCIS Office of Special Projects**

**Ops Center**

Juliana Todd, one of the OSP's undercover agents, munched on a lollipop and twirled her now-blonde hair, while waiting on Leon Vance to commence the OSP's meeting on Ari Haswari.

"Change your hair color again, Jules?" asked G Callen, the team's Senior Agent, before handing her an orange juice. "Undercover op? Or you decide to switch from brunette again?"

"What if I'm going on a _date_?" Julie replied, smiling and winking at Callen.

"Since when do you have time to date?" Callen answered back, with a smile and a wink of his own.

"Why do you ask, oh man of mystery?" she said, looking him over. "You gave yourself a buzzcut, Callen?"

"As a matter of fact, I did," he said. "One of the many talents I've developed over the years."

"Looks _good_ on you," she answered, rubbing her hand along the sides and back of his head. "Men look _good_ with buzzcuts."
"You two gonna get a hotel room or do I have to tell Vance?"

Sam Hanna, Callen's closest friend and his work partner, pulled up a stool and sat between Callen and Juliana; in the back of the room stood the team's newest member, probationary agent Kensi Blye.

She was so new she wouldn't even get her badge until Thanksgiving morning, though Leon Vance - the operations manager - did issue her a gun.

Kensi, not even in her mid-twenties, looked around, at the others in the room, all whom separately had years of experience on her - including Juliana, the closest to her in age.

There's something going on between Juliana and Callen, Kensi thought. It's as plain as day. I can't possibly see myself getting involved with a coworker, much less falling for one. [1]

Whatever flirting was going on stopped when Vance walked back into the room.

Everyone - including the flirty couple, and Callen's buddy Sam - flipped to all-business mode when they saw Vance.

"If you weren't aware, this is the OSP-only portion of the meeting addressing Ari Haswari," Vance said as the picture of Haswari appeared on the Ops Center's big screen.

Over the next hour, Vance detailed his plans for the OSP to track and capture Haswari, separately and in conjunction with other NCIS field offices and the FBI.

"Eric" - Eric Beale, the team's technical expert and one of its intelligence analysts - "is coordinating NCIS's efforts to track Haswari and his network," Vance said.

Beale explained how Haswari had been traced to several locations along the east coast, in Israel, Somalia and Afghanistan, and that his American operations had been traced to three locations: Boston, Miami and Los Angeles.

"Haswari seems to bounce around," Vance explained. "As soon as he pops up in one area, he disappears. And then there is the matter of jurisdiction: Mossad has authority to capture him in Israel; we don't have diplomatic nor legal authorization to go after him in Somalia or Afghanistan, unless he were to step foot on a U.S. military base or diplomatic facility."

"So if he's smart, and trying to avoid us, he stays over there, and conducts his operations away from U.S. intelligence and military operations," Callen said.

"Which is what he's been doing," said Vance, who added that tracking Haswari's American operations has been easier.

"At some point, we expect that he will show up in the states, to go after his primary targets," Vance said.

Kensi noticed Juliana winced, one of those targets being her twin sister, Kate.

"When he does, we will lead the operation to capture him," Vance continued. "I will be coordinating the NCIS effort with Henrietta Lange, the director of our New York City field office. Agents from Norfolk, San Diego, Miami, New Orleans, Chicago, perhaps even Washington, may be involved. I anticipate involvement of Navy SEALs as well in such an operation. The full extent of personnel involved will depend in part how many men he has protecting him."

"It's been discussed before using SEALs exclusively in potential operations to capture bin Laden and
other terrorist leaders," said Sam Hanna, himself a former SEAL. "I know we can handle this type of operation, but why did SecDef and SecNav decide not to use the SEALs exclusively with Haswari?"

"Because currently, he's mainly a threat to a small number of Americans," Vance replied. "Whereas bin Laden is considered a threat to the country at large. Ari is a definite threat to a small group of people, and a potential possible threat to the U.S."

In short, when Ari stepped foot in the states and it was known for certain where he was, Special Ops was going to lead the way in apprehending him.

"And everyone in the agency is on board?" Juliana asked Vance.

"They are," he replied.

"Even Gibbs?" she asked.

"Agent Gibbs will not compromise our efforts, nor stand in our way," Vance said. "Now if Ari were to show up in his basement, of course, agent Gibbs would be within his rights to engage him."

Vance then explained that until Haswari showed up for certain in the U.S., the OSP would conduct its normal business and take its usual caseload.

"However, we will be keeping an eye on Washington, and on Ari's targets," Vance said. "Agent Todd. And, probationary agent Blye. You two will be watching them on our behalf, undercover."

"Meaning?" Juliana asked.

"Don't let on to the wrong people you're watching Gibbs, and your sister, and the couple from Boston," Vance explained. "You'll check in with me, and Macy, and Callen regularly, and you'll be available for Special Ops cases when needed. For now, though, consider yourselves based in Washington."

[1] Famous last words.

**Washington**

As MTAC emptied out - save for the techies normally assigned to work there this time of day - Jane Rizzoli took a few more moments to linger.

"Come on, hon," Maura Isles said to her friend and lover. "Everyone's leaving."

"Maybe we can get that Morrow guy to assign us a team of Marines so we can go out and see a movie," Jane said. "You can't go to a mall, Maura, and NOT ever go into a cineplex."

"It does look like a small movie theater," said FBI agent Gabriel Dean, as he walked up to Jane and Maura. "I don't think you need a whole 'team' of Marines. A few FBI agents would probably suffice."

"You volunteering, Gabriel?" Jane said.

"Maybe," he replied, "although I know you two are taken."

"Good," Jane answered, "though you're a good-looking guy. Can't you find someone at work?"

"Dating other FBI agents is verboten," Dean said. "The Bureau is keeping me busy anyway, right now, between this and other things they have me doing. Still, I would like to take you both to a
"Has to be a cineplex," Jane said. "Maura cannot go through life without experiencing a blockbuster."

"And Jane cannot go through life, as it were, without visiting the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and experiencing the National Symphony Orchestra, or the Washington Ballet," Maura interjected. "And we must visit the local theaters, such as the Shakespeare Theatre Company, as well as the U Street Corridor. Ford's Theatre, where President Lincoln was assassinated."

"How long you been planning all that?" Jane asked Maura, them and Dean now the only people besides the techies in MTAC.

"I've attended performances at the Kennedy Center numerous times in the past," Maura continued, as the entrance into MTAC reopened, "and visited many of the more popular and some of the more obscure attractions, museums and places of interest."

"We'd have to plan it out, with agent Gibbs, but that shouldn't be a problem," Dean said. "The most important thing is to make sure you're protected."

"And with enough advance planning, that wouldn't be a problem," said Tobias Fornell, who had walked back into MTAC. "I was looking for you both, Detective Rizzoli, Dr. Isles."

"Um uhkay," Jane muttered, before Maura elbowed her. "OW! Where'd that come from?"

"My doppelganger and our new mutual friend taught me that while you were brushing your teeth last night," Maura replied. "Agent Fornell, it's a pleasure seeing you again."

"Thank you, Dr. Isles," Fornell continued. "I wanted to touch base with you and Detective Rizzoli before I left."

Jane remained silent; Dean looked downward.

So Maura took the lead in the conversation, since Jane wasn't speaking up.

"Agent Fornell, is there something you wanted to discuss?" Maura asked.

"Yes," Fornell said. "I'm...sorry about yesterday, how it went. I'm sorry I didn't deliver the news to you in a more pleasant matter, and that the Bureau had to violate your privacy."

"Really." Jane.

"Detective-"

"Sir. Maura and I have been ripped from our homes, had our privacy violated, forced to reveal things about our lives at times and to degrees against our will, and we get confronted and ripped by the likes of you."

"Detective, Doctor," Fornell said. "I will apologize for not being as sensitive as I should have been, and I will emphasize to you that I and the Bureau have the very best intentions. I will not apologize for what the Bureau had to do and will have to do in order to protect you and your loved ones, and others, from this lunatic."

Jane walked off. "Come on, Maura," she said, walking up the ramp to the exit, and Maura trailing after her.
"Well, sir, that went well," Dean said, jokingly.

"I've seen worse, plenty of times, on the job and off," Fornell said. "Her reaction was mild."

"Compared to what?"

"If you ever met my ex-wife Diane, you'd understand."

**Director Thomas Morrow's office**

Whenever Gibbs discussed business with the Director of NCIS, it was almost always either on the phone, or in MTAC, or, at his invitation, in his office.

Gibbs had tremendous respect for Morrow, a former Navy Admiral. The man's presence and demeanor commanded respect, and Gibbs thought of Morrow as a man who always put the agency and its agents first, and had their backs.

Gibbs and Morrow did have a friendship of sorts, though Gibbs clearly saw Morrow as his boss, and THE boss of the agency. His respect included referring to the director as 'sir' and went far beyond that.

Morrow wasn't a man to waste time or words - and when one was ordered to meet with him in his office, it clearly was for a good, and important, reason.

Gibbs and agent Kate Todd were told to meet the director in his office after the MTAC Meeting, and both knew who the subject of the discussion was going to be.

"I'll get to the point," Morrow said. "Are you two in a relationship?"

Gibbs understood the director was doing his job.

Kate was taken aback - just like when Captain Vetich tried to prevent her from boarding the USS Philadelphia submarine to help Gibbs investigate a case. But she kept silent.

"Agent Gibbs, and Agent Todd?" Morrow said. "Please answer my question."

"No."

"No."

"Sir, if we were, you would have known it by now," Gibbs said. "I would have told you. You also are aware of my rules, including the one about relationships between coworkers. I don't make them lightly, Director, and I don't break them easily."

"Director," Kate said, "Gibbs is my boss. That's all he is. I have no interest in him. In fact, I make it a point to separate my personal life from my job."

Morrow sat back in his chair.

"That's what I thought," Morrow said. "You both know, however, why this is pertinent. The terrorist thinks there is something there, and because of it not only are your lives threatened, but I have two women from outside the agency whom we are protecting and whom we have hired because Haswari is convinced they are just like you two."

"Sir, may I speak freely?" Kate asked the director.
"By all means."

"Director," said Kate. "Do you really want to take the word of a maniac, a counter agent, a man who is acting with terrorist groups, who could have tried to kill the President if he wanted to? A man who has authorized the sending of hundreds of horrific emails to American women, who has gone so far as to send letters in blood on women's doors? Who probably was behind the death of that woman in Idaho?"

"He thinks that about Gibbs and I, that we're some sort of couple. Let him. I know better. Gibbs is my boss, and a man I highly respect, but he is not my lover and never has been. For that matter, I have not dated, nor do I date, within the agency. I learned that lesson from my time in the Secret Service. If I wanted to date another NCIS agent or employee, you and Gibbs will be the first to know. I promise you."

Gibbs was impressed by his young agent - how well she stood up for herself and spoke her mind, in a professional manner, and with great respect for the director and without the fear that most agents in her position might feel.

"Gibbs?" Morrow said.

"Sir, I could say the same thing about myself," Gibbs said. "That's the reason I have a Rule 12."

"Very well," Morrow said, standing up and motioning for Gibbs and Kate to stand themselves. "I will remind you there are no rules in this agency regarding relationships between agents, even those on the same team. I myself do require full disclosure, and I am confident that if you two were in a relationship you would have told me as soon as you could have.

"I also take you at your word when you say you're not," Morrow said as he moved to conclude the brief meeting. "We can't do anything about what the bastard thinks. We CAN do a lot about what he does, and how we respond."

Gibbs and Kate walked out of Morrow's office, to see agent Stan Burley waiting for them.

"Kate," Gibbs said, "go take a lunch break. Take Cassidy with you, and see if Rizzoli wants to join you."

She left the hallway, leaving Stan and Gibbs alone.

"Boss," Stan said, "I know-"

"You know what?"

"I know that making me Senior Agent wasn't your idea."

"The director thought it was the best idea," Gibbs replied. "I couldn't say no to it."

"Tony's gonna be pissed-"

"I'll talk to Tony. As far as I'm concerned, you both are senior agents. You do your job."

"Boss, if it...comes to you having to go into hiding, you're still the boss," Burley replied. "If it comes to where I have to run the team, that's fine...but Tony is the Senior Agent. For that matter, so is Paula...I think they're both going to be ready to lead their own teams, sooner than later-"

"You trying to tell me something, Burley?"
What's the worst thing Gibbs can do to me for speaking my mind, Burley thought. Fire me? He needs to hear this.

"Yeah I am, Gibbs," Stan said. "If the Director orders something it's gonna be done. We both know that. You can't just add to a team and demote the number two guy and not have problems.

"Tony was jealous of me when we had that case on the USS Enterprise. I think there's still some jealousy there, and I don't think he's wrong. I don't blame him. Boss, he's a young guy but he's a hell of an agent. The director yanking him down a notch like that, for whatever reason, is gonna mess with his head...you need to talk to him. He wants to do a fine job and he wants your approval. If you talk to him and tell him why this is the way Morrow wants it, I think he'll be fine."

"Anything else, Burley?"

Did anything I just said get through to the man?

"No, boss."

"Then you and Cassidy and Rizzoli find out what's going on with that lieutenant and ensign."

Gibbs watched Burley walk away, a little frustrated - and he knew Stan was right.

Tony deserved an explanation, and definitely deserved to find out about his status from Gibbs, if not the Director himself, face to face.

And that's what he was going to give Tony.

Boston

FBI field office headquarters

"Now that that's done-" agent Daniel Todd said, sitting back at his desk, drinking a can of Pepsi - "I think it's safe to say our day is not even half through."

"Speak for yourself," answered Sean Cavanaugh, Lieutenant Detective of the Homicide Division of the Boston Police Department.

"Sadly, I'm speaking for us both," Todd retorted. "We still have to interrogate our friend T. Pike-"

"Not our friend. Not mine," Cavanaugh said. "Look. Things got heated back at Homicide with him-"

"Yeah. I know," Todd said. "That's why I'm conducting the interrogation. Any questions you have, you'll get to ask, but they'll go through me. I don't want to blow this."

Cavanaugh took a drink from his coffee. "Hell," he muttered, "I might have blown the damn thing back there."

"Wasn't like Pike was the model citizen himself," Todd replied. "He was egging you on. He was stirring things up. Question isn't just why, but who was pushing him."

"You thinking the terrorist has something to do with him?"

"Sean, have you ever known Pike to be that way?"

"Yeah...but not that intense. It's like he was...was..."
"Dialed up? Twice as bad?"

"More like ten times," Cavanaugh replied. "He's known to have been jealous of Dr. Isles, ever since he got passed over for the medical examiner's job after Macy left. He's also known as a blabbermouth-"

"And I have to ask, Sean. Are you someone who flies off the handle like you did at Homicide? And you know you're not the only one I'm going to ask."

"I know that, Danny...no. Not usually. This whole thing with Jane and Maura has me wound up."

"The protection deal?"

"And them not being here where they belong."

"Any of it have to do with their...being a couple?"

"No...hell no," Cavanaugh continued. "Danny, I will admit it doesn't necessarily surprise me about Jane. Maura, yeah; I never pegged her for the type-"

"There's no one 'type', Sean," Todd said. "Some women fit the stereotype, yeah. Most don't. And I'm sure you'll find they're the same exact people they've always been."

"I ain't sure about nothing," Cavanaugh answered. "The only thing I'm sure of is I and a whole lot of other people want them home, and that we all want to catch these bastards before they do anything bad."

"I'm right with you," Todd said. "Something else I'm sure of: they may have to stay in Washington. But we're not going to sit back and do nothing and put all our trust in Jethro Gibbs to take care of Jane and Maura - and my sister Kate."

"What do you have in mind?"

"For starters: I talk to Pike. We talk to Charles Hoyt's former guard, Rod Mason, and Price, the warden at Central Boston. We find out how Hoyt's connected to Haswari and their role. Then we work together, with Boston PD's Special Ops unit, and find out how big Haswari's network is locally."

"And we shut it down," Cavanaugh said. "And whatever the other bastard - Hoyt - has going on."

"All of it," Todd said. "Completely."

**somewhere else in Boston**

None of Paddy Doyle's top lieutenants could remember a time when the man was *this* angry, *this* hot, profanities flying off the walls.

It was a barely controlled rage, and they thought they'd be forced to seek medical attention for Paddy - covertly, of course.

But the old crime chief calmed down, as his brain took control of his emotions and Doyle started thinking.

"Bring the kid to ME," Doyle ordered his lieutenants.

Seconds later, Kumar "Joey" Patel - a sophomore from Boston Cambridge University, majoring in
A third-generation American, was a technical prodigy, looking to have a good time and make a lot of money.

Right now, however, his only concern was to give Paddy Doyle what he wanted.

If he didn't, he had been told after being thrown into the back of an SUV 50 minutes ago, "bad things" would happen to him and his loved ones.

"They tell you why you're here?" Doyle grumbled to the kid.

"They-they-they said what would happen to me if I didn't help you, sir."

"What would happen, kid?"

"Buh-buh-bad th-things."

"Only if you're dumb...and from what they tell me, you're one of the smartest and brightest kids at that college of yours," Doyle said. "Better you help me than take your chances with that goddamned terrorist. FBI's looked at you, right?"

"They-they-they talked to me -"

"And now you're gonna look at them. And something called N-C-I-S."

"FBI? NCIS? Why? And what?"

"Because I want my daughter back home where she belongs!" Doyle roared. "And she's gotten knocked up by that dyke cop who's got a hold on her, and if I don't bring her back, my daughter won't come back home either!"

"Boy," one of Doyle's lieutenants said to him, breathing in his face, placing a pistol to his temple. "Mr. Doyle's daughter - Dr. Maura Isles, the medical examiner of this state - and her...friend...Jane Rizzoli, a detective from Boston police. They're both being held by the feds in Washington, D.C."

Doyle calmed down, and glared at the lieutenant.

"Put the damn pistol down, McGregor," Doyle said. "Now."

The lieutenant did as he was told, then stepped aside for Doyle.

"Boy," Doyle said. "Right now. Your only job, your only mission is to find my daughter Maura and that cop Jane. Search through the feds' databases. I know you can do it. I know you WILL do it, and WILL find them. And when you do - when you tell me the hotel room or house or safe house they're staying in, I'm sending my men to bring Maura and Rizzoli back home."

Doyle stepped back. "Take him to that computer room," he said, waving his hand to dismiss him. "Feed him, three times a day, let him take a piss and shit when he needs to...and kid. I want an answer by TONIGHT."
Chapter 49

Chapter Summary

Paddy Doyle's goons force a college student to hack into NCIS;

McGee tries to stay one step ahead of the hacker while throwing him off Jane and Maura's safe house (which happens to be Gibbs' house, and where Kate also is staying);

Trent Kort gets made and narrowly avoids the FBI;

a dying Charles Hoyt is screaming for Jane to come to him;

Maura conducts the autopsy of Hoyt's victims via live streaming from NCIS;

and Angela calls Jane to confront her about certain rumors regarding Jane and Maura.

Chapter 49

Boston

"You heard Mr. Doyle, boy!" shouted Stinson, another of Paddy Doyle's goons. "Get to work!"

Kumar Patel - known as Joey to his family and friends - stood before an impressive array of computer technology.

Whomever put this together, he thought, knew what they were doing. I wonder who that might be - it sure couldn't be any of these idiots-

"HEY PUNK! THE MAN SAID GET TO WORK!" McGregor shouted, before drawing his pistol and pointing it right at Joey's head. "You ain't the ONLY geek we can get!...stop wasting time and FIND Mr. Doyle's DAUGHTER!"

It's remarkable what one can do when one's life is threatened, Joey thought.

It was easier than he thought, hacking into NCIS; he figured they'd be easier to hack into than the FBI.

As Joey got deeper into the NCIS database, he found references to Maura Isles and Jane Rizzoli.

"They're in some kind of protective custody," Joey said.

"Find out the details. Where they are, where they're staying," said Harris, another of Doyle's lieutenants, before placing a call on his cell. "Hey...kid's making faster progress than we expected; we may be able to get a location quick..."

Washington

Navy Yard
NCIS headquarters

Tim McGee was the first to notice the remote incursion into NCIS's secured database, and the hacker looking at files related to Maura and Jane.

Of course, Jane and her brother, Frankie, would be talking to Kate, thought McGee, right at Kate's desk.

McGee's fingers flew around the keyboard, sending a message to Cyber Crimes about the hacking while trying to trace him and prevent any further hacking.

Great. Both Rizzolis are looking at something over Kate's shoulder, so I can't send her a IM. How do I let Gibbs know without tipping them off?

"McGee."

Gibbs found him, and in fact was standing over his shoulder, for God knows how long.

"Boss? I-I-I didn't see you-"

"McGee. Keep working on that secret project. Wouldn't want to tip off our guests," he said, looking at the Rizzolis and winking.

"Uh...yeah," Kate said, picking up that something was going on and not knowing what it might be, other than she better keep her 'guests' the hell away from McGee and Gibbs.

As Kate's phone rang, McGee kept frantically typing; the hacker was already deep into the database, and McGee and Cyber Crimes were barely holding him at bay.

"Gibbs," Kate said. "That was Ducky. They've set up some kind of connection to Boston? There's some bodies up there that they want Dr. Isles to look at."

"Uh, boss, that was my doing," McGee said. "Got a phone call."

"-from Boston Police asking for a remote setup on an autopsy involving alleged victims of Charles Hoyt," Gibbs finished. "Good work, McGee."

"Hoyt?" Jane Rizzoli said. "What victims?"

"Four bodies in a car found at the bottom of a pool based on an anonymous tip," Gibbs said. "Detective Frost will explain when you get down to Ducky's. Kate. Take Jane and Frankie down there. McGee and I will stay up here and finish this."

"Finish what," Jane said.

"Special business. NCIS eyes only," Gibbs said.

Thankfully, to McGee anyway, Jane didn't push the matter, though she and Frankie did exchange looks and then give Gibbs a 'something's going on and I'm going to find out' look.

Moments after the Rizzolis and Kate got on the back elevator, the hacker got into the portion of the database neither Gibbs nor McGee wanted him in.

"I got an idea but I have to move now," McGee said, as he began to edit selected portions of the database to throw off the hacker.
McGee's phone rang, and Gibbs took it. "Gibbs...you found the hacker...Boston?...and the address?...send it to me, to Agent McGee, and to FBI Agent Tobias C. Fornell."

"What are you doing McGee?" Gibbs said, placing a call to Fornell on his cell.

"They've found the location Jane and Maura are staying," McGee said. "Or they think they have."

"THINK?" Gibbs roared, as Fornell answered on his end. "Fornell! Gibbs...we have a situation. Some hacker in Boston has hacked into NCIS...they found Jane and Maura...and the address they're staying. We have the hacker's physical address; can you send agents?"

"Boss! It's not what you think-" McGee yelled.

"MCGEE!" Gibbs shouted in McGee's ear. "You better NOT have given Ari or Paddy Doyle or whatever's on the other end my home address!"

"Boss...I-I-I didn't. I wrote a virus, that will give them random address of landmarks in the area, before settling on the address of Hogwarts."

"Tobias hold on...WHAT McGee?"

"I gave them a fake address for the safe house. 39446 Hogwarts Avenue, Washington, D.C. The backup address is the Pentagon."

Gibbs switched back to Fornell. "McGee says he's given them a fake address."

"What's the address?"

"Something called Hogwarts, Tobias. And the backup he says is the Pentagon."

Fornell chuckled, getting the reference that Gibbs was completely unaware of. "Not a bad idea, Jethro, to send whomever this is on a wild goose chase."

**Boston**

Joey saw *Hogwarts* and knew NCIS was trying to throw him off; however, Joey had a pistol at his head to give him motivation to keep searching.

"I'm going to try something," Joey said, "and get past this Hogwarts crap."

Joey wrote a code that – he hoped – would serve as a beacon, showing his location to anyone on the other side, then resumed his search for the location of the safe house.

FBI Boston got emails, texts and phone calls alerting it of the situation, and the neighborhood the hacker was in.

**NCIS**

"Boss," McGee said, as two Cyber Crimes agents looked over his right shoulder and Gibbs over his left. "This guy's good—"

"Be better," Gibbs replied.

"I mean, he's good; he's telling us where he's *at*. Coding – broadcasting coordinates of his location —"
"Pull those coordinates and put them up on a screen," Gibbs barked. Moments later, a map of south Boston appeared, with a glowing dot on a house in a neighborhood.

"I know that area," said one of the Cyber Crimes agents. "I'm from Boston. That's near Dorchester. MacNeil Street…and we have an address."

"Send that address to Boston FBI and Boston police," Gibbs ordered.

**Boston**

Boston FBI and Boston police's Special Operations Unit fled to the double decker house in Dorchester, even as Joey continued to hack around NCIS, while McGee and Cyber Crimes were doing their best to block and divert him.

"There's something embedded in the coding for the beacon," one of the Cyber agents noticed. "Look…there's a message in here."

"What is it?" McGee said.

"HELP…Paddy Doyle."

"You think it's one of Doyle's men?" Gibbs asked the agent, then McGee.

"It could be, sir," the agent from Boston replied. "Paddy's real notorious up there. Lots of dirty stuff. I wouldn't put it past him to find somebody to do his work for him, if he's the one behind this."

**Boston**

FBI and SOU got Gibbs' message, though they were proceeding as if whomever was in the house may be some of Ari Haswari's men.

As the feds and SOU closed in, Joey kept digging around.

"THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU FOUND THEIR LOCATION!" one of the goons roared in Joey's ear.

The kid kept his composure and turned to the goon. "These ARE the feds," he said. "They know I'm in the system and are trying to head me off. I have to stay ahead of them—"

"Goddamn right you do," the goon said. "You at least know why Paddy's daughter and that dyke are being held by those friggin' Navy cops?"

Actually, he could tell him that, without having to make something up.

"Yeah," Joey replied. "They're in protection because of a threat to their lives from a terrorist known as Ari Haswari…and I've found some references to his people being here in Boston."

"Son of a bitch!" the goon mused, then left the room; Joey could hear him talking to Doyle in the background.

"Yes, Mr. Doyle, the kid's running into resistance from the feds," Harris said.

"You said he was smart enough to get past them!" Doyle thundered, from his own safe house.

"They ARE the feds, sir. He HAS confirmed that Haswari is the reason your daughter and that woman are down there—"
"Have you been listening to me?" Paddy responded. "Of course I know that goddamned terrorist is threatening them!"

"There's something else, sir," Harris said. "The kid found records in their database indicating that Haswari has operatives here. In Boston. And perhaps embedded in Boston PD and your organization."

"WHAT? THE F**K?" Even Joey could hear Doyle scream profanities; Harris held the cell phone far from his ear.

"We're gonna find these f*****s!" Paddy yells. "Make sure that kid finds where Jane and Maura are being held - are they in Washington? New York?"

"Sir, they're probably in Washington—"

"HARRIS! FEDS! AND COPS! OUTSIDE!"

FBI and Boston PD SOU had the house surrounded, and armed to the teeth.

There were only four of Paddy's men in the house with Joey, and three of the men kept a level head.

It was the one without the level head who started the firefight.

The goon, nervous upon hearing Harris yelling about the feds, saw something run past a side window and ran himself to the back of the house, gun in hand. Against orders he opened the door, and shot at a stray cat.

That of course got the attention of the feds and SOU, and the goon ducked back into the house just in time to see one of the front windows shattered by a bullet.

"THE F**K!"

"STINSON WHAT IN HELL ARE YOU DOING—"

"GODDAMN IT GET THE RIFLE! CALL PADDY CALL FOR BACKUP!"

"GET THAT F*****G KID DOWN ON THE FLOOR!"

"F*** NO HE'S OUR TICKET OUTTA HERE!"

The other front window was shattered moments later, by a tear gas canister.

"WHAT IN HELL IS GOING ON THERE?" Joey heard Paddy's voice from the cell phone, but the four men were focused on firing on whomever was outside the house.

Joey stayed down; the gunfire from both sides seemed to last forever.

He finally got up, looked around, saw two of the men dead, a third laying in a pool of his own blood, barely breathing; Joey decided to make a run for it.

And two feet from the door, he felt the cold barrel of a rifle at the back of his head.

"Move, goddamn it," he heard the man say, as he grabbed the collar of Joey's shirt.

It was Stinson, the guy who started this mess.
"YOU F*****S LET ME GO OR I SHOOT THIS BASTARD!" Stinson yelled. "BOY! WALK!"

Joey froze in fear, hearing the goon but not understanding him, paralyzed by fear.

He felt something tear through his shoulder; and blood splatter on his head and shoulders, then barely noted that two different men – one with a FBI badge – were guiding him towards a van of some kind.

Washington

Joey's link to NCIS shut down during the firefight, and now McGee and the rest of Cyber Crimes were working on shoring up the agency's firewalls.

Gibbs, Fornell and Director Morrow were in MTAC, talking with FBI agent Daniel Todd and Boston PD SOU Lieutenant White.

"Three are dead, and one more is in critical condition, along with the kid," White said. "All four are known associates of Paddy Doyle."

"Paddy Doyle? The crime lord?" Morrow said.

"The crime lord of a major American city," Fornell interjected.

"Whomever he is, it's incredulous that he could do this to our database. I want to know why, and I want to know now."

"Director," Fornell said. "Doyle's people may not have the resources of an al-Qaeda. But this might boil down to something simpler."

"Such as?"

"Never underestimate the love of a father for his daughter – and what he may do to get her back," Fornell said.


"Director—"

"Should I reconsider Ms. Isles' and Ms. Rizzoli's accommodations? Should I stick them and you and Caitlin in a safe house?"

"Director. With all due respect. We're ALREADY in a safe house," Gibbs said.

"You think so…I'll take your word for it for now, Gibbs. I've trusted you in the past and I trust you now. You know I've had some misgivings about these arrangements; they haven't eased in the wake of this episode. Now with Patrick Doyle trying to find these women – I consider their lives on the line. I expect you to act accordingly."

Boston

Paddy Doyle panicked after hearing the gunfire on the other end of the phone, and decided to call his contact at Boston PD.

He couldn't answer, since he was sitting in a holding cell, waiting to be interrogated by Detectives Vince Korsak and Roz Framus.
"Somebody tell me what in *hell* happened at that *house*!" Doyle roared; Gallagher informed his boss the FBI and SOU had killed three men, a fourth was in critical condition, and the kid was in serious condition, and cooperating with the FBI.

Doyle hit the roof – for the sixth time that day – then panicked.

*What if I'M the one that got made?*

**Boston**

**FBI field office**

Paddy Doyle wasn't Boston FBI's only concern at the moment.

"You *sure* of this?"

After listening to the audio from the bugs placed at the Central Boston Federal Medical Center around Charles Hoyt's room - and looking at the photographs of Hoyt's new guard - Daniel Todd was besides himself.

"You sure the Agency is involved?" Todd said to Agent Cal Hall.

"Sir," Hall told Todd, "they *have* to be. The man in the photographs is someone I've run into before. I'd recognize him anywhere."

"Trent Allan Kort. CIA," Todd said. "The Agency isn't authorized to operate within the U.S.-"

"We all know CIA's run operations like that before," said Agent Mark Williams.

"Let's run facial recognition on this guy against Kort," Todd said. "I'm not going to take any chances. I want to know what this guy - whether he's CIA or otherwise - is up to. We'll check his cover story here; I'm sending you two to lead a team to secure the room and bring this guy in."

**Central Boston Federal Medical Center**

**Charles Hoyt's hospital room**

Trent Kort went back and forth, again and again, on whether he should send 'The Surgeon', Charles Hoyt, to the afterlife.

The Agency had not ordered him to do the deed - per se. It directed Kort to observe Hoyt because of his recent alliance with Haswari.

It never told Kort to kill Hoyt.

It was mentioned, however, that if Hoyt happened to meet his demise, it would be most unfortunate, but of course the Agency does not officially sanction such actions against American citizens, even if they would deserve it.

Kort had a vial of poison in his jacket pocket; what kind of poison it was, Kort couldn't tell you - all he knew was that the poison, once administered, would do its job within minutes.

Kort brought Hoyt his lunch, contemplating whether to end his mission early or extend it another day.

After leaving the cafeteria, getting on the elevator and exiting it on Hoyt's floor, he made his way
down the first two of the three hallways leading to Hoyt's room.

As Kort prepared to turn the corner, taking him to the nurses' area, and to Hoyt, the CIA agent heard a single word shouted in his earpiece:

"Abort!"

Kort stopped, whispering a one-word reply:

"Acknowledged."

Kort left the tray, backtracked to the nearest exit, and entered it to start going down a stairwell just as two FBI agents ran down the hall.

"You go to the nurses station! I'll take the stairwell!" Kort heard one of the FBI agents say, as he exited the stairwell on the next floor below.

Kort then ran 70 yards to an office; he ducked in, and a few minutes later walked out in a disguise: a cowboy hat, a long-haired wig, fake beard, a white shirt and a bolo tie, cowboy boots, and long leather coat.

Kort - who was science advocate John Reed to anyone who asked - made his way to the next elevator, waited until it opened, then hit the button for the main lobby.

He walked out, past several FBI agents, to a SUV driven by a fellow CIA agent.

By the time Kort was made, and the SUV identified, it was found abandoned ten blocks away, the driver and his passenger long gone.

"We lost him, sir," Agent Williams told Daniel Todd via phone. "We're looking at surveillance footage now. Hoyt and his room are secured; the facility knows the Bureau is taking command of Hoyt's security arrangements."

"Dammit!" Todd cursed. "No sign of Kort anywhere?"

"No sir."

"Make sure you have two agents there at all times, and they are to give the man only what he needs," Todd replied. "This guy may deserve to die, but that's not an issue for us - nor any other agency - to decide. Examine his food; make sure it's clean...in fact, move Hoyt, and sweep his room. I want to know if our Agency friend or whatever he is left any surprises."

**Boston FBI/Central Boston Federal Medical Center**

Minutes later, Todd got another call from the prison hospital.

It was Hoyt.

Todd took the call.

"Agent Todd," Hoyt purred, between hacking coughs. "Are you related to Ari's friend Caitlin?"

"Hoyt," Todd replied, "why did you want to talk to me?"

"I want to talk with Jane! Why won't you let me talk with Jane!"
Todd paused a few beats. "What is it you want with her? Why not talk to us?"

"I want to talk with Jane! Only to Jane!"

"About what, Hoyt?...at least tell me what you want to ask her. What you want to tell her."

"That's between Jane and I...brother of Ari's friend...hello?"

"I'm here. Why don't you tell ME-"

"I have something to tell you, Caitlin's brother," Hoyt said, hacking and wheezing. "If you let Jane come to me, I'll give up the names and burial sites of everyone I've ever killed."

"Names? Sites?"

"Everyone. All 3,000 of them..." Hoyt hacked, wheezed and coughed some more; Todd thought this guy is clearly delusional, then switched to his cell phone.

"Do we have medical reports on Hoyt?" Todd said to the agent on site, Todd Hausman.

"Danny, his doctors say the cancer's spread to his brain. They're giving him anywhere from a day to a week."

"Thanks Todd," Daniel Todd said, as he heard Hoyt yelling for him.

"I'm here, Hoyt," Todd said. "How many people did you kill again?"

"Eight hundred," Hoyt said. "BUT I WANT TO TALK TO JANE!"

"Why!" Todd replied. "Do you want to kill her yourself? Or give her up to Ari?"

Todd heard a bit less hacking, and coughing, and several moments of silence before Hoyt finally said a word.

"How did you know about that?" Hoyt said.

"Hoyt," Todd told him, "we know all about Ari. And Rod Mason. And this other guard who told you Ari sent him. We know all about you and Ari and your special arrangement. And I can tell you the only people you're telling about those bodies and victims are US-the FBI."

Hoyt responded with silence; in fact he never said another word, to Todd, to the agents in his room, nor to his doctors or the nurses assigned to attend to him.

After instructing Hausman to have the nurses draw blood to search for abnormalities, Todd placed a call to his boss, and to the director of the Bureau. They got through to the director of the CIA, who feigned ignorance of Trent Kort's activities and promised to give them "an answer" by Thanksgiving Day.

Washington

NCIS

Dr. Donald Mallard's autopsy room

Gibbs walked through the entrance into autopsy, and saw everyone in the room standing in front of two monitors, both streaming a live feed of corpses from the autopsy room at Boston PD.
Maura Isles officially was conducting the autopsy of the four alleged victims of Charles Hoyt, the Wilson family, gone missing several years ago. Their bodies were reduced to skeletons; Maura's assistant, Susie Chang, was handling the bodies in Boston, with Detective Barry Frost observing.

Ducky Mallard asked the occasional question, while Jane and Frankie Rizzoli, Kate Todd and Ducky's assistant, Jimmy Palmer, looked on.

Gibbs tapped on Jane and Frankie's shoulders, and motioned for them to follow him out to the hallway, where he explained what had just happened with the hacker and Paddy Doyle's men in Boston.

"Kid claims he was coerced," Gibbs said. "That sound consistent with Doyle to you?"

"Yeah," Jane replied. "Doyle's no prince. It sounds like something he'd do."

"Did they find Maura and Jane's safe house, Agent Gibbs?" Frankie asked.

"No...though Agent McGee did give them the address of something called 'Hogwarts'?" Gibbs replied; Jane and Frankie both looked at each other, at first in confusion, then laughed after realizing what McGee did.

It was the first time the Rizzolis had laughed since arriving in Washington.

Back in autopsy, Maura was wrapping up the autopsy.

"Susie, zoom in one more time on their necks, all four of them," Maura said.

"Ducky," Kate said, whispering in his ear. "They're skeletons that have been in the pond for, what, five, six years? How can you determine a cause of death?"

"My dear," Ducky replied, "it is true these poor souls have been in their watery grave all that time, and even though the cold water preserved their remains remarkably, one would normally expect to not find much material to work with, as it were. Medical examiners like Dr. Isles and myself are trained to find the answers to the questions these victims pose to us, no matter how steep our challenge might be."

"Susie, a moment-Caitlin, I couldn't help but overhear your question to Dr. Mallard," Maura said. "Fortunately, the answer here is much clearer than you'd typically expect and I'm ready to give my opinion...but Jane needs to be in the room. Do you know where she is?"

"I'll get her," Kate said; moments later, the Rizzolis and Gibbs were with the rest, in front of the monitors.

"It's my opinion, based on the tool marks Susie found and that I'm seeing, on all of the c3 vertebrae, that each of the victims suffered a lateral incised wound that encompassed both left and right corradeds and jugulars," Maura stated.

"Their throats were slit," Gibbs and Jane said in unison.

"For those of you who weren't familiar with 'The Surgeon', there you go," Jane said. "They probably were just eating sandwiches at that park, enjoying a nice day, and had their throats slashed by that bastard."

Boston
Frost left Chang and went looking for Korsak; he found Korsak, and fellow Homicide detective Roz Framus, interrogating a uniformed officer, who confessed to being an informant for Paddy Doyle.

The uniform whined about Paddy threatening him, and his family, and he wasn't going to hurt Angela, just keep tabs on her for Paddy.

Korsak had Frost track down Angela to make sure she was safe; when Frost ran down to the Division One Cafe, he was told by Stanley that Angela had left with "two of those FBI people".

A phone call to FBI verified that Angela had left early, and was back at Maura's house, but the FBI agents said Angela couldn't talk to Frost "at the moment."

Frost had the agent put Angela's son, and Jane and Frankie's brother, Tommy, on the phone.

"Tommy, it's Frost, from Homicide. Your mom okay?"

"If you can call all this okay," Tommy replied. "Ma's trying to call Jane, Frost."

"Tommy, we're just checking up on her; she left work early, and Stanley said she went back home. I'm calling to make sure that's what happened."

"You know why she went home early, Detective?"

"Tommy, is she sick?"

"You know what they're saying about Jane? And Maura?"

Washington

Given the hacker incident, and McGee's ongoing work on discovering how Joey managed to hack into NCIS's database, Gibbs decided to stick around a little longer. He gave Jane and Frankie the option of sticking around or going back to Gibbs's house; they decided to wait, especially since Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy hadn't returned to the office, and Jane was working a case with them.

Jane's cell phone rang, as she leaned on Tony DiNozzo's desk.

"Ma?"

"Jane? It's your mother."

"Yeah, Ma. I know that. Frankie's here with me. How're you and Tommy doing?"

"That...that's good. Tommy and I and Frankie can talk to you then."

Jane noticed the tone in her mother's voice, and realized something was wrong.

"Ma? Ma...are you okay?"

"Jane, I'm wondering that about you. You...and Maura...I want you to explain that to me and Frankie and Tommy, Jane-"

Oh God. Ma and Tommy know, Jane thought. "Explain what, Ma?" Jane said.

"Explain if everything they're saying about you up here is a lie or the truth," Angela said.

Frankie looked at her, wide-eyed, having heard Angela over Jane's earpiece.
How crappier can this day get, Jane thought.
The ‘abstract’ of Jane and Maura’s formal coming out to Angela, Frankie and Tommy, via phone (note: the longer, extended version is still in beta, and will be posted in an upcoming chapter).

Chapter 50
Washington
NCIS headquarters

"Gibbs!"

Jane Rizzoli - with her brother Frankie close behind - ran to Gibbs in the bullpen.

"Gibbs! I need somewhere to talk privately, and fast!" Jane said in a rush; Gibbs could hear Jane and Frankie’s mother, Angela, on Jane’s phone.

"Ma!...Ma!...I’m trying to find somewhere private...I'm in a federal office building, Ma!...Frankie, take the phone!"

Jane handed Frankie her phone, leaving him to calm down his - and Jane’s - upset mother, and their confused brother Tommy, who was sitting next to Angela back in Boston, at Maura’s house.

"Gibbs, I need a favor and I need it now!" Jane whispered. "Ma...she knows about me and Maura...and now I gotta explain it to her."

"And you can't do that here," Gibbs said, thinking fast and motioning for her to follow him.

"Wait-I need Frankie-" Jane said, as Frankie saw the two moving towards the back elevator. "Frankie come on!"

"Where are we going?" he asked. "No...Ma...she's still here...no she's not putting you off-"

"Some place with privacy," Gibbs told Frankie, and Jane.

Forensics

Shortly afterwards, Gibbs led Jane and Frankie off the elevator into Abby Sciuto's lab.

The pig-tailed, Gothic forensics scientist was examining blood work for the dead Naval lieutenant and ensign from the case agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy were working on (and that Jane was assisting them with).

As usual with Abby, she was bouncing around, perky and upbeat, in time with whatever gothic or industrial rock band she had playing on her stereo at the moment.

Jane, momentarily distracted by the scene, wondered if the music was Green Satan or Feminist Palin or some other weird band she had never heard of.
Frankie had come across goths before, and was mesmerized by the contrast - goth, federal agency, perky person bouncing around - before being brought back to the moment by the sound of his mother on Jane's phone.

"What...what on earth is that noise?" he heard Angela yelling.

Gibbs took it all in stride.

"Gibbs!" Abby shouted. "I don't have anything new on the blood work to show you, but I am glad you're here. What are you bringing to Ducky's Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow-?

Gibbs said nothing, instead talking to Abby in sign language, telling her to turn down her stereo so they could talk.

After she did so, Abby noticed Jane and Frankie standing near the doorway, and she signed to Gibbs 'who's the guy with Detective Rizzoli? Are they here with you?'

"Abs," Gibbs said - in spoken English - "they need privacy. This is the first and only place that came to mind. Is this something you have to work on right now?"

"Well, kinda..." Abby said. "Will it take long?"

"Abs," Gibbs whispered. "She's coming out to her mother."

"Oh...OOOHHH." Abby replied. "I could work in my office, and shut the door..."

"Good," Gibbs said, then turned towards the Rizzolis. "Detective, Officer, Abby will work in her office. She won't hear you," Gibbs said to them. "I'll tell everyone else to stay out; Abby can come to them."

"Thank you," Jane said to Gibbs.

"Do you want me to have Dr. Isles join you?" Gibbs replied.

"Yeah," Jane said. "Ma's probably gonna want to talk to her about this, too."

**Autopsy**

Maura and Ducky were wrapping up for the day - Ducky had finished his examinations of the dead lieutenant and ensign long ago, and Thanksgiving was looming.

Ducky was going to host the Major Case Response Team's fifth annual Thanksgiving dinner tomorrow, and he wanted to get home to get a head start.

At the moment, turkey and dressing was not the topic of conversation.

"I must confess, Maura, that although technology offers a world of new opportunities for medical examination, I prefer an old-fashioned, hands-on approach," Ducky told her as he packed his bag.

"You're not alone," Maura replied. "I have to admit the same. I would much rather prefer to work with the bodies myself...were you aware, Ducky, that two years ago at the Medical Examiners' North American Conference in San Francisco, Dr. Estella of the University of New York proposed the use of video observation as a way to most efficiently conduct medical examinations in a 21st century environment? It was written up in the Journal of Medical Examinations' June issue."
"Ah, yes, dear Maura," Ducky mused. "An old colleague of mine from Johns Hopkins in Baltimore told me recently about that report; I do remember. In fact, there was an overwhelming negative response to it-
"
"Filming it doesn't beat being there on the scene, Duck," said Gibbs, as he strode into the vast autopsy room.

"Hello, Agent Gibbs," Maura said, with a pleasant and polite demeanor.

"Ah, Jethro," Ducky replied. "Speaking of being there, I do hope you plan to join us tomorrow afternoon. Abigail and Mr. Palmer have been helping me prepare our dinner. Some of the food will be catered, unfortunately - I would strongly prefer a fully, home-cooked course - but given our circumstances, including the large number of guests, it can't be avoided."

"Think it's been decided for me, Duck," Gibbs replied.

"So you will be there, Jethro," Ducky said. "May I ask which side course you're planning to bring?"

"Not yet," Gibbs answered. "I can tell you I'm here to escort Dr. Isles to Abby's lab."

"Oh? Is there something she requires my assistance with?" Maura asked.

"Not Abby," Gibbs said. "Jane. She's talking to her mother. On the phone. And I've told Abby to stay in her office and ordered everyone else to stay out for as long as it takes."

"May I ask why, Agent Gibbs-oh." Maura realized why. "Oh my-Angela-"

"Maura," Ducky said softly, "I would suggest you go to your partner's side immediately. I know a couple of colleagues who are in same-sex relationships, and have had to formally reveal themselves to family and friends and colleagues. The saying, 'strength in numbers', has never been more appropriate."

Forensics, roughly an hour later [1]

Jane Rizzoli wasn't a crier, nor was she a hugger.

Frankie Rizzoli was the same way.

After an hourlong honest, frank, sometimes frank, sometimes gutwrenching conversation in which Jane told her family she was in love with her best friend, both siblings freely hugged one another, and more than a few tears were shed.

Although if you pushed them about the crying, both Rizzolis might respond by punching you in the arm.

The gist of the "coming out" conversation ended in Jane's mother, Angela, and her brothers, Frankie and Tommy, telling Jane and her partner, Maura Isles, that they were very, very much loved, unconditionally.

Because the conversation centered on Jane, Maura didn't have to discuss herself as much, though all were certain there would be another conversation about Maura. But everyone - including Jane and Frankie's brother, Tommy, who was staying at Maura's house in Boston with Angela - knew the basics of Maura's story.

In short: both women identified themselves as straight, from childhood until falling for one another
several months before. They were, and are, cautious about going public with their relationship. They were relieved that the people at NCIS accepted them without reservation, and ecstatic that Jane's own family did the same - albeit with a ton of questions.

As Jane ended the phone call, and she, Maura and Frankie exchanged yet another round of hugs, they heard someone knocking on a door.

It was Abby Sciuto, whose lab was 'donated' so Jane, Maura and Frankie could talk with Angela and Tommy in private.

The gothic forensics scientist - standing behind the glass door separating her office from the main area of the lab - waved her arms wildly to get their attention, with a stuffed hippo in one hand.

"Can I come out now?" she seemed to say, though the glass door muffled her voice to the trio.

"I've seen some goths on the beat," Frankie said, "but none of them were that...happy."

"I've never seen anyone like her," Jane replied, "at all. Ever...crap! She's asking if we're done."

"Which we are," Maura said, motioning for Abby to open the door. "Abby...Abby! It's okay. We're done!"

[1] Jane and Maura's formal coming out will be told in an upcoming chapter; that portion of the story is being beta-read by a fellow NFA writer who was kind enough to do so when asked.
Chapter 51

Chapter Summary

Chapter 51 (which occurs during Chapter 50) has Jane and Maura formally coming out to Jane’s ma, Angela, and brothers Frankie and Tommy.

Chapter 51

Boston

Dr. Maura Isles' home

"Ma'am, you're cleared and free to come in."

Dr. Constance Isles had just learned a few hours before that her adopted daughter, Maura, would not be coming home anytime soon.

That's how it was presented to her by the young, sincere FBI agent who awkwardly fumbled her presentation.

After her older partner cleared things up, Constance understood that Maura was alive and well, and under 'federal protection from a terrorist' and staying in Washington, D.C.

Constance finished up her business, then decided to run by Maura's house - perhaps there was something there that needed to be sent to her daughter - and remembered that Jane Rizzoli's mother, and one of her brothers, were living there.

*The poor woman has to be torn up over all of this,* Constance thought as she pulled her car into an empty spot near Maura's front door. *Just like me.*

Even after being recognized as Maura's adoptive mother, Constance still had to undergo a scan and a pat-down by the apologetic and kind FBI agents assigned to the home.

"We're sorry, Mrs. Isles, but one can never be too careful," Constance was told before being allowed in.

After walking past the agent at the front door, Constance saw Jane's mother, Angela, cutting vegetables while Jane's brother, Tommy, put out plates and silverware on the table.

Angela saw Constance, greeted her, then broke down crying.

So did Constance.

While Tommy and one of the agents took over preparing dinner, Constance sat with Angela on the couch, where both caught the other up on the day's events.

Angela saved the biggest event of all for last.

"You spoke with Jane...and Maura? How are they?" Constance said.
"They're... fine... Jane and Maura told me something very personal about themselves," Angela replied. "Something I've suspected for a while, and that Tommy and I just spent nearly an hour talking to them about."

"Tell me about it," Constance said, as Tommy brought Angela a glass of water, and sat down next to her, while the agent put the chicken in the oven.

**An hour and a half ago**

**Washington**

**NCIS, Forensics**

"That girl, Jane... I thought those cheerleaders I tried to date my junior year of high school were perky... she's got them beat."

Frankie was still mesmerized by Abby Sciuto, who left he and Jane in the main lab by spreading her arms wide and saying "I am hugging you both in my mind... and you have my full support, Jane, and I'll be my office if you need me for anything!"

All Jane could do - as Angela, on the phone, yelled, asking 'who is that?' - was wave. She'd realize, later, that Abby was really on her and Maura's side, but at the moment Angela and Tommy had her attention.

Until Maura poked her in her ribs and motioned for her to follow her away from the windows where they and Frankie were sitting.

"Frankie, Tommy, Angela... Jane and I need another few moments," Maura said.

"Jane! Why are you not talking to me!" Angela said, loudly. "Please, please talk to me-

"Ma!" Jane and Frankie heard Tommy take the receiver. "Jane! It's Tommy... Jane Ma's heard some things about you that upset her-

"Ma," Frankie said - gesturing for Jane and Maura to come back over - "they're here-

Maura and Jane stood next to Abby's mass spectrometer machine.

"They're expecting us to... talk," Jane said.

"I know that," Maura said. "I knew this day would come. I know we expected... hoped... to... orchestrate it, that we'd have time to prepare for it-

"Well we don't, thanks to the FBI and that crazy half-Israeli terrorist," Jane said, pulling Maura into a tight hug, while they both could hear Angela and Tommy shouting over Jane's cell phone.

"We can do this," Jane said, holding Maura's cheeks.

"Y-yes," Maura answered, a bit uncertain. "We talked about this. Weeks ago. Last night."

"Yeah; avoiding it isn't gonna do a bit of good," Jane said. "'sides. If we don't talk to Ma and Tommy, Ma's gonna... gonna... oh Maur I don't know WHAT she's gonna say!"

"Jane! Maura!" Frankie said, running over to them. "Ma's going crazy."

Several feet away, all three could hear Angela trying to talk over Tommy, and Tommy trying to calm
down his mother.

"Let's go talk to them," Jane said, taking command of the situation.

"MA! TOMMY!" Jane shouted, loudly enough to be heard by Abby in the adjacent office.

The verbal chaos on the other end turned into silence.

"Finally!" Jane shouted, with Maura sitting by her side and Frankie in front of them both. "Ma, Tommy...I...I don't know where to begin..."

"I do," Frankie said. "Ma. Tommy. You called Jane. Not the other way around. About something you heard about Jane that you want to clear up, right?"

"Frankie?...Frankie. I heard-"

"Right, Ma?"

"Right. Frankie. Right," Angela said.

"Ma?" Frankie said. "Tell me what you heard, whatever they said to you, okay? Let's start there."

Maura looked at Jane and saw fear, confusion, uncertainty and a little bit of resignation. This was not how we planned to break the news to Angela, Maura thought.

"Frankie...Tommy...Jane...I heard the officers at the cafe talk about you and Maura. Being...together...more than friends. Lovers. Lesbians."

Jane wasn't sure if that was disgust or fear in her mother's voice when she said 'lesbians'.

In contrast, Maura heard fear...from a mother concerned for her little girl's safety.

"T. Pike, the new Medical Examiner, was talking to people at the cafe," Angela said. "Said you two left town to get married. In Provincetown. Then Key West. Then San Francisco. One of the officers said T. Pike told him you two were having a Roman orgy."

Jane and Maura looked at each other in astonishment, before Maura realized whom Angela had just said was spreading rumors.

"T. PIKE?" Maura shouted. "HE'S saying those things?"

Jane took in Maura's reaction - her eyes, and mouth, as wide open in completely shock and horror as Jane had ever seen her - and what Angela just said:

Marriage.

Provincetown.

Key West

San Francisco.

Roman orgy.

The only appropriate reaction, Jane thought, was not to answer her mother calmly.

It was to bust out laughing.
"Jane?...Jane?...JANE!" Angela shouted. "Frankie! Tell Jane I want her to answer me!"

Jane couldn't stop laughing; the notion of T. Pike of all people accusing her and Maura of an Roman orgy in San Francisco - did the guy really know what a Roman orgy was? - was the most absurd, hilarious thing she'd heard or seen since the seniors on Frankie's high school baseball team made him dress like Monica from Friends his sophomore year.

"Uh, Jane-" Frankie said, as Angela implored her to answer.

Maura then reached over and tapped her on the back of the head, not nearly enough to hurt her, but enough to snap her back into the moment.

"Maura! What was that for?" Jane said, rubbing the back of her head.

"Agent Gibbs showed me something, too, though I merely gave you a tap," Maura replied. "You shouldn't feel any pain. If you do, however, that would be indicative of a previous injury I was not privy to, and that would require me to-"

"Maur!" Jane interjected. "Don't do that-"

"MAURA ISLES," Jane, Maura and Frankie heard Angela's voice booming from the cell phone. "I cannot get an answer out of my own daughter. Perhaps I can get one from you...are you two together. Are you two in a lesbian relationship?"

"Ma," Jane interjected. "Maura and I...we're..."

"Jane," Maura interrupted, while looking straight into Jane's eyes, and reaching across to grab both of her hands. "We've talked about this, more than a few times. There's no easy way to tell her. The best way is to be totally honest."

"Jane? Maura?" Angela said, and Jane had never felt more fear in her life.

"Jane if you don't say something, I will," Maura said, standing, still holding Jane's hands.

"Maur...she's my mother...I gotta be the one to tell her. And my brother, Tommy," Jane said, shaking.

"Ma, Tommy...I'm so sorry, so sorry, I...no, Maura and I...can't do this in person," Jane said, her voice a little shaky, her guts churning. "They won't let us leave and right now they won't let you come down. So Maura and I, have to do this over the phone-"

"Jane," Frankie said. "Tell her. It's okay. We know why the feds have you here. Take your time."

Jane took a breath, as Maura sat on her lap, one arm around Jane's neck, and Jane clasping Maura's other hand with her own hands.

"Ma, Tommy," Jane said, "I don't know exactly what Pike and those other officers said, though I can probably guess. No, Maura and I aren't married, no we're not in Key West or Provincetown or San Francisco or whatever ridiculous location Pike says we're at, and for God's sake we're not having a Roman orgy!"

"Jane...tell her," Maura said, quietly. "It'll be okay."

"That isn't the...truth. But what is the truth...is that, yes, Maura and I are in a relationship...Ma, Tommy...Frankie...I'm in love with Maura."
"And I'm in love with Jane," Maura said.

There was silence for the next minute.

"That's it?" Jane finally spoke up.

"No!" Angela replied. "Jane...how long? How long have you two been a couple?"

"Awhile...several months," Jane said. "We tried to keep it hidden until the right time."

"Angela, Tommy, Frankie, we wanted to be cautious," Maura said. "We're not ashamed...but we both saw the wisdom in discretion, while we figured out the best way to break the news to our colleagues, our own friends and our families. Including the people most important to us. Like you."

More silence for several moments.

"Jane," Frankie said. "And Maura. Have you both always...liked women?"

"Men," they both said. "And women."

"Not as much as men," Jane said. "Until Maura."

"Me too," Maura said. "Until Jane...but this is the first same-gender relationship either one of us has had."

"And the last relationship we'll have...period," Jane said. "We're in this for keeps."

Frankie, Tommy and Angela then threw a hundred questions at Jane and Maura, and both answered as best they could.

"Ma, I had some feelings for girls, sure," Jane said. "That kind of thing isn't exactly encouraged, not at my high school, not when I was growing up. And I liked guys, more, I thought. So because I liked guys, I never gave it a second thought when I saw an attractive woman."

More questions were asked, including one about when Jane and Maura went from being friends to more.

"Was it at Giovanni's garage?" Angela said, and Jane nearly fell out of her chair, causing Maura to jump up to avoid falling.

"How-how'd you know about that?" Jane said.

"Another rumor," Angela said, "from a uniformed officer-"

"GIVE ME THE PUNK'S NAME!" Frankie and Jane shouted in unison.

"And Giovanni told me," Angela said.

"HE WHAT?" Jane and Maura shouted together, Jane nearly falling out of her chair.

"Giovanni told me...went looking for you and Maura at the cafe, after an officer went by his garage asking about you. He said you two were hot-"

Jane crossed her eyes in exasperation. "I"m gonna kill him-" she muttered.

"-and he wanted to know if you two were okay," Angela said. "I didn't know what to tell him."
"Oh, Angela," Maura said, pulling up a chair to Jane and Frankie. "What really happened...was Giovanni was hitting on me, and to ward him off, Jane held me and we told him we were life long best friends forever."

"And Giovanni didn't buy it," Jane said. "So we told him we were together, straight up."

"Jane had to tell him twice," Maura added.

"Giovanni was cool with it," Jane continued. "He even said Maura could keep that big pink teddy bear he gave her as a gift."

"Why would Giovanni give you a teddy bear if he knew you weren't interested in him?" Angela said.

"Ma! He didn't," Jane said. "We had to tell him-"

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Why do you think-" Jane stopped herself, noticing the hurt in her mother's voice. "Ma...I'm sorry..."

"Jane Clementine Rizzoli," Angela said, "and Maura Dorthea Isles.

"Maura...you've become a daughter to me. You've made me feel a part of your family, you let me into your home, after my ex-husband left me, without asking anything in return. I can never, ever repay you for that. And we've talked for Lord knows how long about everything under the sun. I know, I know, I know you're a good, good person, one of the very best I've ever met.

"And Jane. You're my daughter. My flesh and blood. I've known you from the time I carried you in my womb, and popped out, and grew up from a child into a teenager into the wonderful, accomplished, smart, amazing woman you are today. I know I've told you I wished you did something else with your life, but being a detective, is who you are. You're great at it. And you're an even better person, and daughter, and sister.

"Jane...of course I knew what people said about you. I wondered about you myself...and I suspected that you might be gay, at least a little bit. Mothers know, Jane."

Maura wiped a tear from Jane's eye with a tissue.

"And you didn't want to kill me?" Jane said. "I didn't say anything...because I figured you might hate me. You know, the church, the neighbors-"

"Oh Jane, I would never, never hate you. Or Maura," Angela said. "I figured if you were gay, you would tell me yourself when the time was right. But you never really gave me any indication you were only interested in women; if anything I thought you were too dedicated to your job. But I did hear about a woman I used to work with, who was married to a man, and later divorced because she fell in love with another woman; I wondered if that might be the same of you-especially when I looked back at you and Maura and the time you spent together."

"THAT upset you, Ma?" Jane said. "All the sleepovers, dinners at the Dirty Robber, times we talked at work-"

"No no no!" Angela said. "It was...what people were saying about you that bothered me so much."

"Well they're wrong," Maura replied. "I can tell you from personal experience that T. Pike bloviates all the time."
"Is that one of your medical terms, Maura?" Angela said.

"It means he's full of s***-" Jane.

"Jane Rizzoli! Whatever I think of your relationship with Maura does not mean I approve of your potty mouth!" Angela said, indignantly, causing Jane to roll her eyes.


There were more questions from Tommy and Frankie. "When did you two know," Tommy asked, "that you liked each other?"

"When we were undercover at that lesbian bar," Jane said, "and Maura posed as a waitress, and she came up while I was sitting at a table and talking to a woman as part of the op...Maura came up, and I saw her eyes...for a moment, just a moment. That's when I knew."

Jane figured it was for the best, to leave out the part about her getting an eyeful of Maura's cleavage.

"What about you, Maura?" Tommy asked.

"When Jane got shot, outside headquarters," she said, softly. "I saw what she did...and as I ran out I knew I didn't want to live without her."

"None of us did," Frankie replied. "None of us do..."

"Jane, Maura, none of us want to live without you, either of you," Angela said. "Honey...I hoped you would find a man, and give me grandchildren...there was a part of me that hoped that you weren't...liking women...but if you did, you'd tell me when you were ready."

"Ma," Jane said, trying to fight back tears. "Are you saying...you're okay with this?"

"I'm...it's still strange to me...but you're not strange. Maura isn't strange. You're family. I know you both and you are my flesh and blood and will always be. I don't fully understand...this...but I understand the type of person, and woman, you are, Jane. And you, Maura. And Jane if you're going to be in this kind of relationship...I'd want you to be with someone like Maura."

Jane stoically tried to maintain her composure.

Maura cried, put her head on Jane's shoulder.

And Frankie also was crying, his head on Jane's other shoulder.

"Ma, Tommy, if you could see me now..." Jane said.

"Jane did you tell Frankie about you and Maura?" Tommy asked.

"Uh...um...actually he's hearing this for sure, the same time you two are," Jane said.

"Jane," Frankie said, wiping his face on his sleeve, wrapped his sister in his arms and hugged her tight.

"God Frankie," Jane said. "You're killing me."

"Jane...I may not understand it totally, like Ma, but you and Maura are good with me," he replied. "I've stuck up for you all this time; I didn't give a damn what they thought and don't now. That ain't gonna change. Besides...you two are great for each other."
"Like chocolate and peanut butter!" Tommy interjected.

"Tommy?" Maura said.

"You two don't sound any different than you were last time I saw you," he answered. "And you haven't changed either. You are who you are, you are who you love...look, I guessed you two might be together months ago, but I didn't say nothing because...because..."

"Because what, Tommy?" Maura said.

"It wasn't my place?" Tommy answered. "I don't know...guess I wanted to wait for the right time...you two sure you weren't always gay?"

"No!" Jane and Maura both said together, insisting they were both attracted to men - several men - at different points in their lives.

"I've talked to women who were into guys for a long time, then met other women and fell in love," Tommy said.

"You know," Maura said, "a University of Vancouver study from 2004 suggested that two out of five women have a serious degree of sexual and romantic attraction to a member of their own gender. And of those who had such an attraction, between 19 and 25 percent settle into long-term same-gender relationships of ten years or more. Now that report has been disputed by researchers from-"

"Maura!" Jane said, holding her hands up to her partner, and friend. "Don't be a Googlemouth!"

"Jane," Angela said. "Maura. What's a Googlemouth? Is that something you two do together in bed?"

That shut the kids up, momentarily.

"Ma..." Jane muttered, her face a bright red.

"Angela?" Maura said. "'Googlemouth' is not a sexual position we nor anyone else practices-"

"MAURA!" Jane shouted. "TMI!"

"TMI?" Angela said. "What's that, Jane?"

"Too much information!"

"Angela, 'Googlemouth' is Jane's pet name for me when I state statistics and information-"

"Good," Frankie said. "Because I don't want to know what my sister and my friend do in bed-"

"FRANKIE!"

"Jane, Maura," Angela said. "I miss you both...and I hate that we had to talk about this over the phone...I wish we could have done this in person. I wish I could see YOU BOTH in person...I love you, Jane, and you Maura. You're both my family. This wasn't what I expected...but all I ever wanted for you, Jane, was to be happy. If Maura makes you happy...then I'm happy."

Jane was crying, and dabbing her eyes with a tissue. So was Maura. Frankie stoically kept his tears at bay.
Chapter 52

Chapter Summary

Maura ponders Caf!-Pow, Jane ponders Bert the Farting Hippo, Abby proclaims Jane and Maura to be ‘Rizzles’, Paddy Doyle ponders his next move and Tony DiNozzo & Co. set up to listen in on Ziva David as she’s debriefed by her American intelligence contact - Jenny Shepard.

Chapter 52
Washington

With Kate Todd having left early to go help Ducky Mallard prepare his Thanksgiving dinner, Gibbs walked into the forensics lab to check on Jane, Maura and Frankie.

Their impromptu talk had gone on for a good hour - and while he wasn't keen on cutting it short, Gibbs did want to make sure everything was alright, especially after Abby Sciuto's two emails to he and Kate, concerned over hearing the occasional bouts of crying and a shout or two.

When Gibbs walked in, though, with a 64-ounce cup of Caf!-Pow in hand, Rizzoli, Rizzoli & Isles were all smiles.

"Glad to see you let Abby out of her office," Gibbs said.

Abby, bubbly and exuberant, stood with the trio, holding a stuffed toy in one arm, and holding her other arm out towards Gibbs.

"Got you something, Abs," Gibbs said, handing her a 64-ounce Caf!-Pow.

"Oooooooohhhhhhh!" Abby said. "My energy level was starting to run low, Gibbs, but you've given me my Caf!-Pow. Now I'm gonna be able to get through the rest of the day and night, including helping Ducky with Thanksgiving dinner-hey, you three, you are joining us, right?"

"So I hear," Jane said. "What's that you're holding?"

"Oh. This is Caf!-Pow-"

"Uh, I meant the other thing you're holding."

"Oh. This is Bert."

"Jane," Maura interjected. "Abby. May I ask what Caf!-Pow is? Is it a high-energy drink, or a soft drink?"

"Well, it's a mix of both," Abby told her. "It's like coffee, but it's not coffee, it tastes like a soft drink...the best way I can put it is that it tastes like Caf!-Pow, and it helps get me through my day."

"Sounds like we've all had a long day," Gibbs interrupted. "Time to call it a day, too."

"You kicking me out, Gibbs?" Abby joked.
"You can stay down here if you want, but if there's nothing else you need to do, I'm sure Ducky and Kate could use your help," Gibbs said. "I'm going home. You three can join me if you like."

"Home away from home?" Jane said. "Let's go."

All five got on the elevator, and shortly afterwards found themselves on the third floor of NCIS, where Maura decided to present to Maura an alternative to Caf!-Pow.

"...have you considered, Abby, numerous studies, most recently one from Louisville State University, finding that a highly-nutritious diet full of vegetables, fruits, and water, with a small amount of lean meats, combined with an hour of aerobic exercise, five days a week, provides the same benefits, and more so, that these high-energy and sugar-laden soft drinks claim-"

"Maura," Jane said. "Do YOU eat a 'highly nutritious diet' and exercise five days a week-waitasecond, never mind. Of course you do."

Maura looked at her, head cocked. "Of course I do, Jane, as you know - from my numerous attempts to encourage you to do the same, including when we take yoga classes together. My nutritional and exercise habits give me a high, consistent energy level, and meet the recommendations of the National Institute for Health and the American Dietary Association, without forcing me to partake of caffeinated beverages. I might add that yoga also provides additional benefits in both exercise and stress reduction-"

"Maura, thanks, but I'm addicted to my Caf!-Pow," Abbu said, half-apologetically.

"You are?" Maura replied. "How long."

"Maura," Frankie said, "she's addicted to this Caf!-Pow like Jane's addicted to coffee."

"You are?" Maura said to Abby. "Abby. And Jane. And you too, Frankie, and you, agent Gibbs. If you're addicted to these drinks, I might suggest a regimen of moderation-"

"Dr. Isles," Gibbs said, politely, "there ARE much worse addictions than coffee. And Caf!-Pow."

"Agent Gibbs, you're correct," Maura replied, then said nothing for several moments before continuing. "At least 40 more I can think of off the top of my head. Alcohol, cocaine, methamphetamine, sexual-"

"Maura!" Jane and Frankie said, with Jane crossing her eyes in exasperation, trying to think of how to quickly change the topic of conversation.

She eyed the stuffed hippo Abby was holding in her left arm, the object Jane really wanted to know about.

"Say...Abby. What's that you're holding...no, not the drink. Other arm."

"Oh! This is Bert."

Abby held up her stuffed hippo. "Jane. You can take him if you like. In fact, you should squeeze him."

"Squeeze him?" Jane said, taking the hippo. "What happens when you squeeze him? Does he say Goth things? Does he play Goth rock?"

"Jane," Maura said to Jane, before elbowing her lightly.
"Oooohhh," Abby said. "Kate's already taught you something, it looks like - that's what she does to Tony all the time...anyway. Jane, squeeze Bert."

"Okay," Jane replied, then squeezed the stuffed doll, resulting in a very loud farting sound.

Abby giggled; Gibbs raised his eyebrows; Frankie stared at Jane, who seemed to be thrown off guard; and Maura looked shocked and disgusted, which Jane immediately picked up on.

By squeezing Bert again, and again.

The combination of the farting sounds and Maura's reactions to them caused Jane to laugh uproariously, and continually.

"Jane," Maura said - clearly not picking up on what Jane found to be hilarious - "I do not understand your sense of humor - oh! That's disgusting! Why do you find that to be humorous?"

"Yeah," Abby mused. "Kate didn't like him either. Tony thought he was funny, though."

Gibbs started walking towards the main elevator. "Time to leave," he said, and the other four followed him out, with Jane squeezing Bert in Maura's face, laughing loudly.

Maura still didn't quite get how on earth Jane thought that was humorous, but did see she was having fun.

This experience in Washington has been especially hard on Jane, Maura thought. If my playing straight man to the stuffed farting hippo helps lift Jane out of her doldrums, then she can squeeze that thing all she wants.

"You can take Bert with you," Abby said as they all boarded the elevator, "and bring him with you to Ducky's."

"He stays downstairs with Frankie," Maura told Jane. "I do not want...Bert...upstairs with us."

Jane squeezed Bert twice more, laughing, and laughed even louder at Maura's half-disgusted look.

Outside, Jane and Frankie passed Bert back and forth, squeezing him; Gibbs took a few moments to catch up with agents Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy. Jane saw them and joined in on the conversation, since she was assisting on their case.

Abby led Maura in their direction - as Gibbs did not want either Jane or Maura left alone - and struck up a conversation.

"You know how people give names to couples on TV, like a name smoosh?" Abby said.

"Yes," Maura replied. "Although Jane, and her mother, and her brother Tommy, and I do regularly watch television and movies, I'm not that familiar with the 'name smooshes' of the couples on those shows."

"Not even with Bragelina? Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie?"

"Oh...oh of course," Maura said. "A celebrity name portmanteau."

"Right, a portmanteau," Abby replied. "Fans have their own portmanteaus - name smooshes - for their favorite couples. Like Monica and Chandler from Friends? Mondler. Or Harry Potter and Severus Snape? Snarry."
"I see."

"Yeah!" Abby said. "And I think I've come up with one for you and Jane."

"Oh, we've tried, jokingly," Maura replied. "We couldn't come up with anything better than Mane."

"Mane? Ugh," Abby said. "Think you'll like mine better. Rizzas."

Maura's eyes lit up.

"Rizzas...Rizzoli...and Isles...Abby, I like it! Rizzas!"

Maura would say 'Rizzas' a couple of hundred more times the rest of the night, mostly because she liked the sound of it, and partly to get back at Jane for squeezing Bert in her ear so often.

Bert, incidentally, went back to Gibbs' house with Jane. And he stayed upstairs with Rizzas.

**Boston**

Paddy Doyle walked around his safe house in a panic, and not even his most trusted lieutenants could calm him down.

Convinced the FBI was on to him, Doyle tried to call in every favor he could - not just to try to find Maura and Jane, but to protect himself from being arrested.

The best he could do is get information from a couple of his contacts at Boston PD that the police force and the feds were searching for him.

One of his contacts at Boston PD called him back and made Paddy's night even worse.

"Cavanaugh and the FBI are putting together a warrant for your arrest," the contact said. "Kidnapping. Hacking into a federal agency. Serious charges, Paddy-"

Paddy's contact dropped his call, and neither he nor his lieutenants could raise the officer.

"Paddy," said one of his lieutenants, "we gotta get you to a safer place-"

"I'm IN a safe place," Paddy roared. "Where the hell ELSE am I gonna go?"

"Not here, sir," the lieutenant replied, as two young men picked the crime boss up by his armpits and carried him to an SUV.

Ten minutes later, two FBI cars and six Boston PD vehicles pulled up to the now-abandoned house, searched it thoroughly, and found no one.

By then, Paddy was at yet another safe house, pacing the living room while his top lieutenants discussed what to do next.

It slowly dawned on Paddy that he couldn't stay ahead of the feds forever, and his prospects of ever seeing his daughter alive were dwindling to nothing.

*Should I turn himself in, he thought, or should I contact my lawyers and ask for a plea bargain?*

*Or, should I find the bastards who sent my daughter away into the hands of the feds, and hunt them down, one by one...all the way to the big bastard himself?*
Night had fallen in the capital city of Virginia, and the trio of Michael Rivkin, Tony DiNozzo and Seeley Booth had managed to keep up with Ziva David.

Tony, now driving, saw the fuel indicator was at a quarter of a tank.

"Does that girl like to drive or what," Tony mused. "She's probably racked up a thousand miles since we got down here."

"267.8 kilometers," Rivkin replied.

"What's that in English?" Tony joked.

"A lotta miles," Booth answered.

Their car followed Ziva into a rural area just south of Richmond, and a few minutes later Ziva finally pulled off the road, towards a farmhouse.

"STOP!" Rivkin said - and Tony put on the brakes, hard; all three could hear the loud squeal.

"Did you have to stop so abruptly," Rivkin sniped. "She could have heard us. She may HAVE heard us."

"You're the one who yelled at me to STOPPPP," Tony replied. "We were sixty yards from her; chill out already."

"Agent DiNozzo, I do not want us to get made," Rivkin replied. "Now drive - slowly - another 20 meters."

"We're in America, Rivkin," DiNozzo said. "Metric system doesn't work here."

Tony's joke went over Rivkin's head.

"Just drive until I tell you to stop - SLOWLY," Rivkin said.

Tony drove - at a snail's pace - another 30 yards before Rivkin signaled him to pull over.

Rivkin pulled out his binoculars, and the three waited for Ziva to get out.

Not ten minutes later, an SUV pulled next to Ziva's car; Ziva and the red-haired, female SUV driver both got out, simultaneously, and embraced before walking in.

"Agent DiNozzo, pull out your binoculars, you too, agent Booth," Rivkin said. "Do you recognize that woman with Ziva?"

Tony looked at the redhead, following Ziva into the house.

"Damn," Tony said.

"Tony, that's not your director-" Booth.

"No, Booth, definitely not Morrow. That's the No. 2 person in NCIS. The Assistant Director. Jenny Shepard."
Chapter 53

Chapter Summary

Tony DiNozzo, Michael Rivkin and Seeley Booth listen in on a conversation between
Ziva David and Jenny Shepard outside Richmond, Virginia - as do Gibbs, Director Tom
Morrow and other NCIS personnel at MTAC.

Chapter 53

south of Richmond, Virginia

None of the three agents in the rented car sitting outside a farmhouse had seen anything like this part
of Virginia throughout their lives.

Rural, out of the way, not even a gas station for blocks around, nor a house of any kind; only the
pavement on the two-lane road they took to get here, and the phone and electric lines paralleling it,
showed any sign of civilization.

It was miles from the urban areas Tony DiNozzo and Seeley Booth normally frequented, and an
ocean and a continent away from the homeland Michael Rivkin knew, loved and worked to protect.

The two-story farm house itself looked old and not in the best of shape, though it did seem to have
electricity, as evidenced by the lights on in the front room.

On a clear, late fall evening, with more stars than he had seen in a long time, Tony wasn't concerned
with the structure of the house, nor with reviewing the thousands of movies he had seen to match the
scene before him to.

He was worried about who was in that house.

"What in hell is the assistant director of my agency doing talking to the sister of a terrorist we're
trying to find?" Tony muttered.


"Stay here and do what?" Tony said, as Rivkin and Booth got out of the car; Rivkin popped the
trunk and took out a gym bag; and both men ran to the house, as quietly as possible.

Tony decided this would be a good time to phone Gibbs.

"Boss," Tony said after Gibbs picked up at his house, "we're somewhere south of Richmond, out in
the sticks. Rivkin had me stop near some farmhouse that Ziva went to. And you won't believe who's
there with her."

"Who, DiNozzo?"

"NCIS Assistant Director Jenny Shepard...didn't you work with her in Paris, boss?"

"Is Rivkin with you?" Gibbs said after a couple of beats.
"He and Booth got out of the car after we stopped, Rivkin got a bag out of the trunk, told me to stay put, and they both ran up to the house-"

"DiNozzo. Do you see them?"

"I can barely see the house," Tony said. "The only light I can see besides from my phone is from the main room."

"Movement inside the house?"

"Not that I can tell from here, boss."

"I'll call the Director. Stay put."

A few minutes later, Booth and Rivkin returned to the car.

"You guys go zombie hunting?" DiNozzo said.

"If by that you mean placing listening devices around the house so we could listen in, then yes," Rivkin replied.

**Washington**

While Gibbs was calling NCIS Director Tom Morrow, Rivkin was calling the Director of the FBI; Tobias Fornell, one of the senior Bureau agents on the Haswari case, was linked into what, in effect, was a vast conference call.

At Gibbs' house, Jane, Maura and Frankie walked through the front door, waved hello to Mike Franks, and saw an unfamiliar face.

"Fritz Howard. FBI," the agent said as he stood up, shaking the hands of both Rizzoli siblings and Dr. Isles.

"Another FBI agent? How many of you are there?" Jane joked.

"All of us," Howard joked back. "I'm...I've been assigned here, by the Bureau."

Howard neglected to tell them that he was there as a favor to Tobias Fornell.

"Where is Paris?" Maura asked, in reference to NCIS agent Paris Summerskill, assigned temporarily to Washington to help guard Jane, Maura, Kate and the Gibbs house.

"She's at Ducky's house," Franks replied, "helping guard Kate. And Ducky, and Abby. You never know who'd try to steal that pumpkin pie."

Gibbs ran out from the basement, through the living room, and out to his truck, cell phone in ear.

"I think maybe I should see what that's about," Franks said.

"Think I'll join you," Jane added.

Jane and Franks saw Gibbs jump in his truck and back out of the driveway; Jane ran and stopped him before he pulled out into the road.

"NCIS business, Rizzoli."
"You said that before."

Gibbs exhaled, looked off to the side, knowing the Boston detective wanted more info than 'company housekeeping'.

"Ari's sister finally stopped," Gibbs said, engine running.

"What does that mean, probie?" Franks asked.

"It means Jenny is talking to her, and DiNozzo and that FBI agent and Mossad officer with him can listen in on them," Gibbs said. "The director wants me there at MTAC. Jane, call agent McGee, ask him to fill Dr. Isles in on the hacking incident from earlier today. Mike, tell Jane who Jenny is. I'll be back ASAP."

Gibbs pulled out into the street and sped away.

**The farmhouse, south of Richmond**

"The assistant director should be wired; our listening devices will pick up the wire, allowing us to listen in on her conversation with Ziva, which we can play in real time to your directors," Rivkin said to DiNozzo and Booth.

"Are you telling me the assistant director is in on this?" DiNozzo asked. "Is Ari's sister in on it, too?"

"What they're 'in', Agent DiNozzo, is this: we believe Ziva is cooperating with us, and willing to pass along important intel," Rivkin replied. "The assistant director is wired, as the FBI, Mossad and NCIS all want to hear this conversation for ourselves."

"The assistant director – who knows Ziva – and is going to talk to her about Ari – is wired," Tony stated. "Something about that sounds off."

"Like what if Ziva is telling Jenny what she wants to hear," Booth added, "or if Jenny – having worked with Ziva in the past – might hold back on questioning, or Ziva might take advantage of that relationship—"

"They worked together?" Tony said.

"Did you not read the report?" Rivkin said. "Or were you too busy ogling women at the gas station?"

_Dammit_, Tony thought. _I did miss that part._

"Anyway: the assistant director is wired, and she is not necessarily aware of this," Rivkin said, as he put on his headphones. "Mr. Booth's female associates placed it among the wiring of her brassiere. Without her knowledge, of course."

"And – this will give us an opportunity to see those two interact, and whether we can trust your assistant director," Booth said. "Do you know her, Tony?"

"Not really," Tony said, as he and Booth put on their own pairs of headphones. "Gibbs worked with her in Paris. She got the assistant director's job not long ago; Boss said very little about it; Ducky told me most of it. Said it sounded like it was mainly political."

"Jenny is discussing the stock market," Rivkin said.

"So?" Tony.
"So...that is her signal that she and Ziva are going to talk shop, as it were," Rivkin said.

Inside the sparse living room of the townhouse, Jenny asked Ziva what her business was in America; Ziva said "the usual."

"Meaning?" Tony said.

"Conducting Ari's business in America, while passing along intel to American intelligence agencies and Mossad when she can," Rivkin said. "As well as attempting to defuse any impromptu and impulsive ideas her brother may have."

"Such as?" Tony asked.

"Telling Ziva to murder a federal agent," Rivkin answered. "Or provide materiel for a member of the Fighters of God, or an independent agent, to carry out a shooting or bombing."

"Shhhh!" Booth said.

In the house, Ziva told Jenny she is "definitely" an unwilling partner in Ari's crusade, and believes her unwillingness to participate in his and the FoG's proposed 'minor operations' may soon result in her being found out.

"How so?" the three agents heard Jenny ask.

"Ari is coming under pressure to intensify his efforts," Ziva said. "Not now; they know the Americans are on to him. But they believe that over time the Americans will relax, once their superiors believe the threat has lessened. And that will be the time, his associates believe, for them – and him – to strike."

"When?" Jenny said.

"Sometime in the spring, perhaps around Memorial Day," Ziva said.

Jenny and Ziva talked further, about Ziva's opinion that if she doesn't do something she termed 'immoral' her cover may be blown.

"And that would make it necessary for me to either commit an atrocity that would put me in the same category as my brother with your intelligence and with Mossad," Ziva told her, "or force me to leave, and go underground."

"Underground?" Jenny asked.

"Ari would be displeased," Ziva replied, "and would possibly turn his attention from our father" – Eli David, Mossad director – "Gibbs, and the others and take his aggressions out on me. And...he may become totally radicalized by the FoG, and any influence I have on him gone with it."

"Ziva, is there any possibility you could influence him to just walk away from all this? Leave Gibbs, and agent Todd, and all of those women alone?" Jenny asked – almost pleadingly, by Tony's judgment.

"I can influence him to leave you alone," Ziva said. "He has little interest in you anyway, just as he really has no interest in Gibbs' ex-wives. I understand the FBI has Diane Sterling under heavy guard, but that is not necessary—"

"She was married to Gibbs."
"His lack of relationship to his former wives has been duly noted by Ari," Ziva answered. "Ari is more interested in Gibbs' father than in the ex-wives. And you, Jenny."

"Yeah…me and Abby and Kate spent a good two-and-a-half hours talking about Gibbs's dad, starting with the fact that he had a dad, and finishing up with talk of a road trip to Stillwater and me getting slapped in the back of the head." Tony mused, before being shushed by Rivkin and Booth.

"What is his end game, Ziva? Really?" Jenny said.

"My and his father. Eli."

"Why he connected with this Fighters of God group."

"Yes. But not until he concludes his business with Gibbs and agent Todd," Ziva continued. "Some days, he seems…weary of the matter. As if he wants to walk away. In recent days, that has not been the case. He is slowly, gradually, becoming more committed to what he refers to as 'finishing the mission'."

"Finishing the mission?"

"Or, as you Americans might say, 'topping the cake'."

Back in the car, all three men looked at each other totally confused. "What on earth is that girl talking about?" Booth said.

Jenny must have been equally confused, Tony thought.

"Ziva," Jenny said, "does that mean Ari plans to murder agents Gibbs and Todd, and every woman on the list?"

A few beats later, Ziva answered.

"As much as I would like to say no…I have to say yes," she said. "He is gradually, steadily, more committed to accomplishing his goals. Killing the Americans is his immediate goal, and one he is committed to, one might even say exuberant at times about accomplishing. However…this occasionally creates tension between he and his associates."

"How?" Jenny asked.

"Their goals are…different," Ziva said. "They are willing to work with him, and assist him, but ultimately so he can assist them in their greater goals, which Mossad is still attempting to learn."

"Is his…obsession with Gibbs creating this tension?"

"You might say that. From what little Ari has told me, they would like him to drop the obsession in favor of greater goals."

Jenny and Ziva discussed the FoG terrorist group further, including the 'greater goals', which Ziva knew only to be general, 9/11-type attacks in America, Israel, western Europe and the Middle East. Ziva mused whether the group might want Ari to be its leader, and tolerating his 'side endeavors' for the future payoff of his assistance in its 'greater goals'.

Finally, Jenny told Ziva she needs to tell the American FBI, NSA, Homeland and CIA what she knows; "I am," Ziva replied, "by telling you."

"Of course, gentlemen," Rivkin said back in the car, "I am not fully taking her at her word. And
neither should you."

Washington, NCIS headquarters

MTAC

Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Director Tom Morrow and assorted techies were listening in on the conversation, along with Leon Vance from Special Ops in Los Angeles and Hetty Lange in New York (both of whom were on video on the main screen).

"Is our end game here to have a mole within Haswari's network?" Hetty said. "Or do we have a plan to apprehend her if necessary?"

"Both," Morrow replied. "There is a task force assigned to do the latter; all they need is the go-ahead from myself and the FBI and Homeland Security directors."

"Unanimous, Director?" asked Gibbs.

"Yes. To prevent two of the three from wrongly activating the task force."

"Smart."

"And as smart, Jethro, as the plan to keep Ziva David in the field," Hetty said. "She is a greater asset, given her connection to the assistant director, to us there than if she was brought in, by us or Mossad."

"I have to disagree," Vance said. "She's a wild card. We don't know for certain she's telling Jenny everything she knows. She could be lying to Jenny and setting us up. Agent Gibbs; what is your opinion."

If Gibbs relied on his logic, he would have sided with Vance, hands-down, and led the charge in asking Morrow to bring her in.

However, Gibbs was one to rely on his 'gut' – call it intuition or whatever you will – and it was telling him that Ziva was trustworthy.

"Leave her out there," Gibbs said, noticing Vance exhaling in frustration.

Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Vance thought. You have a unique way of making my job much, much more difficult than it needs to be.

Farmhouse, south of Richmond

Another unmarked car pulled behind the one Rivkin, Tony and Booth were in, and for a few moments that was a cause for alarm for Tony.

Booth reassured him it was friendly, and in fact two of Booth's FBI associates were in it. Rivkin put the car in reverse, following the unmarked vehicle into a place not far, where they could be hidden from someone driving down the road. Rivkin and one of the agents got out and watched the house.

Several minutes later, Rivkin motioned for Booth to get out and meet him, leaving Tony alone.

Tony placed a call to Gibbs.

"Boss," he said, explaining the past hour and a half from his perspective. "Rivkin and some FBI guy are out on the road, while we're hidden behind trees and bushes—"
Ziva's car flew past their position; moments later, Rivkin motioned for the unmarked car to pull out, then got in with the other agent, and the car speed away.

"Boss, I think Rivkin and Booth left me behind," Tony said, only to notice Booth sprinting back towards his position, then jumping in the driver's seat next to Tony.

"Rivkin and those FBI agents are gone, following Ziva David," Booth said. "We're debriefing your assistant director."

"No, Booth, WE'RE debriefing the assistant director," Gibbs said on Tony's cell, now on speakerphone.

Booth and Tony drove up to the house, where they got out and met Jenny; back in the townhouse, the three debriefed, with Gibbs, Morrow, Vance and Hetty listening in on audio.
Chapter 54

Chapter Summary

The FBI informs Gibbs and Jane about a conversation T. Pike had with Ari Haswari (posing as a reporter); Gibbs gives Tony a pep talk; Korsak and Frost decide to get all of Jane and Maura's friends and colleagues together for Thanksgiving; and Fornell looks through the file on an FBI agent who may hold a key to saving Kate's life.

Chapter 54
Thanksgiving Eve
Boston
FBI field office

Sean Cavanaugh leaned against a wall near one of the interrogation rooms, exhaled in frustration, and lightly punched the wall behind him.

That did not go unnoticed by the FBI agents and personnel still in the building an hour and a half before midnight, and a few minutes later Special Agent Daniel Todd made his way to the Boston Police Department Lieutenant.

"That's not gonna help," Todd said to Cavanaugh, who was rubbing his knuckles. "Lemme take a look."

Cavanaugh's hand had only a few scratches, and the wall hadn't taken any damage.

"Don't worry, Danny, I'm just blowin' off steam," Cavanaugh said, loudly for the benefit of anyone else in the hallway. "And I ain't gonna beat the crap outta Pike," he whispered low enough that only Todd could hear.

"Can't do it myself; sure can't let you do it," Todd replied, in a whisper. "Not that I haven't thought about it."

Cavanaugh looked at him in frustration, and then over at the room where the former interim medical examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts - T. Pike - had been hours ago.

"Pike lawyered up," Cavanaugh said as he and Todd walked to the break room. "Idiot's smart enough to do that. Dumb enough to run his mouth."

"The guy's not going anywhere, Sean," Todd replied. "We're watching him, and we told him and his lawyer both that he's not to leave town. Besides, there's that thing."

"Thing? What thing?"

"That thing I'm about to tell you about. Let's get some coffee, go back to my office and I'll tell you about it."

Washington
Leroy Jethro Gibbs' basement
Gibbs stared at the frame of the boat in his basement, and wanted to work on it a bit before settling in for the night.

Between the debriefing he had via audio back at NCIS with Tony DiNozzo, Jenny Shepard, and FBI agent Seeley Booth, and the discussion he and FBI agent Fritz Howard just had with agent Todd and Lt. Cavanaugh, sleep wasn't coming anytime soon.

"Probie!"

Mike Franks - Gibbs's former boss, when NCIS was the Naval Investigative Service, and Franks led Gibbs' team - walked down the stairs into the basement, trailed by Jane Rizzoli.

"Probie, I brought Jane with me, just like you wanted."

"Good," said Gibbs, who - after assuring Howard that Franks was an authorized (and retired) NCIS agent - informed Franks and Jane about a conversation FBI in Boston had taped.

"Our Boston field office recorded it, and played it back for agent Gibbs and myself in its entirety," Howard said, as he, Gibbs, Franks and Jane huddled around a table in the basement. Howard then began to summarize the recording, and the conversation he and Gibbs just had with Todd and Jane's boss, Cavanaugh.

"Earlier this morning," Howard said, "T. Pike talked with a Middle Eastern male who identified himself as an Al-Jazeera reporter, wanting to interview Pike about 'reverse gender prejudice in the American workplace'."

Jane rolled her eyes at that, and Gibbs couldn't resist a chuckle in response.

Pike gave the man a long history and told how he had been "held back" by Maura Isles and her "friends in Boston PD" - resulting in more eyerolling by Jane - then went on a long rant about how Jane and Maura were leaving, their jobs intact, covered by Cavanaugh, Korsak and Boston PD. He said he didn't know where they went, but "probably got married and honeymooned" in Provincetown or "Paradise Island".

Pike also told the male that he was going to "question as many people as possible" at Boston PD to get the truth behind Jane and Maura's departure.

The male told Pike "I can help you", following up with claims to know people within the governor's office and Congress who could "overturn this atrocity to your career"; all the male needed was information on Jane and Maura, which Pike readily agreed to turn over.

"In case it already wasn't obvious to all of you, Pike's an idiot," Jane remarked.

"You're not the first person to make that observation," Howard replied. "Now here's the part that has us concerned. Pike took the call on his home phone; because Pike had been labeled as a person of interest by the Bureau, due to his professional and personal jealousy of Dr. Isles-"

"And didn't Haswari target the guy as somebody he could use potentially to help him get close to Jane, here, and her girlfriend?" Franks asked.

"Yes," Howard replied. "FBI and Haswari targeted him as a person of interest, for different reasons, and because of that we put a trace on his phone. Turns out, the guy he talked with was based in Somalia. He tried to hide his location. We were able, though, to trace it to an internet cafe in a coastal town known as one of the places the Fighters of God use for their activities."
"A commonly used location?" Gibbs asked.

"They've used it before, for posting messages on the internet," Howard said, "and we ran voice recognition on the guy Pike was talking to."

"Let me take a wild guess who that might be, and it's not bin Laden," Jane said.

"It's an exact match for Ari Haswari himself," Howard replied.

"So you know where the bastard is," Franks said. "Seems simple to me; send somebody in to either find him and bring him, or blow the son of a bitch up."

"He moves around, Mike," Gibbs said. "Never stays in one place very long. He's almost as hard to find as bin Laden."

"So you're saying," Jane said to Howard and Gibbs, "that the guy threatening Maura - and Kate, and me - talked to T. Pike and asked him to give him information on us both."

"Correct, though Pike probably didn't know he was Ari Haswari," Howard answered. "Pike may have lawyered up, but we can get him to talk, under the Homeland Security Act. If he refuses, he's looking - at best - at life in Gitmo."

Upstairs, Tony DiNozzo and Seeley Booth finally arrived in the neighborhood, having driven up from Richmond - and dropping off NCIS assistant director Jenny Shepard at the Navy Yard. Kate Todd and fellow NCIS agent Paris Summerskill arrived at the same time, and all four walked into the house.

After Gibbs and Howard debriefed the group on Pike's conversation with Haswari, everyone mingled upstairs - except for Gibbs and Tony, who headed down to the basement to talk shop - and about Director Tom Morrow's comments during the MTAC meeting earlier that day.

"Here," Gibbs said, opening a bag of potato chips for Tony, and opening a bottle of beer for him. "You're probably hungry after being out there a while."

"You're right, Boss," Tony said, sitting at the table next to the boat. "Put hundreds of miles on the car, nearly got pulled over by Roscoe Coltrane and friends, and drove waaayyy out into the sticks to listen in on the assistant director talking with Ari's sister."

Gibbs and Tony talked about director Morrow's decision to make Stan Burley the Senior Agent on Gibbs' team, and Tony got to the point.

"Boss, I can be senior agent. I can lead the team if something happens to you."

"Tony. I know that. I believe that. I believe in you. On this, I gotta follow orders."

"Boss, what else did the director order? Anything else I should know about?" Tony asked, frustrated and a little angered. "Anything else I'm gonna find out about in some meeting, over the phone?"

"DiNozzo," Gibbs replied. "You are one of the best young agents I have ever met, ever worked with. Yes. The Director has more confidence in Stan to lead the team if something happens to me. But the Director hasn't worked with you like I have."

"Damn right."

"He hasn't seen what I see in you. And for that matter what I see in Kate...Morrow will see it soon"
enough. Maybe one day, sooner than you think, you'll lead your very own team."

"...really?"

"Yeah...but keep in mind everything I've tried to teach you - including what we talked about last night."

Tony recalled his spying on Jane and Maura in Gibbs' - no, their - room.

"Kids don't lead teams in NCIS," Gibbs said. "Men do. Tony...when you think, and act, like a man, you're damn good. Remember what I told you your first day on the job."

"Rule Five. Don't waste good."

"Remember that, DiNozzo, and keep it up, you can go as far as you want."

**Boston**

**Maura Isles' house**

Detective Vince Korsak drove by Maura's house - just to make sure everything was okay - and saw the lights were still on.

He found an open spot up the street, walked to the house, and - after being frisked by one of the FBI agents on site - greeted Angela Rizzoli and Tommy Rizzoli.

"Angela, Tommy, you're more than welcome to join me for dinner tomorrow," Korsak said, as the three sat in the living room.

"Vince, we'd love to," Angela said, "but we have to get approval to go anywhere."

"She's telling the truth," Tommy said. "Even if Ma goes to buy groceries she has to have two of those agents with her."

"At ALL times," Angela complained, then whispered, "I'm lucky they're not standing next to me when I use the restroom-"

"MA!" Tommy shouted as Korsak looked away in embarassment. "We don't need to know that-"

One of the FBI agents - April Wilson - walked up to the three, apologizing for the inconvenience, reiterating that the Rizzoli family - including the father, Frankie Sr. in Florida - had to be guarded by FBI 24/7. And that any prolonged visit to someone's house had to be approved by the FBI.

"Check out the family, the house," Wilson said. "This late, we can't do that. If we had known-"

"It's alright, Agent Wilson," Angela said, forlornly. "We understand that."

"However...as long as we know who's coming here, and we can clear them, there's nothing to prevent you from having people come over-"

"Really?" Angela.

"Really. And I understand that all of your friends and associates have been checked out by the Bureau. Even Jane's criminal informant."

"Rondo?" Korsak said, increduously. "You checked out Rondo?"
"Had to," Wilson replied. "As far as Thanksgiving is concerned...there's nothing stopping him, or pretty much anyone else you know and work with, from coming by. We'll even cater."

"You'd cater?" Angela said. "I can't ask you to do that-

"You guys cook?" Tommy said.

"I know a few recipes," Wilson answered. "Mamma's a chef down in Atlanta. And the food has to be cleared anyway. That means a potluck's out of the question, but the FBI does up a nice Thanksgiving dinner."

"How nice?" Korsak asked.

"Bring your friends and find out."

"Now there's an idea," Korsak mused. "How many people?"

"However many the living room can fit."

Korsak and Tommy proceeded to make some phone calls.

Detective Barry Frost agreed to come by, and asked if he could bring his mother and her 'friend' - Wilson agreed to do background on the two immediately - and Frost also offered to find Rondo and bring him by.

Roz Framus said she could come by. Lt. Cavanaugh agreed, after dinner with his brother Max, and told Korsak he was going to formally ask his cousin Jordan to be the interim M.E. tomorrow.

Tommy called Giovanni, who said he'd like to come by, and asked if Jane and Maura were alright.

Angela called Susie Chang, who called the rest of Maura's team.

Korsak called Frost back, and asked if there was a way to have it to where Jane and Maura could see everyone via a webstream; Frost said he'd need a capable laptop with webcam, and streaming connection - and Wilson said the FBI might be able to "arrange" that.

"That would be great," Frost said. "It'd be great to do that for them tomorrow. Hopefully all this will be settled before Christmas."

"Barry, I hate to say it, but it looks like they both are gonna be down there longer than that," Korsak said, resignedly.

**Quantico, Virginia**

**FBI Headquarters**

It had been a long day for Tobias Fornell, one that wasn't quite over yet for the senior Bureau agent.

Before leaving the building, Fornell sat back at his desk and leafed through a manila folder full of photos and bios of four agents the Bureau hoped it would not have to put into the field.

Two were Bureau agents, two recruited specifically for the mission of posing as Leroy Jethro Gibbs, Caitlin Todd, Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles.

This mission came from the FBI Director, who said in a closed meeting that the Bureau "grossly misjudged the threat posed by Haswari, trusting him to provide intel on Hamas when he clearly
intended to double cross the United States and its ally”.

*It's fitting that the man who approved what we did with Ari would cover his own ass by putting four agents' asses on the line,* Fornell thought as he looked at the photographs.

One photograph struck him, that of the young woman who was Kate's 'body double'.

*Isn't she on sick leave,* Fornell thought, before going back to her file, and the note attached to it.

The agent's name was Amy Sutton, and Fornell heard rumors that her illness was worse than officially let on...as in terminal.

The note on her bio was interesting: *effectiveness in field est. 6-8 mos.*

Also of interest was the note about her upcoming 'procedure' in San Francisco.

Fornell looked up the doctor assigned to the surgery: Jackie Colette, Presidio Medical Group. He looked up her info, saw her photo, then doublechecked her against the 'Kate list' and saw she was on it.

*Why are they having this woman do the procedure, and what exactly is she going to do,* Fornell mused. *Sutton doesn't really look like Kate, but I guess if you had the right surgeon...*

*My god...*

*They're making her LOOK like Kate Todd.*

Fornell closed the folder, and saw the CONFIDENTIAL label on it, meaning that he couldn't tell Gibbs or anyone outside the agency about this 'mission'...officially.

And definitely not this soon.
Chapter 55

Chapter Summary

Thanksgiving in D.C., Los Angeles and Boston; Jordan Cavanaugh accepts the position as Maura's interim replacement, and the permanent associate M.E. of Massachusetts, with a condition.

Chapter 55

Thanksgiving Day

Boston

Driving around downtown Boston, Danny Todd turned off the radio, looking for a restaurant open late Thanksgiving morning that was close to headquarters.

Work kept the Senior Agent in Charge of the FBI's Boston office here in town. So, as much as Danny wanted to visit his family, phone calls would have to suffice.

The first was home to Indianapolis, where his parents and his two brothers (and their own families) were having dinner. Not only were there the usual greetings and catching up, there were also questions about his, and his sisters' well-being and safety.

No, we couldn't get there in time for Thanksgiving because she's under protection and I'm working.

Yes, we can probably do Christmas in Indy.

Yes, I'll call Julie.

Yeah ma, I know she called you.

She's working too, pop.

Rachel can't get away because of that case in Miami; I'll call her.

No, Gibbs doesn't want Kate to leave D.C.

Yes, Director Morrow wants her in Indy if at all possible.

Yes, Morrow trumps Gibbs.

Yes, Kate is safe.

Yes, I'm safe.

Danny hung up, 30 minutes later, still seeing nothing open besides fast food and gas stations.

After calling in to work to see if his presence was needed at the moment - it wasn't - Danny called his oldest sister, Dr. Rachel Cranston, a psychologist working in Miami.
"Mom cried and cried, but I have to stay here," Rachel explained. "I'm working with the Miami-Dade County police on a horrible case. Three dead people, and a father whom we're unsure whether he's insane or not. The guy in charge, Horatio Crane, insists I stick around because I can offer 'insight' into this guy's personality."

"What's it like working with this Crane guy?"

"Nicer than Gibbs." Rachel met Gibbs three weeks ago, after Gibbs and Morrow decided to have Kate Todd put into "protective custody", and Gibbs demanded to know as much as he could about Kate's family and background.

"Promise me you won't let him get her killed," Rachel said to Danny.

"Well, the Bureau's involved and too many people inside his own agency are involved," he answered. "Gibbs couldn't hijack this thing if he wanted to."

Danny's next call was to Los Angeles and to his sister Julie, Kate's twin, who was in her apartment. Julie perhaps was the wildest and most difficult of all the Todd children to manage, partly out of rebellion.

She eventually settled down and, with the help of Henrietta "Hetty" Lange and others, became a respected NCIS undercover agent.

"Oh, Danny," Julie whined. "I'm stuck here. Stuck on this op. I wish I were with you and the rest of the family, and I know you do too."

"Try to look on the bright side: it's warm and sunny in L.A., Thanksgiving on the beach," Danny replied. "Boston? Cold, damp, rainy, and I still can't find a decent restaurant open."

"For your information, dear brother, I'm in the city, the nearest beach is miles away, and I don't have time to eat anything other than stale popcorn and whatever's in the kitchen or in the machines," she replied.

Finally, Danny called Kate, who was in Washington at Gibbs' house, preparing to leave for her team's Thanksgiving dinner.

"They - well, Abby - made this thing up big," Kate explained, as everyone rushed to get out the door and to Ducky Mallard's house on time. "Abby wants to make it like home...which is sweet of her, but it's not like..." Kate's voice trailed off.

"...not like home, is it?" Danny said. "Hey. I'm in the same boat you're in...and so are your sisters..."

"I know," Kate said.

"And I know you and Julie aren't quite on the same page," he replied. "You and Rachel aren't bosom buddies. But life's too short, and it's Thanksgiving. Call them up. Talk to them, like you did mom and dad...you driving there?"

"No. Stan's driving me and 'Rizzles'."

"Who?"

"Stan, Stan Burley, the new senior agent. And Rizzles is Abby's pet name for Jane and Maura."

"Ah. So you have no excuse-"
"Danny...it's not that easy-"

"Call them. You're not THAT mad at them...admit it. You want to talk to them."

Kate stood in her room, dabbing her eyes with a tissue.

Danny was right. Life was too short to hold grudges.

Central Boston Federal Medical Center

Charles Hoyt laid in his bed, dying, completely silent other than his intermittent pleas for Jane Rizzoli to come to his side.

The killer saw only the FBI agents, two at a time, rotating every four hours, in his room.

Only now did he realize that the feds weren't going to allow him his dying wish.

So he wept, and cursed, and shut up when the nurses and agents demanded to know what was going on.

Somewhere in Boston

Thanksgiving meant nothing to Paddy Doyle.

The crime lord was on the run, his lieutenants pulling in every favor to hide him from Boston Police and the FBI.

He wasn't wondering if and when he should give himself up; his men were too busy figuring out how to keep him hidden.

Paddy wasn't going to hand himself over, now, not when his girl was in hiding somewhere because of a goddamned psychotic terrorist.

Paddy knew he'd done some henious things in his life. God knows what Sean and Max Cavanaugh might do to him if they ever found out his role in the death of Sean's family.

But Paddy was no terrorist. If anyone was going to kill somebody from Boston - like that detective woman who everyone was saying was his daughter's lover - it'd be him. Not the psycho.

And by god, no one, not the psycho, not the feds, were going to take his daughter, his Maura, away from him and get away with it.

Suburban D.C.
Ducky Mallard's house

Ducky's house - or was it a mansion? - was more than sufficient to accomodate the dozen or so people gathered there for Thanksgiving dinner.

Everything had gone rather smoothly, so far, except for the moment when Ducky's mother, Mrs. Victoria Mallard, was introduced to the guests.

And she blurted out something wholly inappropriate.

"I want to look at your knickers!" she said to Jane, causing almost all conversation in the room to stop.
"And hers too!" pointing to Maura - who stood next to Jane - and to Kate Todd, whom, over in the
other room talking to her sister Rachel, didn't hear the exchange.

"Uh, er...excuse me?" Jane said.

"Your panties!" Mrs. Mallard insisted. "One can tell a woman's intentions by the panties she
wears...so pull them DOWN!"

Tony DiNozzo had something to say, but seeing Gibbs walk up next to him made him opt to keep
his observation to himself.

"No," Jane said, arms crossed.

"No?" Mrs. Mallard replied. "No...what?...who are you again?"

Ducky was besides himself, half shocked, rushing over to pull his mother away before something
really crazy happened.

"Mother!" Ducky said, gently grasping his mother's arm. "These women are our guests. They are
here to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner with us. Please, come along."

After showing his mother to her seat at the kitchen - where she asked Stan Burley if he was a
baggpipe player and offered to give him lessons - Ducky explained that Mrs. Mallard was in the early
stages of dementia.

That led Maura and Ducky to a lengthy interchange on dementia, including its history and causes.

A very lengthy interchange.

"...a much broader clinical concept until the end of the 19th century," Ducky concluded.

"The definition began to be narrowed down-" Maura began, before she was interrupted by Jane.

"Maur," Jane said, repeatedly, five times. "Perhaps you can tell the table about Bass."

"You mean Dr. William M. Bass, the forensic anthropologist?" Maura asked.

"I mean your turtle," Jane replied, walking towards the dining room.

"Jane. How often have I explained to you he's a tortoise?"

"Turtle."

"Tortoise."

"No. Turtle. Big turtle."

"Jane. His size has no relation to the fact that Bass is a tortoise-"

"Ladies."

Gibbs had a way of ending rambling conversations. With Tony it involved a slap to the head,
whereas around women, the Marine needed only to politely interject himself into their conversation.

"Dinner."

 Shortly afterwards, Gibbs; Jane; Maura; Frankie Rizzoli; Kate (who promised to call Julie back);
Tony; Stan; Paris Summerskill; McGee; Paula Cassidy; and FBI agent Fritz Howard - there to help watch over the group - sat with Mrs. Mallard and Ducky to enjoy Thanksgiving dinner.

**Washington**

At Gibbs' house, three men were inside, and two more agents outside patrolling the premises.

The three men were enjoying their own Thanksgiving of sorts - turkey, dressing, the traditional fixings of the holiday, and bottles of beer, while the Detroit-Green Bay game ticked towards its conclusion on the nearby TV.

"I told Jethro to bring back some food," FBI agent Tobias Fornell said to his fellow agent, Brent Langer, and to Gibbs' former boss at NCIS, Mike Franks.

"If the men don't eat it all," Franks replied. "They better. There ain't much left in the kitchen. Somebody's gonna have to make a grocery run tonight or tomorrow."

"Good luck with that on Black Friday," Langer said.

"I wouldn't get in that mess if they gave me a million dollars," Franks mused, as he drank down the remnants of his first bottle.

**Boston**

**Max Cavanaugh's house**

Family was precious to Sean Cavanaugh, although the Boston Police lieutenant wasn't apt to openly express that to even the closest of friends and family.

After losing his wife and son in a fire years ago, the holidays became difficult for the bachelor, but he always made time to spend with his brother, Max, a retired cop.

On Thanksgiving and Christmas, work usually got put on the shelf, but not today.

Sean wanted his niece, Jordan, to take over for Maura Isles as chief medical examiner until Maura returned to Boston. He had to ask her, first, and get a 'yes' before he could take the next step of nominating her to the chief of police; he would then nominate her to the governor, who would have the final say in the process.

And Sean Cavanaugh wasn't about to take no for an answer, even with Jordan's history of 'crossing' authority figures and inserting herself into cases with homicide detectives.

"Jordan," Sean began his pitch. "I'm aware of your history and your reputation. I'm also aware of your performance and what you bring to the job."

"Yes," Jordan said.

"I've talked with Macy numerous times, including last night. I talked with your father-"

"Yes."

"-who told me how capable and qualified you were."

"Yes."

"I guarantee you the chief will sign off on you, and his word will go a long way with the governor, especially after the debacle with Pike."
"Yes, Sean."

"And I don't want Papov and nobody else wants him either."

"Yes!"

"...wait. You're saying YOU want Papov? And you're not interested in-"

"No. Yes. No. Yes...uh, I mean no I wouldn't want Papov either. And yes, I want the job."

Sean realized Jordan had accepted the offer, and he grinned.

"Jordan, that's great!" he said. "And's it's not just until Maura comes back. She's still the M.E. after all, you're the second in command, and running things while the feds have got her and Jane-"

"Yes, I'll take the job, on one condition," she interjected.

That surprised Sean.

"Uh, alright," he said. "What's the condition?"

"Woody gets his old job back."

Woody is Woodrow Wilson Hoyt, a former Boston PD Homicide detective with a stellar work reputation, and Jordan's boyfriend.

Woody had the misfortune to have the last name of the infamous Charles Hoyt - whom he wasn't related to - but which caused a bit of discomfort in the department with detective Jane Rizzoli, to the point where they were unable to work together. Woody opted to leave Boston for a similar job in Milwaukee, but Jordan explained he "hated it there."

"That thing with Hoyt will still be there," Sean explained. "And Jane's going to come back eventually."

"You should have remembered that before extending the job offer," Jordan countered.

She's right, Sean thought.

"It's not like we can go a detective down for too long," Sean said. "I'll talk to the chief. I'm sure we can get him back on the force, if he wants it."

"Oh, he'll come back," Jordan assured Sean, then reached out to hug him. "Thank you!"

Jordan ran into the living room - where her father and others were watching the start of the Dallas game - and screamed and hollered in celebration of her new job.

Sean placed a phone call.

"Vince? She accepted...the governor has to sign off, but I'm sure he will...that means Woody Hoyt's coming back...I'll smooth it over with Jane...and I'll tell her myself."

**Boston**

**Maura Isles' home**

Tommy Rizzoli tried to steal a minute or two to watch the Indianapolis-Atlanta game on the high-def screen in the living room.
And Angela Rizzoli was having none of it.

"Tommy!" she yelled, from the kitchen. "Help me set the table. Everyone will be over any minute now."

Indeed they were, starting with Detective Vince Korsak, Detective Barry Frost, his mother, and her partner (both of whom gave Frost advice regarding relating to Jane and Maura as a couple) and Maura's adoptive mother, Constance Isles.

They were followed by Lt. Sean Cavanaugh, his brother Max and his niece Jordan; Giovanni Gilberti - the first person Jane and Maura came out to - and Jane's criminal informant, Rondo.

As promised by the FBI agent in charge of the Isles house, dinner was provided by the Bureau and it was a great spread.

The company was even better, if bittersweet due to the absence of Jane and Maura.

Thanks to technology, however, along with a little bending of the rules, Jane and Maura both would be there both in spirit and in high-definition.

After dinner at Ducky's, Gibbs took Kate, Jane and Maura back to the Navy Yard; with the blessing of Director Morrow, Kate spoke with her family in Indianapolis; her brother Daniel in Boston; and her sister Julie in Los Angeles via video feed.

The same technology - set up in the bullpen where Gibbs and his team worked - was used to stream Jane and Maura to everyone at the Isles house for over an hour.

Black Friday was spent on the case involving the dead Naval officers from the car wreck near the Pentagon the day before.

**Author's note:** First off, I want to thank you for reading and for following along as long as this story has gone on thus far. I greatly appreciate your time and your interest.

From here on out, the story will undergo a series of time-jumps.

The next chapter is set two weeks after Jane and Maura's arrival in Washington, around an AU version of Forced Entry, the ninth episode in Season Two of NCIS.

The next few chapters skip ahead to Christmas Day and New Years, and then into early January, and quickly into early May, setting the stage for the AU versions of Twilight and Kill Ari.

I'm looking at 15-20 more chapters tops in this story.
Chapter 56

Chapter Summary

Time jump to December, then Christmas, then January.

December: catchup on the RI&K universe, including a Rizzles and Kate trip down to Gibbs’ basement, and Christmas at Ducky’s (with a Rizzles family reunion), Indianapolis (Kate) and Stillwater, Pa. (Gibbs).

January: Team Gibbs - including Rizzles - meet their doppelgangers; two in particular catch the team’s eye, and suspicions.

Chapter 56

December 21

Jane Rizzoli wandered down to the kitchen of her "home away from home" in Washington.

She had to admit, the place had grown on her - a tiny bit - but it wasn't her old apartment, which she decided to stop paying rent for, given her future living arrangement with Maura...whenever they both would get back to Boston.

Still, Jane appreciated the effort the house's owner - Leroy Jethro Gibbs - put out to make she and Maura feel welcomed, and at home. She sensed he wasn't this way to most, and only special circumstances - or special people - made him show a softer side of himself.

Of course, he was his usual gruff self at work, and even at home he wasn't emotional, which was fine with Jane.

She looked through the fridge, found the cheese and bologna and mayo she was looking for, and put them out on the table to make a sandwich.

When she turned around, her girlfriend, Maura Isles, was looking at her, hand on hip.

"Jane," Maura stated, "eating like that at this time of night isn't good for you-"

"Maur," Jane said, rolling her eyes. "I'm hungry. Last time I ate was 2 o'clock. Twelve hours ago."

"Which is why I've told you numerous times about the importance of regular, nutritious meals," Maura replied, "so you don't find yourself eating at the time of night when your metabolism is the least likely to burn calories."

"Say what?"

"Jane, you eat like this at night, you'll get fat."

"Don't think that's gonna be a problem," Jane replied. "Today, I ate a cup of oatmeal and a glass of almond milk that your twin upstairs recommended. Then I got handed a case before we left, and ended up chasing a guy for 12 blocks - TWELVE BLOCKS! - and had to steal a pack of Ding Dongs
out of DiNozzo's desk. That was 2 o'clock!

"Shhh!" Maura whispered to Jane. "You're practically shouting. You'll wake everybody up."

"Please," said Jane, as she munched on her sandwich. "Gibbs is building Noah's Ark downstairs, and Kate's upstairs sound asleep because she chased the jackass right alongside me!"

"She ran 12 blocks, too?" Maura asked, as she poured herself a glass of water.

"More," Jane said. "I joined up with her after she ran after the guy for six blocks... Watch yourself, Maura. Drink that, might make you fat. Middle of the night."

"That isn't true," she answered, as they both heard someone coming down the steps. "Water has zero calor-Jane."

Jane smiled, then looked behind Maura, to see a half-sleepy Kate Todd, who walked to the cupboard, grabbed a bowl, put it back, then grabbed a spoon out of the silverware drawer.

She then went to the fridge and pulled out a container of vanilla ice cream, threw it on the table, threw herself in a chair and began to eat.

"Hungry," she mumbled.

"I hear ya," Jane replied, sitting down next to Kate.

Maura sat down next to Jane, who was watching Maura's 'twin' powering through the ice cream.

"It's quiet down here," Maura observed. The assortment of men bunking in the living room had disappeared, although there were always at least two FBI and/or NCIS agents on the grounds at all times.

Mike Franks returned to Mexico to care for his wife and child, although he promised to return "soon."

Gibbs himself usually slept in his basement, though he sometimes bunked in the living room; tonight, he was downstairs working on his boat.

"When does that guy sleep?" Jane wondered.

"I don't know," Maura said, "but it concerns me. How much rest he isn't getting. He can say all he wants that he lives on caffeine, but the coffee and lack of rest cannot be good for his cardiovascular health-"

"He's Gibbs," Kate muttered. "He lives on coffee."

"And that's even more concerning to me than you eating that ice cream, Caitlin, and YOU, Jane, eating that...sandwich."

"Whatdya got against bologna and cheese?" Jane answered.

Maura half-smiled, half-smirked. "I will have to talk with Dr. Mallard tomorrow about Gibbs," she said.

"He'll be alright," Kate said. "If you want, you can check on him now. Sounds like he's still up."

"That's an excellent idea," Maura said, getting up from her chair and making her way towards the
steps leading to the basement.

"Maur...Maur!...Kate, come on! She's heading down there...Maura! Leave him alone."

When Jane and Kate - and her container of ice cream - got down to the basement, they saw Gibbs sitting on a stool, while Maura gave him an impromptu physical exam.

The boat that took up half the basement wasn't there.

"Where's the boat?" Jane said. "That...that boat was here last night...how'dya get that thing out of here that fast?"

"Trade secret," Gibbs replied.

**December 22**

Two young women walked off a plane at Andrews Air Force Base at 7 a.m., and were met on the tarmac by a diminutive older woman.

"Hetty?" said one of the younger women, Special Agent Julie Todd, NCIS Office of Special Projects.

"Ms. Todd," replied Hetty Lange, director of NCIS's New York City field office, "and Ms. Blye," referring to Julie's work partner, probationary agent Kensi Blye. "Your orders have changed."

"How so?" Julie asked.

"You will still be keeping tabs on Jethro Gibbs' team here in Washington, but you also will be working with the New York office and with OSP in Los Angeles as part of the ongoing investigation into Haswari's operations here in the States," Hetty said. "Unfortunately, that will mean much of the time you two will be undercover, and that will mean you won't spend as much time with your families as you would like."

"Part of the job," Kensi replied.

"Agreed," Julie said.

"I admire your attitudes," Hetty said. "We are all going to be quite busy uncovering the extent of his operations and then shutting them down. Haswari as you know is extremely dangerous and must be stopped before he can execute whatever he has planned."

"We know what that is, Hetty," Julie said. "Kate. Gibbs. The Rizzolis. The Kate List."

"It goes far beyond that, Ms. Todd," Hetty replied. "The group he works for is planning some sort of 9/11-esque attack. And Haswari has not forgotten his desire for revenge against his father, and Mossad, and Israel...come with me. We'll discuss all of that."

In the meeting, Julie and Kensi learned that Paris Summerskill returned to the NCIS field office in New York; Michael Rivkin returned to Israel after Ziva David left the United States and was 'spotted' in Somalia, working with U.S. intelligence agencies and Mossad as they tracked Ari Haswari's half-sister.

Haswari moved up to No. 4 on the FBI's most-wanted list two weeks before Christmas.

He still hadn't shown up anywhere in the world - anywhere the U.S. could track - and that would remain the case for several more months.
"There is another element of the plan you need to be aware of," Hetty said to the two agents. "The FBI has plans, should Haswari set foot in the United States and pose a real, tangible threat to Jethro Gibbs, your sister, and Ms. Rizzoli and Ms. Isles, to switch them out with body doubles."

"Body doubles?" Julie asked.

"FBI agents who look like the four people Haswari has specifically targeted, while the real ones go underground," Hetty said. "They would be the bait to lure the bastard, so we can capture him and arrest him-"

"Or shoot the son of a bitch," Julie said.

"I sympathize with your feelings, Ms. Todd," Hetty said. "But we are agents of the law and justice, first and foremost. Though many would not mind if a bullet passed through his head, that cannot be our primary goal."

San Francisco

At the Presidio Medical Center, an FBI agent named Amy Austin recovered from plastic surgery, intended to make her a virtual lookalike for Kate Todd.

Given the nature of Austin's illness, her effectiveness in the field was judged to be six months, maximum. A cocktail of drugs, along with a strict diet and exercise regimen, kept Austin healthy enough to carry out her duties.

Christmas Day

Washington

Christmas saw the NCIS team split up, with Tony visiting relatives in New York, McGee spending an awkward dinner with his parents and sister Sarah, and Stan Burley, Paula Cassidy and Jimmy Palmer visiting family.

Abby Sciuto spent the day at Ducky Mallard's house, expecting only them and Ducky's mother to be around.

So Abby was very surprised to see the dining room table filled with food, and helpers in the kitchen - helpers from the FBI and NCIS, and a very loud woman running affairs.

"You need to take the turkey out of the oven," she said, "or it will burn!...that's too much butter in the mashed potatoes...don't do that! You'll ruin the cranberry sauce-"

Abby spotted Ducky in the hallway.

"Ducky, I didn't know you had guests," she said.

"Well, Abigail, given that our friends Jane and Maura are, unfortunately, stuck here in Washington, I proposed that if they couldn't go home, we bring home to them."

It took only a few moments for Abby to understand what Ducky meant: the Rizzolis, Maura's adoptive parents and Rizzles' friends were coming down.

"It's a surprise," Ducky admitted, telling Abby he was approached with the idea after Thanksgiving.

The woman running the kitchen was Jane's mother, Angela. She and Abby hit it off instantly, and the dinner was a success.
Especially when mother and daughter - and future daughter in law - were reunited.

"Tell me where the pudding is, Vince," Angela Rizzoli yelled from the kitchen.

Vince - Detective Vince Korsak - walked into the kitchen. "Angela, could you come out to the living room for a moment?" he asked.

"Well, just for a moment," Angela said as she walked towards the living room, "and don't put out the pudding. It needs to stay in the refrigerator-"

Angela stopped in her tracks.

"Jane? Maura?"

"Ma!"

"Angela..."

Mother hugged both her daughters, tightly; then it was her sons' turn to hug their sister and future sister.

And no one cared that the turkey went cold.

**Indianapolis**

Kate - under FBI guard - went home to Indianapolis for the holiday; Julie also was there, with Kensi in tow, their cover story being they were working a case on the East Coast.

For the first time in a while, the twins and their sister, Rachel Cranston, were in the same place, and given the situation, put aside their bickering and differences.

All three said that this would be the first of "many, many holidays together".

Kate understood she couldn't keep that promise, given the risks of her job and the threat of Haswari.

Rachel had a bad feeling this might be the last year they were all together, and confided as such to Julie, who told her to shake it off, and privately felt the same way.

**Stillwater, Pennsylvania**

Gibbs himself opted to, for the first time in years, spend Christmas in the town he grew up in.

He drove straight to his father's store, in the center of town, where his father - and the FBI agents guarding him - were waiting.

Father and son stood in the store, looking at one another, unsure what to say.

"It took some terrorist to finally get you up here, Leroy," said Jackson Gibbs, as the two agents tried to be inconspicuous. "You could have called. Surely could have taken some time to come visit."

"I'm here now...Jack. Surprised you didn't have somewhere else to be."

"Well, Marcus and George here are great company, Leroy," Jack said, as he reached behind the counter for a bottle of bourbon. "Great dinner companions, great breakfast companions, heck, I even got both of them to help out around the store."
"One of the **perks** of FBI surveillance, Jack?"

"Leroy, I'd trade it all just to know you were okay."

Gibbs looked downwards. Last year he told someone his father was dead; that conversation kept running through Gibbs' head, as he stood in Jack's store.

So did Ari Haswari's face.

"'Safe' isn't part of the job description, Jack."

Jack offered Marcus and George some bourbon - which they both declined - and then poured some for himself and his son.

"You didn't have a *girlfriend* to spend Christmas with, Jack?" Gibbs said, with a smirk.

Jack took a shot, poured himself another, and sat on a stool.

"How would you know?" he asked his son. "You never write. Never call. Never talk like most fathers and sons do."

Part of Leroy Jethro Gibbs wanted to tell off this man who sired him, who could never be as faithful to his mother as he wanted his father to be, who dared to bring his girlfriend - of all people - to his wife and daughter's funeral.

The other part of Leroy Jethro Gibbs wanted to put all the crap behind him, take it out on Ari and restore whatever part of his relationship with his dad could be salvaged.

The latter won out.

"*This* all you got for Christmas dinner - dad?"

"I know a place that's open," Jack said. "A friend, lives a mile down that way. He and his wife have a standing invitation for me and a few guests to come over if we like. I figure if we leave now, we'll get there in time - *son*."

"I'd like that."

"Marcus, George," Jack yelled, "let's lock up, and head over to Howard's."

Father and son, and agents, jumped in the son's car, drove to the friend's home, and had their first real meal together in years.

**January**

**Washington**

The morning began for Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles with yet another case. This time, they'd go out with the 'main' team - Gibbs, DiNozzo, Kate and McGee - instead of the 'second' team of Burley and Cassidy and whatever third agent they could find.

"Switching it up," said Tony, as he drove one of the two NCIS vans to their crime scene. "Ducky's with Stan and Paula. You two are with the *varsity*."

Jane rolled her eyes. "*Again* with the varsity crap, DiNozzo?"
"Well, I played at *THE* Ohio State University, one of *the* elite programs in all of college sports-speaking of elite, spring training starts next month. How about those *Yankees*?"

Tony grinned, attempting to lure Jane into taking his bait.

"Gonna get their ass kicked by the Red Sox, Tony," Jane replied. "Defending World Series champions, remember?"

"They are?" Maura said. "Oh yes...I remember you bragged about it for days."

"Damn right," Jane said, proudly.

"Ah, baseball, the American pastime," Tony said as their van pulled onto the street where the crime scene was located. "Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, BUCKY DENT, Derek Jeter..."

"Let's talk about a real team," Jane said. "Ted Williams, Carl Yastremski, Carlton Fisk, Wade Boggs, Pedro Martinez, Dustin Pedroia-"

"Bill Buckner." Tony smiled.

"Are you trying to get me to kill you?" Jane smirked, as they pulled in front of the house.

Tony, Jane and Maura walked towards the house, and saw a Metro DC detective standing near the street, greeting them.

"Detective Cheney - my boss - is in charge," he said.

Gibbs then burst outside the house and walked towards Jane and Maura.

"DiNozzo," he said to Tony. "Inside with Kate and McGee. You two. With *me*.

He took Jane and Maura aside, and pulled out a picture.

"Why are you showing us a picture of Paddy Doyle?" Jane asked him.

"You sure that's your father, Dr. Isles?" Gibbs said.

"Her sperm donor," Jane answered; Gibbs returned her remark with a glare, she returned it in kind.

"Yes," Maura said. "Is he...is he or his people here?..were they involved-"

"No," Gibbs said. "But the detective in charge from Metro. Cheney. He's a ringer for Doyle."

"How much?" Jane asked.

"Looks like this guy in the picture," Gibbs said. "Can you two do your jobs?"

"Yes," Maura and Jane said.

"Then go in there. Kate and McGee know what's going on. You won't be alone. I'll have McGee do background on this bunch."

Jane walked in, and tried to be as anonymous as possible.

"You okay?" Kate asked her.
"Ask me when we get back," she replied, looking at Cheney.

Jane hung back and observed, and noticed that Cheney's team was a doppelganger of Gibbs' team, down to the headslaps; the comments about Cheney's ex-wives; and the Italian detective hitting on random women.

"There isn't anything for me to do," Maura said to Jane. "No body to examine."

"Hang close to me," Jane told her. "Kate says this whole thing is weird. Not just because their 'boss' looks like Paddy Doyle. She says they have their own DiNozzo, Kate, McGee."

"Doppelgangers," Maura replied.

The detectives left the house, leaving the NCIS team alone to conduct its investigation. Gibbs told DiNozzo to bag and tag the trace evidence; Kate to sketch; Jane to photograph; and McGee to handle a laptop and answering machine.

"Burley," Gibbs said after phoning his senior agent. "Run background on some Metro detectives. Cheney. Rapp. Miller. Monteleone. And especially Cheney. Search for any possible connection to Paddy Doyle, or Ari Haswari...now would be a great time...call me when you find something."

Maura, looking out the door, saw something else that was unusual.

A young woman, with honey blonde hair, and a taller athletic woman, with dark, curly hair, whom were standing very close to one another alongside Cheney's car.

"More lookalikes, Dr. Isles?" said Gibbs.

"I...I don't know," she replied, as Jane stopped what she was doing to look.

"...I'll be-" Jane started to say.

"Shooting, Rizzoli." Gibbs said, nodding towards the living room. "Dr. Isles. You and Kate check it out, since DiNozzo left her sketch pad in the van."

Kate and Maura walked out towards the van Kate, Gibbs and McGee traveled to the house in, and found Tony's counterpart.

"Primo Monteleone at your service, ladies," he said.

"Charmed," Kate replied. "Who are the ladies standing over by the car? Are they associates of yours?"

"Why do you ask?" Monteleone replied. "Interested? Either of..."

He took a look at Maura, then looked back, and back at Maura.

"Crap," he said. "You...could pass for Misty...hey, you guys have your own 'Ringles'!"

'Ringles' as it turned out were doppelgangers for Rizzoli & Isles. Misty Ingle, a medical examiner, and Joan Rinaldi, a homicide detective, both from Tampa.

Ingle was adopted by a wealthy family, a geek, socially awkward, and owned a pet turtle; Rinaldi came from a working-class background, had two brothers, lived with her mother, spent most of her time at Misty's house, and was a Yankees fan.
All of which Kate and Maura learned from Monteleone, since neither Rinaldi nor Ingle moved from the car.

"We call them 'Ringles',' Monteleone told Kate and Maura. "That's the name our forensics person, Angie, gave them."

"Angie?" Kate said.

"Yeah," Monteleone said. "Happy, gregarious, outgoing, kinda kinky. Listens to a lot of Celine Dion, happy faces all over her lab. Pigtails. Cute, but I wouldn't do her."

Kate rolled her eyes and thought creep.

"Dr. Isles and I need to gather some things," Kate said. "Excuse us."

Kate got the pad, and noted when she and Maura walked back to the house that the wanna-be suave detective was talking with Cheney, Miller, Rapp and 'Ringles'.

"Stay here," Gibbs said to Maura and Jane. "I called Burley and Cassidy. I'm having them check into those women."

"You don't think Haswari or Paddy's behind this, do you?" Jane asked.

"I'm not sure," he said. "I'll talk to Cheney."

While the NCIS team worked inside the house, Gibbs spent some time talking with his counterpart. Cheney and his team - including 'Ringles' piled into the older-model car - three in front, three in back - and drove away.

"Gibbs," Kate said when he walked back in, "did you notice they are exactly like us, personality-wise?"

"Yeah," he said, "but it didn't kick in until Rinaldi and Ingle were pointed out to me. None of you saw them in his car?"

"I saw the back of their heads in the car," McGee said. "Didn't know it belonged to their boss, didn't think anything of it, and it wasn't pointed out to me."

"They must have been sitting in the back seat, boss," Tony said, smiling.

"Doing what, DiNozzo?"

"Well," Tony replied, "this whole deal sounds hinky, but not in a bad way. Maybe they were, uh..."

"Uh what, DiNozzo?...I hope you have a good answer."

"I do, boss," Tony said. "Hiding from us. Or Paddy Cheney didn't have a reason to let them in so he had them sit in the car...or they were making out."

Gibbs glared at Tony. "Rizzoli."

Jane slapped Tony in the back of his head, hard.

"McGee," Gibbs said. "When we're done, you'll drive Rizzoli and Dr. Isles back, then help Burley check out that bunch, starting with Cheney and 'Ringles'. Tony, you're with Kate and me."
After the NCIS team wrapped up its work, it headed back to the Navy Yard.

"All of it looked like deja vu," Kate remarked, "down to how their Tony dealt with their McGee, and how you and their Gibbs drank their coffee-"

"Other than their Gibbs looked like Paddy Doyle," Tony said. "Their Kate was just as humorless and prim as you. And their Rizzles..."

"Want another headslap, Tony?" Gibbs said.

"NO," Tony replied. "But you've got to admit that was the hinkiest part of that whole deal. Why weren't they in the house when we arrived? Why did they sit in the car? Where were they when Kate and Rizzles arrived? Deja vu's one thing; this can't be a coincidence."

"What do you think, Gibbs?" Kate said.

"Don't believe in coincidences, Kate, Tony," Gibbs replied.
Chapter 57

Chapter Summary

Jane, Maura and FBI Agent Brent Langer discuss Jane and Maura's doppelgangers; Gibbs and Jenny Shepard discuss Ziva David; Gibbs sticks up for Tony DiNozzo to Director Morrow; and Ari tells one of his Boston contacts the operation is a go.

Chapter 57
Navy Yard, Washington

Maura Isles, one of two people in autopsy - the other being FBI agent Brent Langer - put away her tools and appeared to be wrapping up for the day.

Then she pulled a dust cleaner out of her bag, and began dusting the numerous tribal masks that had been put up around the room back in early December.

"You ain't done yet, Dr. Isles?" asked Langer, sitting on a stool next to the door.

"I need to keep these masks dusted," Maura replied, as the door whooshed and Jane Rizzoli walked in. "It's important to keep these works of art clean properly maintained."

"I'd think the masks would scare off the dust," Jane deadpanned, causing Langer to laugh.

"Inanimate objects do not frighten nor are they frightened, Jane," Maura said. "How many times have I reminded you that these masks reflect the culture and history of African tribes--"

"It looks like Halloween in here," Jane said of the masks, which lined all four walls in the spacious autopsy/medical examination room. "You sure you don't need some more decorations? Pumpkins? Witches on broomsticks? Heavy metal album covers?"

"I do not see the connection between African tribal art and Halloween, nor with rock album art," Maura said, straightforwardly. "And besides, Dr. Mallard thinks it adds character."

"Does he talk to the masks, too?" Jane said.

"Not usually," Maura replied. "I saw him talking to one of the masks one time, when there were no bodies in the morgue. Then Agent Gibbs walked in, and looked at him...like you're looking at me..."

"Moi? Gibbs?" Jane said, switching from an are-you-kidding-me look to mock surprise. "That can't be true! What did the mask say to him?"

Maura stared back at Jane. "You're mocking me again, aren't you?"

"Oh I would never do that," Jane said, mischievously, as Langer laughed in the background.

"And neither would YOU!" Jane turned around, pointing to Langer, who stopped laughing.

"Hey! No problemo, Rizzoli," Langer said, holding up his hands in mock surrender.
"Well, Jane, if you wish to talk to one of the masks, I won't stop you," Maura deadpanned. "Perhaps you and Agent Langer can help me dust, so we can go home sooner."

Maura nodded to her bag, and Jane walked over and pulled two more dusters out of it, handing one to Langer.

"Whipped," he whispered to her, as he started dusting.

"Shaddup," Jane whispered back, dusting next to Maura.

"So how did that case with the Metro PD turn out?" Langer asked.

"The petty officer was killed by his supervisor," Jane said. "He caught her using the Naval computer system for her own purposes and she tried to cover her ass by killing the officer and framing another employee. Gibbs figured it out."

"I hear he took her down to his basement, told her what he found out, arrested her on the spot," Langer said. "With a kiss."

"Actually, he did," Jane said, to Langer and Maura's surprise. "Told me about it, when he called me back after I called him about the DNA."

"What about that other thing?" Langer said, Maura and Jane both giving him questioning looks.

"That thing," Langer said. "Your doppelgangers from Metro PD."

"Oh. Them," Jane said. "They're legit - as far as we can determine. We traced them both all the way back to when they were kids and they check out. Their reason for being in Washington checks out, too. Met Detectives Rapp and Monteleone here in D.C., said they're in hiding from a Florida drug cartel."

"What about Cheney? The Paddy Doyle lookalike?" Langer asked.

"No connection to Paddy," Jane said. "Just a coincidence that he looks like Paddy Doyle."

"You know what Gibbs thinks about coincidences," Langer said.

"Yeah, but he doesn't have any connection to Paddy," Jane said. "We had Boston Homicide and FBI look into him. No more of a connection than those people on the 'Kate List' have a connection to Maura."

Maura stopped dusting and seemed to be lost in thought.

"Maur, don't tell me you're about to talk to that mask," Jane joked.

"You know," Maura responded, "it is unusual that both of those women refused to talk to us."

"Refused?" Langer said.

"Jane and I asked Detective Cheney - as awkward as that was - to meet with Detective Rinaldi and Dr. Ingle," Maura said. "They refused to meet with us."

"Why?" Langer asked.

"We were told, twice - once by Cheney, once by Gibbs - that they were 'shy'," Jane replied. "That's the hinky part about the whole thing. Gibbs said he was told they were introverted and didn't take
"Sounds legit enough," Langer replied.

"Yeah maybe, but something still sounds off," Jane said. "Their background checking out is one thing. The drug cartel thing, wanting to avoid us, another. I've got my spidey sense going on this one."

"I'm suspicious as well," Maura said. "I told Jane and Gibbs that I'd prefer Jane and I to avoid them unless it's absolutely necessary to interact with them."

"That's smart," Langer replied, as he dusted one of the masks. "You never know what Ari might pull."

Jane and Maura were uncomfortably silent for several moments. "Let's get this done and get up to the bullpen," Jane finally said. "I'm sure Gibbs can't wait another moment to get back to building that boat in his basement."

March

MTAC

Gibbs, NCIS Director Tom Morrow and NCIS Assistant Director Jenny Shepard were talking to Mossad Officer Michael Rivkin, whose face took up the entirety of the big screen in the vast MTAC room.

The subject of their discussion was Ziva David, still working as a double-agent - openly as Ari's right-hand woman, and undercover for Mossad and the FBI. Rivkin told NCIS she was recently sighted in Somalia, and indicated Ari had been in the country for some time; when he decided to move his operations, she would let them know.

"Still say we should press her for his location," Gibbs said after Rivkin signed off. "Take care of our problem."

"As much as it loathes me to do so, we have to trust her," Morrow said. "We need her working undercover to help gain intel on this Fighters of God group. The consensus of the intelligence community is that the FoG has potential to become as much of a threat to the U.S. as al Qaeda and Hezbollah."

"Which is how this Ari mess came about in the first place," Gibbs replied. "Why do you think I shot him in the shoulder instead of in the head when he was here in the building? He was supposed to be on our side--."

"Obviously he isn't, Jethro," Jenny said. "But I can tell you that Ziva is on our side."

"You sure, Jen?" Gibbs retorted.

"The intelligence community is sure, and SecNav and SecDef agree," Morrow interjected, in a no-nonsense tone. "We use Ziva to gain intel on this group and take it out before it can become a threat. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a meeting to get to."

After Morrow left MTAC, Gibbs turned to Jenny.

"You trust her, Jen?"
"I thought you did, Jethro."

"I'm not sure what to think," Gibbs admitted. "I knew Ari was a real bastard from the first time I met him. I'm not sure whether his sister is legit or if she's another Ari."

"As I've done the last three times, I'll vouch for Ziva," Jenny said. "She's the real deal. I've worked with her. I would know if she was going to doublecross us. She's on our side, Jethro."

"Better be right about that, Jen," Gibbs said, resolutely. "The last thing I want is for you and the 'intelligence community' to be wrong, and one of my people wind up dead with a bullet through their head."

"That's why we trust Ziva," Jen said. "So that doesn't happen. In fact...when this is done, I have an idea to how we could further use her."

"Further use her, Jen?"

"Yes. I've broached the idea with Director Morrow about her joining NCIS as a liaison from Mossad."

"A liaison?"

"It's not like we don't have a couple of those already, Jethro."

"The two we have, I trust, Jen," Gibbs said, as he got up from his seat and walked up the ramp leading out of MTAC. "Ziva as another one? She's gonna have to earn my trust."

"She's earned mine, Jethro," Jenny replied, following him out.

Late March
Director Morrow's office

"Come in, Jethro," Morrow said, after Gibbs knocked on the door and let himself in. "There's a development on the case with the eyeballs, I hear."

"I'm sending DiNozzo and Cassidy down to Paraguay to follow a lead," Gibbs said.

"You trust those two?" Morrow asked. "You certain Burley and Cassidy wouldn't be a better pair?"

"Yeah," Gibbs said. "I trust Tony. He'll do a fine job. Only thing is he wanted to take Kate, and I told him that was out of the question. I told him he could take Paula; I could have told him to take McGee--"

"Todd is definitely out of the question because of her situation, and McGee is young and inexperienced," Morrow said. "Burley and Cassidy are your most experienced agents. They're the ones I would have sent."

"DiNozzo's more than capable," Gibbs replied. "He needs the experience, and I trust him to get the job done. He's more capable than you think, Director."

"You say so, Gibbs, I trust you," Morrow said. "You haven't let me down yet."

Early May
Boston
He lie awake in the bedroom of his high-end apartment. Next to him was a young co-ed he met at a club; after a night of lovemaking, she was sound asleep.

On the table nearby were papers with notes, from what he told her was his upcoming motivational book; he had a publisher lined up, waiting on his manuscript.

Next to the papers was a miniature Venus de Milo; he told her he was an amateur artist and sculptor.

His cell phone buzzed; he looked at the display, and saw a number from Dubai.

She stirred.

"Where're you goin'" she said to him, half asleep.

"Just taking a call from a friend," he replied, "my European contact. I'll be a minute."

He stepped into the living room, as far away from the bedroom as he could get.

The 'contact' was the man who approached him months ago, with a proposition he literally could not refuse.

"Mr. Dugan," the man on the other line said. "I hope things are well with you."

"They are, Mr. Haswari," Dugan replied. "And I hope the same is true for you."

"They will be," the man said. "Remember my proposition?"

"I do. I've been waiting quite a while."

"And I told you patience was a virtue, in this matter. Now, the time has come."

"You want to go ahead with the operation."

"I do, Mr. Dugan. Circumstances warrant moving ahead, and quickly."

"When do you want to begin?"

"Within 24 hours," Haswari said. "My people will contact you no later than 8 a.m. your time. You need to be at the agreed-upon location five minutes before."

"Understood," Dugan replied. "Everything is secured?"

"The weapons are secured and my people are in position," Haswari said. "And, as I told you, if all goes according to plan, you will be rewarded at the conclusion of the operation, with payment in full, and transportation. I understand Cancun is beautiful."

"It'll do," Dugan said. "It'll do just fine."

"Are you certain you would not prefer Dubai, or Abu Dhabi?"

"Mr. Haswari, a tequila sunrise suits me just fine."
Chapter 58

Chapter Summary

More details of Ari's operation against Paddy Doyle are revealed; Jane has a problem with Tony, but a lipsticked envelope laying on Tony's desk portends more serious problems for the team...

Chapter 58
May
Boston

Mark Dugan is many things: a budding motivational speaker, an amateur sculptor, a mercenary, a man with mommy issues, and a man with an interest in specific types of prostitutes.

Right now, Dugan was one annoyed son of a bitch, because his contact wanted him at a meeting right away, and because of the call girl sleeping in his bed.

That should keep her out for a few hours, he thought, as he pulled out the needle and injected the woman. Long enough to take care of this and get back before she wakes up.

Dugan's drive was uneventful, though his pistol was loaded.

The abandoned building he was to go to, on Boston's north side, was once a Lum's Restaurant. Even after the chain itself went defunct years ago, local owners kept the restaurant going before finally pulling the plug in 2000.

The building then became home to three different businesses, the last being a payday loan office, and passed through five different owners before its present landlord purchased it eight months ago.

It's 4:30 a.m., and the landlord is one of Ari Haswari's men, quietly using his fortune in real estate to help build a cache of weapons and supplies, as well as funding a network of safe houses, for when Ari chose to activate his operations in Boston.

That time had come, and a variety of men - some American, a few Africans, most of Middle Eastern descent - were gathered here, in the dark, candle-lit former dining area/office space.

They had plans and a wireless connection to Ari himself.

"This is Stage One of our operations," Ari said via audio from the laptop's speaker. "Destabilization of a major American city. You will engage Patrick Doyle's organization, and local police."

"We're taking on Paddy Doyle?" Dugan said.

"Doyle's organization is entrenched within the city," Ari replied, "but we have the knowledge and manpower to eliminate it, and him. Doing so will force a power struggle amongst the remaining criminal players."

"And what about local police, and the FBI?" Dugan asked.
"They'll be too busy handing the players attempting to fill the vacuum - and fighting us after we eliminate Doyle," said a man known to the group only as Hassan, Ari's top lieutenant in the Boston area. "We'll have to draw him out, and when we do, we strike."

"How do you plan to do that, Hassan?" Dugan said.

"Doyle has a daughter, the medical examiner of the state of Massachusetts, and she is in a lesbian relationship with a detective from the homicide unit of the Boston Police Department," Ari said. "They have family and friends in the city."

"They deserve to die for that alone!" said one of the men, a Somalian immigrant working in sanitation.

"Silence!" Hassan barked at him. "We stick to the plan...My apologies, Ari, for that unexpected outburst."

"He is not the only one there with similar sentiments," Ari replied, "and I am sure some of you could care less...nevertheless. We threaten the daughter and her...'partner', and those close to them."

"That'll draw the attention of Boston PD," Dugan said.

"We kill two birds with one stone, as the saying goes - or, as it should go, we kill them with the same bullet," Hassan said.

"So we kill them?" Dugan.

"This operation involves kidnappings, holding people hostage. We want to draw out the daughter and detective, under federal protection..." Hassan said.

"We kill them?" Dugan.

"I want the daughter and detective," Ari said, firmly. "Anyone else - including Patrick Doyle himself - is expendable."

Over the next 20 minutes, Hassan laid out the basics of the operation, including the location of weapons and safe houses.

"Do we clear our schedules for, what, the next two weeks?" Dugan asked Hassan, pulling him aside after the meeting ended.

"Some here will, ah, not show up for work," Hassan replied. "You, on the other hand, have a meeting with your publisher in the next few days?"

"Yeah. Friday."

"Keep it. Maintain your cover, but be cautious about making any other appointments during the operation...and you would be wise to avoid 'appointments' with prostitutes."

How'd you know about that? Dugan thought. Sonofa--

"Ari wants his people to be all business," Hassan emphasized. "We can help you with your cover in a meeting with your agent. It's more difficult to control the women you may want to...spend time with...as well as the actions of the men who would take exception to that."

"Somebody's got a problem with me being with a whore?" Dugan said.
"Several of our men are very, shall I say, devoted to their faith," Hassan answered. "The last thing Ari and I want is for fighting amongst our forces...besides. Some of them are making their own sacrifice."

Hassan pointed to Dugan. "By working with an infidel American," Dugan muttered.

"My friend, we are all working together, for the same cause, with the same mission," Hassan said, slapping Dugan on the shoulder. "Now. Be at the agreed location this evening, 11 p.m. ... and be ready. We begin the operation this Monday."

Dugan snuck out of the abandoned building, running to his car, hidden in an abandoned garage; he saw one of his "coworkers" getting into a rusted-out Crown Victoria.

He jumped in his own car, and Dugan sped out onto the street, hoping no Boston PD nor FBI cars were anywhere close. He probably had enough time to get back to his apartment before the call girl woke up.

*We're all on the same side,* Dugan thought, as he drove to his apartment. *As long as I get my damn money.*

**The following Monday**

**Washington**

**Navy Yard**

Tony DiNozzo walked off the elevator, towards his desk, ready to start yet another day as the self-proclaimed Very Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo, Second Senior Field Agent...

...and ran into an annoyed Jane Rizzoli.

"DiNozzo."

"Janey!" Tony said, laughing. "Good to see you on this fine Monday morning!" He looked around and saw Kate Todd at her desk, blowing her nose; Dr. Maura Isles, standing next to her; Agent Tim McGee, at his own desk;

And Jane, still annoyed, standing in front of Tony's desk.

"Hey everybody - hey Probie! - hey Kate, hey Doc - and hey Janie...what's the matter? Not had your cup of coffee this morning?"

Jane threw down a pile of folders on his desk, right next to an envelope with a lipstick kiss on the front.

*To be continued....*
Chapter 59

Chapter Summary

A mysterious envelope sealed with a kiss causes alarm at NCIS, and news of a second envelope leads to even more serious news; Jane and Tony get into an argument; Ari's operation in America begins.

Chapter 59
Monday, May 12, 2008
Washington
Navy Yard
NCIS headquarters

The familiar ding of the elevator chimed at the third floor, as it did dozens of times per day, and off walked Tony DiNozzo.

Tony strode towards his desk, ready to start yet another day as the self-proclaimed Very Special Agent Anthony DiNozzo, Second Senior Field Agent...

...and ran into an annoyed Jane Rizzoli.

"DiNozzo."

"Janey!" Tony said, laughing, as he stepped around her, throwing his gear on the floor behind his desk. "Good to see you on this fine Monday morning!"

He looked around and saw Kate Todd sitting at her desk, blowing her nose; Dr. Maura Isles, standing next to her; Agent Tim McGee, working at his own desk;

And Jane, still annoyed, standing in front of Tony's desk.

"Hey everybody - hey Probie! - hey Kate, hey Doc - and hey Janie...what's the matter? Not had your cup of coffee this morning?" Tony said, loudly.

Jane threw down a pile of folders on the corner of his desk, close to an envelope with a lipstick kiss on the front.

"THIS," she growled. "Two dozen cold case reports? Really?"

"Hey, Detective, we all have to chip in," Tony said, cheerily. "Probie over there" - Tony looked over toward McGee's desk - "he loves them."

McGee rolled his eyes in response.

"Like an ingrown toenail," Jane said. "So instead of splitting these up among everybody, you load them on ME?"
"Like I said, Janie, we all have to do our part--"

"Look," Jane said, leaning in and speaking quietly. "I hope you're still not trying to get back at me for calling you out about that picture of Kate--"

"What picture of Kate?" Tony said, innocently.

"The one we talked about that I thought we came to an understanding on?" answered Jane, this time a little louder and a little more agitated. "I thought you might have grown up."

"Oh, that photo?" Tony replied. "That has nothing to do with this."

"Then why all on me? We're all supposed to split these things--"

"Well, Janie, maybe I did give you a few more than I should've--"

"Then I'm sure, DiNozzo, you won't have a problem if you take a few of them off my hands," Jane answered. "What's your problem, anyway? Huh?"

"Jane," said Maura, hurrying over to try to pull Jane away.

"Tony!" Kate said before sneezing, then hurrying over next to Maura.

By now, Tony and Jane were in each other's faces, gaining attention, and not just from Kate, Maura and McGee.

"Was it that photo, DiNozzo?"

"NO, Rizzoli. It wasn't the photo. It was going to GIBBS instead of going to ME."

"We DID go to you, DiNozzo. And look how that worked out."

"If you kept it at that, Rizzoli, everything would have been FINE."

"You're just PISSED because you got CAUGHT trying to blackmail her--"

"BLACKMAIL?!?!!?"

Now they had the whole floor's attention, though no one outside Gibbs' team had seen the photo in question: Kate winning a wet T-shirt contest in Panama City, Florida while she was in college on spring break.

Tony found the photo, and Jane took his chiding Kate over it as a form of blackmail. Their argument nearly spilled over into the case the team was working at the time, and Gibbs had to play mediator...rather unhappily, to everyone's chagrin.

Gibbs went so far as to have the photo removed from the bar in Panama City and destroyed. He expected that to be the end of it.

So, when he walked off the elevator and saw Jane and Tony's heated argument, Gibbs was an unhappy camper.
"IDIOT!"

"LOONEY!"

Whether you were friend or foe, you do not want Gibbs shouting at you when he's angry.

That goes double for when he's angry, and leans in and speaks to you in a low growl.

"Got something to say?" he growled, almost cheek-to-cheek with both Rizzoli and DiNozzo, before giving them both a headslap.

"You two. With me...NOW," Gibbs barked, heading to the elevator; both Jane and Tony scurried behind, leaving behind a wide-eyed Maura, an embarrassed Kate and a gaping McGee.

The elevator dinged, and Stan Burley and Paula Cassidy stepped off.

"Burley. Cassidy." Gibbs growled. "With Kate, Maura and McGee...you two" - glancing to Jane and Tony - "in the elevator."

Gibbs stepped a few feet away from the elevator as Jane and Tony stepped in.

"ALL OF YOU," he shouted as loudly as he could, before the elevator door shut. "NONE OF THIS IS ANY OF YOUR CONCERN."

Stan and Paula walked to Kate's desk, bewildered by what they had just seen.

"What on earth?" Stan said.

Kate pointed, silently, to the stack of folders on Tony's desk.

"He tried to give those to Jane," Maura said. "ALL of them."

"ALL of them?" Paula asked, incredulously. "These were supposed to be divided up...Sheesh. I thought they worked that out."


"Of course," Paula said. "No one gets more than their fair share."

When Stan was done, Tony had twice the amount the other agents had, individually.

"I'm sure the boss won't object," Stan observed, laying Tony's portion down on Tony's desk, before noticing the envelope with the lipstick already laying on it. "What's this?"

"Lipstick?" Paula said. "One of Don Juan's fans?"

"I don't think so," Stan said, looking at the envelope more closely. "Look at this...addressed to no one in particular. Just 'NCIS Special Agent'."

"You're right," Paula said, as McGee walked over to take a look.
"I noticed it when I came in," McGee said. "I assumed it was from one of Tony's girlfriends."

"Dr. Isles? Would you come over and take a look?" Stan asked Maura.

"Certainly," she replied, but not before wrapping up her talk with Kate. "Kate, being your cold is in its beginning stages, I would recommend getting as much rest as possible, drink lots of water and avoid caffeine - starting with that cup of coffee on your desk."

"Great," Kate muttered, before sneezing for the umpteenth time that morning.

Maura went back to her purse and pulled out a pair of gloves.

"Overkill, Dr. Isles?" Paula said; Maura ignored her, reaching for the envelope, holding the envelope up to the light and looking it carefully.

The envelope was sealed tight, with clear tape all along the borders and along both front and back sides. There was a piece of paper with some kind of scribble on it, and Maura could make out a tiny trace of powder in the light. One could most easily open the envelope with an exacto knife.

"Someone give me an evidence bag," Maura urgently said, carefully placing the envelope back onto Tony's desk. "Now."

McGee had to run down to Abby Sciuto's lab to find one; his demeanor - and his blurting out "there's a suspicious envelope on Tony's desk" - led Abby to follow him back up to the bullpen.

"Where is it?" Abby yelled, running out of the back elevator, bag in hand.

"Careful," Maura replied, gingerly placing the envelope in the bag. "We need to send this to CDC in Atlanta."

"CDC?" Kate said. "Maura, what's in that thing?"

"I noticed what could be a faint, powdery substance in the envelope when I held it up to the light," Maura replied. "Given our current...situation, I think it's wise to be cautious."

"Wouldn't 'cautious' mean sending it down to Abby's lab?" McGee asked.

"You never know with Ari," Stan said - addressing the elephant in the room.

"Powdery substance?" Kate asked. "Could you tell what kind of powder it was?"

"Not without opening the envelope," Maura said. "Fortunately, it appears the envelope is sufficiently sealed, so that any residue is left in the envelope itself--"

"Why is that fortunate?" McGee.

"Because of what might be in it," Stan said. "McGee, Kate. Did you see DiNozzo handle that envelope?...did you see any dust fly when Rizzoli slammed those folders down on the table?"

They said no to both questions. The folders were slammed on the corner of the desk and didn't touch the envelope.
"The substance in that envelope could be anything," Maura said. "I can't even begin to conjecture what it might be without testing--"


"I do not like to conjecture without having the benefit of a full analysis--"

"Then let's assume a worst-case scenario," Stan said. "Ricin."

"Oh god," Abby whispered. "What if Jane or Tony - or you or Stan - got it on you--"

"Ricin is only fatal if inhaled, injected or ingested," Maura said. "A tiny portion - 22 micrograms - is needed for a fatal dose. Symptoms include severe diarrhea, leading eventually to shock, and eventually death within three to five days of ingestion."

"So you're not going to drop dead," Paula finally said. Several other people had wandered over, and someone ran up the stairs towards the Director's office.

"Not upon contact," Maura said.

"How much of this...powder...did you see?" Stan asked.

"Perhaps a third of a teaspoon," Maura replied. "The envelope seemed to be airtight--"

"How did it get here?" Stan.

Maura picked up the bag holding the envelope. "It's addressed only to 'NCIS Special Agent, NCIS, Navy Yard, Washington DC' with no return address," she said, as Stan looked the bag over.

"We don't even know what it is," Kate said. "What if it's something else?"

"Like baby powder?" McGee said.

"Or anthrax," a male agent blurted out.

"This could be anything," Stan said. "The envelope looks to be sealed, but--"

"But I don't want to take any chances," yelled the Assistant Director of NCIS, Jenny Shepard, from atop the stairs.

"Where's Director Morrow?" Stan asked.

"Agency business," she answered. "Where's Gibbs?"

"In the elevator," Kate yelled.

Jenny called Gibbs on her cell phone, telling him to get back there now; a minute later, a perturbed Gibbs strode off the elevator, followed by Jane and Tony, both calm and thoroughly scolded. Jenny met him in the bullpen.

"What in hell is going on?" Gibbs demanded.
Stan and Maura explained the situation, and McGee explained that the envelope was laying on Tony's desk when he and Kate arrived; Tony hadn't even touched it, by his and Kate's recollection.

"I'll contact Atlanta," Jenny said. "Dr. Isles. Did you see any trace of powder on the desk? Or in the bag, after you put the envelope in it?" Maura hadn't in either case.

Out of an abundance of caution - and after conferring by phone with Morrow - Jenny ordered Tony, Jane and Maura to be sent to Bethesda Naval Hospital for observation, "to be on the safe side."

Kate sneezed, and Jenny asked Maura what that was about; after being told Kate was "starting to get a cold," Jenny ordered Kate to join them.

**Monday night**

Tony, Jane, Maura and Kate got a clean bill of health - Kate's cold notwithstanding - from a Dr. Brad Pitt at Bethesda.

It took just over an hour for CDC to transport the envelope to its headquarters in Atlanta, and around 9:15 word came back: it was sucralose. And the paper in the envelope had scribble from an ink pen.

Gibbs gave Stan and Paula the task of finding out where the envelope came from; while everyone else - including Jenny - thought that was the end of this case, Gibbs's gut told him otherwise.

Confirmation came via a phone call from FBI agent Tobias Fornell 20 minutes later.

Part of the FBI's surveillance of Gibbs' team included monitoring the letters and packages sent to it via mail, express and other sources, and the bureau identified a mysterious letter that had yet to be delivered to the Navy Yard.

"This afternoon we intercepted another letter, no return address, addressed only to 'NCIS Special Agent, Major Case Response Team'," Fornell said. "We're having it tested now."

Confirmation came two hours later: this envelope also had a powdery substance, also was lined with clear tape, and also had a letter with the following text:

*If you are reading this and have not initiated biological attack procedures, I suggest you do so immediately since the powder dispersed by opening this envelope contains genetically altered Y-pestis.*

*There is an antidote which administered within 32 hours of infection will eradicate the disease. To procure the antidote, NCIS must make public the true results reported in Dossier R-0377.*

"Y-pestis, otherwise known as the plague - and a genetically altered version," said Fornell, who drove to the Navy Yard and met Gibbs and his team in their bullpen. "CDC has that thing locked away. Never made it to the Navy Yard, so you won't have to worry about a thing as far as that letter is concerned. Sorting facility where we found it is another matter."

**Tuesday**

While Stan and Paula investigated the first letter, the rest of Gibbs' team and Fornell investigated Dossier R-0377, a case in which a young woman was raped and found tied up in a hotel four years before; NCIS investigated several suspects - all Navy cadets - and the case was closed after DNA
FBI soon traced the second letter back to Lowell Pharmaceuticals and its head, CEO Hanna Lowell. The CEO admitted to sending the letter, as revenge for NCIS closing the case. However, the daughter admitted making up the rape to cover up for the fact her boyfriend tied her up before going out for food - and he was killed in a hit-and-run accident - and she made up the rape to cover up the incident.

Meanwhile, Hanna Lowell - rambling on and on about dying from a brain tumor - admitted she had help developing the strain, from a microbiologist she had confided in.

She had last seen Hassan Al-Amin that morning.

The FBI dusted his desk for prints, and ran them - and his picture - in their databases.

Hassan Al-Amin - in reality Hassan Amal, known Hezbollah operative - was one of the men who accompanied Ari Haswari to America last spring, involved in the kidnapping of Kate Todd and the threat on the President.

And he was in the wind.

**Thursday, May 15**

**Navy Yard**

**MTAC**

Gibbs, Jenny, Fornell and Director Morrow stood in front of the big screen, showing Mossad director Eli David, and Officer/FBI Liaison Michael Rivkin, both at Mossad headquarters in Jerusalem.

Abruptly, the images of Office of Special Projects director Leon Vance and New York field office manager Hetty Lange appeared, to the right of David and Rivkin.

"Our mole in Ari's organization has two pieces of information to pass on," said Eli David, speaking of his daughter, Ziva.

"First: Hassan Amal met with Ari yesterday afternoon in Somalia, confirming his involvement with Hanna Lowell," Eli David said.

"That means he is part of Ari's group?" Morrow.

"She confirms that as well," Eli David said. "The other piece of intel should be of great concern to you. We just verified it ourselves within the past hour."

"Which is?" Gibbs said.

"Reliable intel shows that Ari has been planning an operation in Boston and Los Angeles for months, as a prelude to another operation in Washington," Eli said.

"The end game is twofold," Rivkin said, "to test federal agencies as to potential response in future operations, and to extract specific persons."
"Let me guess," Gibbs muttered.

"You, Agent Gibbs," Eli David replied. "Agent Caitlin Todd, and Detective Jane Rizzoli and Doctor Maura Isles. That is Ari's objective. The Fighters of God are planning attacks not just in America but also in Israel. We are on heightened alert, and you should be as well."

"Did Ziva give you a time frame for these attacks?" Vance said.

"She only told us they were imminent," Eli David said. "The Washington operation would follow shortly."

**Boston**

At 11 a.m. Eastern time, Ari Haswari's men, hidden in their nests spread throughout the city, marked their targets.

Boston Police squad cars. Known associates of Paddy Doyle. A house where he allegedly was hiding out at.

The snipers fired their weapons on their targets.

Near the Charles River, another Fighters of God associate fired a rocket launcher at a house.

The two-story house exploded. Whomever was inside couldn't have survived the impact.

**Los Angeles**

At 8 a.m. Pacific time, four SUVs, spread out through Los Angeles County - one in the middle of a packed highway, one outside a downtown bank, a third near the Los Angeles Police Department building and a fourth on the UCLA campus - exploded.

The Boston Globe, Herald and Dispatch newspapers and the Boston television and radio stations received an email sent to them just ahead of Boston PD and FBI. In Los Angeles, the LAPD and FBI got the email just ahead of the local media.

The message was the same.

*War on America and Israel has begun.*

*Fighters of God*

**Somalia**

Ari Haswari couldn't leave the compound just yet, not without one final practice round.

He took his rifle, aiming it at each of his targets 500 meters away, and shot each bullet right through the foreheads of the people on the portraits he aimed at.

All of Leroy Jethro Gibbs' team members, including the couple from Boston, and Caitlin, and Gibbs himself.

Satisfied with the results, he smiled, knowing his opportunity to shoot them personally would arrive.
soon enough.

He gathered his rifle, left his autograph, and ordered his associates to burn down the compound. Then he stepped in the back of the Humvee, which would drive him to the airstrip, where he would begin his journey to America.
Chapter 60

Chapter Summary

Ari's operatives make their moves in Boston and Los Angeles, causing Boston PD and NCIS Special Ops to scramble to respond; a bold move is made to abduct Angela Rizzoli in plain sight; Paddy Doyle avoids Ari's men, only to get captured by the authorities; and Ari's threat expands to all of Gibbs' team - and their Metro DC detective doppelgangers.

Chapter 60

Boston

"This is a WZJT News Special Report.

Reports are coming into the WZJT Newsroom of multiple shootings across the city, some at Boston Police cruisers, others at residences and businesses. We have one report of an officer, driving a cruiser near Fenway Park, killed by one of the shooters; his partner, riding in the front seat, took control of the vehicle and kept it from crashing into an SUV--"

Fenway Park

Frankie Rizzoli saw the glint way down the street, while his partner, Lt. Carl DiPaolo - driving their cruiser - argued why Dustin Pedroia was a future Hall of Famer.

One moment, Carl was his usual jovial, Sox/Celtics/Pats/Bruins loving self, even as Frankie tried to yell over him to get his attention.

The next moment, the front windshield shattered, and the back of Carl's head exploded.

Frankie instinctively grabbed the steering wheel, barely missing an SUV six feet in front of the cruiser; with his heart racing, he saw an empty parking space on the side of the road, yanked the wheel to his right, and braked hard.

With the cruiser at an angle and partly in the road, Frankie turned on its red and blue lights, then checked Carl for a pulse, knowing he wouldn't find one.

"Dispatch!" Frankie yelled into the car's radio set. "Officer Rizzoli...officer down! Fenway Park! Repeat - officer down! Sniper, single shot to the head--"

The back windshield then shattered, as Frankie felt a bullet fly too close past his head. He kicked the passenger door open, and got as low to the floorboard as he could.

"Need backup! NOW!" Frankie yelled into the radio. "Am taking fire!" He looked up, and saw the glint, guessing the shooter was 300 to 400 yards away.

"All units, please be advised of a house exploding on Franklin Street, repeat, explosion on Franklin Street. BFD is on site. Eyewitness reports seeing male, garbed in black near the scene before the explosion, with shoulder-mounted weapon--"
The Cadillac tore down Franklin Street, turning onto Northampton Avenue.

Paddy Doyle was laying down on the back seat, trying to hide from whomever was shooting at him; the man next to him held a machine gun and was glancing out the sides and back of the car. The driver had one hand on the wheel and the other on his Glock, and the passenger up front had his finger on the trigger of his own weapon.

"There's shit all over the city," the driver yelled. "We gotta try to get you out--"

"Hell no!" Paddy yelled back. "I stay here."

"Mr. Doyle," said the front seat passenger - one of Paddy's grunts - "we don't even know who we're dealing with. We only know the house exploded and that Liam got shot at."

"And that somebody's shooting at the cops, too," said the man in the back seat.

"Turn the damn radio on!" Paddy bellowed. "Now!"

The front passenger did so, and quickly found a news station.

"--Paisley's Cleaners locations. One in Charlestown, one in East Cambridge, another in East Boston and, now, a fourth in the North End have been hit by shooters. NewsRadio has confirmed multiple deaths at the East Cambridge location, including the owner, Liam Paisley, the son of the chain's founder--"

"Sonofabitch," Paddy muttered. "They killed Eddie's son."

The Cadillac tore onto Storrow Drive, along the Charles River basin.

"We gotta get you to Northampton, Paddy--"

"HELL NO! I stay here!" Paddy said, raising himself up and pointing his finger in the driver's cheek. "This is MY town! I ain't running! And neither are you!"

"Then what do we do, Paddy?" the driver said.

"We fight," Paddy replied. "We find out who these bastards are, and we take the fight to them--"

"GET DOWN", the passenger yelled, and the next moment his side window shattered, as his weapon sprayed bullets at a target.

The back-seat rider looked backwards as the Cadillac sped away, and he saw a black-garbed male slump downwards against a brick wall. Then he pulled out his own gun, and fired off another round, hitting another black-garbed shooter, as the Cadillac sped away, the driver trying to find a safe place for Paddy Doyle.

**Los Angeles**

After the four explosions, much of Los Angeles County seemed to fall into a complete panic, much of it fueled by media reports and speculation.

Interstates 5, 10 and 110 were in complete gridlock, with some drivers leaving their cars and making their way off the highway by foot.

Students at UCLA fled the campus either by foot or by whatever vehicle they could find. Downtown
streets near the bank where the second SUV exploded was a mess of panicked drivers and pedestrians, trying to get to wherever they thought they would be safe.

And the LAPD’s main headquarters was in the midst of a complete evacuation, even as smoke from the fourth SUV’s explosion filled the air.

In the Office of Special Project's headquarters, every analyst and specialist was trying to make sense of the massive volume of information coming in.

Operations Manager Leon Vance was in the middle of the complex’s Ops Center, talking to Director Morrow in Washington and Hetty Lange in New York, while his people tried to find exactly who was behind the explosions.

Then, they got a huge break.

With the entire Special Ops team either present or listening via cell phone, tech specialist Eric Beale pulled surveillance video of a man talking into a pay phone in south central L.A. near a bank, and the audio from his conversation.

"Sam, can you hear us clearly?" Vance asked agent Sam Hanna, who was with his partner, agent G Callen, in the city's fashion district; both had taken to motorcycles, as most of L.A.'s streets were crowded with people trying to get out of the city.

"Just fine," Sam replied, as he and Callen stayed on guard, weapons loaded and ready. "Play it."

The audio Sam and Callen - and those in Special Ops, along with agents Lauren Hunter and Mike Renko downtown - heard played in time with the video on the center's main screen.

Sam spoke into his phone, repeating in English what he heard the speaker say in Farsi.

"All we have...are what was in the four vehicles...at present...we have only our people and weapons...we need to meet...at the rallying point...south of 105...east of 110...e...l...s...e...g...u...n...d...o -- El Segundo -- south...spring--"

"Eric," Vance said. "El Segundo and South Spring Street."

"On it," Beale replied, and moments later a satellite map of the area was on the right-hand side of the screen.

Sam continued. "...we will rally there?...and plan for the next stage...we have the men...but not the material...not yet...Ari will supply us...within 24 hours...we go there now." The video then showed the man hanging up, and jogging away from the payphone.

"Good thing we bugged that phone," Julie Todd said from the Ops Center, standing next to Vance, Special Agent in Charge Lara Macy and Probationary Agent Kensi Blye.

"Location was a known meeting point for some of our suspected cell members," Vance replied.

"How long ago was this call made, Eric?"

"Thirty-five minutes ago," Beale replied.

"Which means they could be there now, and definitely on the way," Hanna replied.

Vance had real-time satellite footage of the area pulled up on the screen; the location was an abandoned warehouse, not directly on a residential street, but just two blocks from a neighborhood.
The feed showed vehicles pulling up, and people making their way into the building.

"That has to be the cell," Macy said.

"And we're going in," Vance replied. "Macy. Todd. Blye. Get suited up. Hunter, Renko, Callen, Sam. You'll get your gear on site from LAPD. We're going to go with Plan Beta. I'll contact LAPD's SWAT unit, and tell Martin to prep our Storm Team."

Callen and Sam hung up, jumped on their cycles, and made their way through the gridlocked streets, often on sidewalks and through grass.


"We're doing this on the fly," Callen yelled back.

"Not on the fly," Sam said. "We prepped for this. Impromptu mission. We knew they might do this."

"I'm concerned," Callen replied.

"Me too," Sam said. "But if we can surround the place while they're in there, we've got a shot."

**Boston**

Frankie Rizzoli had one shot at the shooter, and he had to take it.

Carl kept a long-range rifle in the trunk of his squad car for unexpected occasions, and this was as unexpected as things could get.

Frankie opened the trunk, grabbed the rifle, checked to make sure it was loaded, then put himself into position.

Behind him, another Boston Police squad car skidded to a stop, and two officers poured out.

"I got a line of sight," Frankie yelled. "That's him."

They saw a glint on the roof of a building three blocks down, and what looked to be a man reloading his weapon.

"Take the shot," said the lieutenant behind him.

Frankie aimed the weapon, and took the shot.

"I think the guy went down and I think I saw red," Frankie shouted.

A Boston PD helicopter in the area flew over the building, and the pilot saw the shooter, dead on the roof, bleeding out.

"You got him!" the lieutenant said, grinning and embracing Frankie. "Good work!"

Frankie's own reaction was relief - and to call his mother. But the line was still busy.

**Washington**

Almost everyone on the third floor of NCIS was glued to a monitor, watching news coverage of the events in Boston and L.A., except for Leroy Jethro Gibbs, who was reading two emails.
Jane Rizzoli, Maura Isles, Kate Todd, Tony DiNozzo, Stan Burley, Paula Cassidy, Tim McGee and Abby Sciuto were watching ZNN coverage on the main monitor in Gibbs' team's bullpen.

"I can't get through to anyone in Boston," Jane said, trying to maintain a calm demeanor. "Not Ma, not Frankie, not Korsak or Frost. I can't even get through to your house, Maura."

Maura hung tightly to her friend and lover. "Jane, I'm sure they're alright," she said, placing her chin on Jane's shoulder. "They are trained professionals, surrounded by trained and competent federal agents. Angela and Tommy are under the best protection--"

"They're not trained for anything like this, Maur," Jane replied. "Terrorists...damn it, if we were there instead of here--"

"What if's not gonna do a bit of good, Rizzoli," Gibbs barked. "Neither is standing around and watching TV."

"What do we do, Gibbs," Kate said.

"We find the bastards here in D.C.," he replied, "instead of waiting around for them to find us."

Boston

Boston P.D. Central Headquarters was more chaotic and active than any other time in recent memory, even 9/11. The shootings had stopped, and Boston PD was now trying to find the shooters while keeping the peace throughout the city.

Angela Rizzoli was sitting at her daughter's desk - temporarily filled by Detective Roz Framus - watching detectives and uniforms moving back and forth, shouting into telephones, checking emails and databases.

Framus gave Angela a cup of coffee, and told her that her son, Frankie was "okay".

Amidst the chaos in Homicide, no one noticed a fax coming through...except for Angela.

Trying to be helpful, she pardoned and excused herself past nearly a dozen people, and picked up the sheet from the machine, looking for Korsak or Frost or Cavanaugh to give it to.

She took a look at it and read the note.

Her scream quieted the noisy room, and only the uniform three feet from her kept her from fainting onto the ground.

"What the hell is that," Korsak yelled, running to Angela.

"She was holding that paper when she fainted," a detective said.

Korsak took the paper from Angela's hand; his eyes grew wide when he read it.

"Where's Cavanaugh?" he yelled to the room; when told the lieutenant was downstairs, Korsak told a uniform to get him right away, and told another uniform to get help for Angela.

"Korsak?" Frost said, running to his fellow detective, who was hovering over Angela while staring at the sheet. "I heard the scream--"

"Barry," Korsak said. "Look at this."
Frost took the sheet and read.

"Oh my god."

FIGHTERS OF GOD
ARI HASWARI DEMANDS JANE RIZZOLI AND MAURA ISLES
BE DELIVERED TO HIM IMMEDIATELY
BOSTON PD AND NCIS HAVE TWO HOURS TO COMPLY
OR BOSTON WILL SUFFER MORE EXPLOSIONS AND ATTACKS

Right then, a man in a suit ran into the room, flashing a badge.

"FBI!" he yelled with a flat, Americanized accent. "Angela Rizzoli, come with me, for your own safety!" He looked around. "Where is she???

"She's injured," Korsak said. "Who are you?"

"She comes with ME," the professed agent yelled. "For her own safety."

"Show me your badge and ID!"

The man ignored Korsak and brusquely grabbed Angela by the arm to pick her up.

Frost pushed him backwards, breaking his grip; he pulled out his gun, pointing it at Frost and Korsak.

"You are in NO position to negotiate!" he screamed, this time with a pronounced Arabic accent. "I am FBI! The woman comes with me or I will shoot my way out of this building--"

"Put down your weapon, sir, and we'll contact FBI to verify your identity," yelled Lieutenant Sean Cavanaugh, who had just ran into the squadroom.

"You do not understand, Lieutenant," the man sneered, his weapon now aimed at Angela's head. "You in NO position to negotiate. The woman comes with me. NOW."

"Put down the weapon," Detective Woody Hoyt said, weapon drawn, standing six feet from the man and closing in.

"You do not understand," the man told him, putting the barrel of the gun close to Angela's temple. "Look at where my weapon is."

"You can't get out of here," Woody Hoyt said. "You have five seconds to put that gun down and back away--"

"All of YOU have five seconds to back down or I kill this infidel where she lies!" he said, staring at Woody Hoyt.

"PUT THE GUN DOWN!" Woody yelled, as Korsak, Frost, Framus and every other detective and officer in the room aimed their weapons at him.

The man stared at Hoyt, looked around, then grinned.

"Ari wins," he whispered, then pulled his gun up from a still-unconscious Angela and aimed it at Hoyt. "ALLAHU AK--"

He got off one shot, hitting Hoyt in the shoulder.
Eight more hit his head and chest, killing him instantly.

"GET MRS. RIZZOLI DOWN TO JORDAN!!" Lt. Cavanaugh shouted, as Frost picked her up and, with Korsak and a uniform on either side, ran to the elevator to take her down to the building's autopsy room.

"Woody's going down there, too!" Framus yelled.

"I'm alright," Woody Hoyt muttered, in shock from being shot; he also was taken to autopsy, which doubled as an emergency treatment room.

Jordan Cavanaugh - the acting Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts - treated Woody and Angela, until an ambulance arrived to take Woody to Boston Central General for surgery to remove the bullet.

Angela woke up, with Framus and Jordan trying to comfort her, even as she cried out for Jane, then Maura, then her sons Frankie and Tommy.

Upstairs, the squadroom had become a crime scene; while Internal Affairs investigated the incident, FBI arrived on site, fingerprinted the body, and ran the impostor agent through its databases.

His fake ID said he was FBI agent Aaron Trust; fingerprints, and DNA samples, identified him as Aaron Carter, a former Marine who embraced radical ideology, went AWOL from his Marine unit in Afghanistan and surfaced as an Al-Qaeda operative.

**FBI Field Office, Boston**

"How in hell did that guy get up to that squadroom?" said Special Agent Daniel Todd. Somebody, somewhere either in his own agency or in Boston PD had let their guard down, and he'd address that leak ASAP.

Meanwhile, Daniel's attention was on trying to find the FoG operatives in the city, and on the faxed threat to Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles. He held off on placing Angela, Tommy and Frankie Rizzoli in the emergency safe house until he could determine how much in danger they were.

Daniel had to put that on the back burner after news of a second round of shootings reached him.

**Boston**

As rush hour set in on the much-emptier-than-normal streets of Boston, Ari's men launched a second round of attacks on Paddy's operatives.

Paddy's men, this time, were ready, and fired back.

BCU was one of dozens of places across the city that turned into an urban war zone, with Boston PD and its Special Operations Unit and the FBI in the middle.

As dusk settled in, the National Guard - there on order of the Governor - spread out. They, and SOU, would take on both sides and do whatever had to be done to end this madness.

**Los Angeles**

NCIS Special Ops and its Storm Team - Leon Vance's version of a SWAT team, trained for potential urban warfare with Ari's group - joined LAPD SWAT in surrounding the warehouse in south central L.A.
The cell was confirmed to be in the area, and the teams moved in as closely, and inconspicuously, as possible.

Every man and woman understood they might not make it out of this alive, and prepared themselves as best they could for that possibility.

They also knew plans could change at any moment, though the orders from the Secretary of Defense caught them off guard.

"SecDef wants to do WHAT?" Macy said, incredulously, into her cell phone.

"SecDef is ordering you to fall back, 200 yards," Vance said, from his position at the Ops Center.

"We're in position, Leon," Callen interjected. "We can move at any time and honestly we need to move now."

"SecDef doesn't want to waste resources - referring to all of you - and wants to try another plan before you move in," Vance said. "You have your orders."

As the teams moved back, a couple of SWAT members sighted people on the warehouse's rooftop, who in turn saw the retreating agents.

"Sniper!" Kensi Blye yelled, and moments later the teams took fire.

"Blye! Madden! Holt!" Macy yelled at Kensi; Storm Team leader Paul Madden; and LAPD SWAT team member Carlton Holt, all trained snipers.

"On it," Madden yelled back, and moments later he, Holt and Kensi were firing at the shooters on the roof. Two went down, a third fell back for shelter.

Seconds later, more men, all armed and shooting, ran out from the building.

"FIRE!" Madden yelled, and his team fired on the shooters.

Twenty seconds later, Callen saw a helicopter rapidly approach the warehouse.

"That's a SuperCobra!" Sam yelled, over the helicopter and the shooting.

"Attack copter," Callen yelled back.

"And armed...EVERYBODY! INCOMING! DOWN!" Sam screamed at the rest of the group.

Four Sidewinder missiles were fired by the SuperCobra's pilot, hitting their targets as the warehouse exploded.

The SuperCobra quickly came around, and this time fired its guns at the three wounded shooters still firing at it and the team.

Special Ops, Storm Team and SWAT descended on the destroyed warehouse, on guard.

They found no survivors, but in the rubble they found the remnants of a huge cache of weapons.

Boston

As night descended, the National Guard/FBI/Boston PD/SOU alliance began to get the upper hand, partly because Paddy Doyle's men and Ari Haswari's guerrillas were picking each other off.
Word got to the FBI that Paddy himself was holed up in a warehouse on the east side of town, his men taking heavy fire from the guerrillas.

SOU and National Guard units maneuvered themselves into position around the warehouse, and moved in.

When all the shooting finally ended and the survivors amongst the guerrillas and Paddy's men were captured, there were 26 casualties on both sides, including two FBI agents, four SOU officers and three Guardsmen.

None of the survivors among Ari's men seemed to be anything more than hired guns, but one of the survivors was none other than Paddy Doyle himself.

Washington

Jane Rizzoli sat in the NCIS conference room, relieved that her brother and mother and everyone else in Homicide were alive and well, including Woody Hoyt, who was under guard at Boston Central General recovering from being shot.

"That's one Hoyt I'm glad is one of the good guys," Jane told Lt. Sean Cavanaugh, who was on speaker.

"Jane, something else you'll be happy to hear," Cavanaugh said. "We got Paddy Doyle."

Jane, Gibbs, Burley, Director Morrow and Assistant Director Jenny Shepard listened to Cavanaugh break down the operation, and explain that Paddy was being treated at a local hospital before being taken to FBI headquarters.

Sunday

Washington

Gibbs spent the day mostly at work, having his team track down various leads on Ari and his operations in the States - something that FBI, NSA, Homeland and even the CIA were doing as well.

That night, he, Kate, Jane and Maura returned to Gibbs' house, which now was under 24/7 surveillance with four agents outside at all times, and four agents inside at all times.

On top of that, Mike Franks had returned, sleeping on a cot in the living room, weapon in hand.

Gibbs was in the basement, working on the frame for a boat, and growling when one of the FBI agents asked him why on earth he was building a boat there in the basement.

His glare caused her to scamper back up the stairs, and he went back to work on the frame when his cell phone rang.

It was Director Morrow.

"Gibbs, Special Ops in Los Angeles and FBI in Washington confirm that Ari has landed here in the States," Morrow said. "Where he is exactly we're not sure, but we know he's somewhere in the southeast."

"How'd he get in?" Gibbs asked.

"Disguise," Morrow said. "Flew in from Barcelona into Miami. It's a disguise he's used before."
Almost like he wanted us to know he was here. And there's more."

"Is he on his way to D.C., Director?" Gibbs.

"Mossad says they heard chatter in Abu Dhabi and Damascus that Ari and FoG plan an operation within the next week in Norfolk," Morrow said, "and that Ari plans to do something here in D.C. during that timeframe."

Gibbs exhaled, and took a drink of whiskey from his jar.

"So you're benching me?" he asked Morrow.

"No," Morrow said. "But I'm considering it, and putting you, Rizzoli, Dr. Isles and agent Todd into protective custody - along with the rest of your team."

That got Gibbs' attention; every piece of intel indicated Haswari was only interested in himself and the other three. "The rest of my team?"

"Eli David told me he was told by Ziva that Ari has also targeted every other member," Morrow said. "DiNozzo. Burley. Cassidy, McGee, Mallard, Scuito, even Palmer. And Jethro, I have to repeat that I am strongly considering placing all of you underground until this is over."

"He's serious about this," Gibbs stated.

"That's not news to either of us, Gibbs," Morrow replied. "How serious is he? Eli says that Ziva is herself under protective custody."

"Ziva is?"

"He says she was made 24 hours ago, and Mossad extracted her just in time. Ari's put a hit out on her, too."

Quantico, Virginia

Tobias Fornell thumbed through the dossiers of the four agents who were involved in Operation Doppelganger.

Fornell suspected that the male, playing the role of Gibbs, was in less danger than the three females, especially Agent Amy Sutton, playing the role of Kate Todd.

If the latest piece of intel was on the money, Ari was going after all of the women in Gibbs' life before taking on Gibbs himself.

The most frustrating thing was that Fornell couldn't tell Gibbs about it, under orders from the FBI director himself; anything that got passed to Gibbs and his team now went through the FBI and NCIS directors first.

Fornell took out his wallet and pulled out one of the pictures of his daughter, Emily. Then he reached in his desk, and pulled out a photo of his ex-wife, and her mother, Diane.

He loved Emily more than life itself, and even though his feelings towards Diane were strained at best, he didn't want either one of them touched by the madness that Gibbs and his team had endured for the past several months.

He could only imagine what Gibbs, Kate's, Jane's and Maura's loved ones had endured for this long.
Monday morning
Washington

Gibbs and his team went to work at the Navy Yard under heavy guard, and came off the elevator to see four-inch bullet-proof glass behind the windows.

"Might as well put us in a safe," Tony DiNozzo remarked. "Cram us all in Ducky's morgue. Put us up in the FBI basement--"

"Got any more ideas, DiNozzo?" Jane snapped.

"Well, they could do us like Harrison Ford in Witness, where he hid out amongst the Amish to protect the little boy who saw the murder," DiNozzo replied. "Don't think Ari would think to find us there."

"You as an Amish man, Tony?" McGee said, rolling his eyes.

"Hey, Probie. At least I could survive," Tony snapped. "You, without your geek toys? Dead in the water."

"You know, Tony, we're all targeted by a terrorist, and living under Ari's threats, but somehow, you remain your same old, same annoying self," Kate said.

"Wouldn't be Tony if he wasn't," Burley joked.

"THAT your observation, Number One?" Tony shot back.

"MY observation, DiNozzo, is you shut the hell up," said Gibbs, walking through with coffee in hand, before stopping in front of Tony's desk.

And staring a hole through the back of his head.

"YES boss," Tony replied.

"Hey, turn that up," Paula Cassidy said, looking at the special report from the ZNN feed on the TV next to Tony's desk. "Something here in D.C."

"Put it up on the monitor, McGee," Gibbs said, and moments later the entire team saw a report that shook them to the core.

"...ZNN's Washington bureau has just learned that an unnamed terrorist has taken credit for the shootings of four Metro DC detectives, and the kidnapping of a visiting detective and doctor from Florida. The Floridans are missing, while the detectives are said to be in critical condition at an area hospital, and are under heavy guard--"

"That's Cheney's team," Paula said.

"And Ringles," Tony said.

"Gonna talk with the Director," Gibbs said, heading up the stairs to Morrow's office. "If Fornell calls, Burley patch him through."

While Gibbs was upstairs, the elevator dinged, and two FBI agents - Fornell and Fritz Howard - strode off to the bullpen.

"Gibbs," Fornell said. "Where is he?"
"Upstairs with the Director," Burley replied.

"We've got a problem," Fornell stated.
Chapter 61

Chapter Summary

After his team's doppelgangers from Metro DC police are critically wounded in an ambush, Gibbs is told that he and his own team are being benched by NCIS director Morrow; Mark Dugan changes his identity to avoid the FBI; and three NCIS agents are killed while investigating the shooting deaths of two Navy lieutenants in Virginia.

Chapter 61

Washington, Navy Yard

FBI agent Tobias Fornell and his fellow agent, Fritz Howard, were looking for Leroy Jethro Gibbs and Fornell didn't look like he wanted to wait around.

"Have something to do with what we just saw on TV?" Tony said to Fornell.

"Agent Howard and I need to talk with Agent Gibbs," Fornell replied. "Where is he?"

"He's upstairs with the Director," Burley said, "but Gibbs told me to call up--"

"No need," Fornell said as he and Howard headed to the stairs. "We'll go there ourselves."

Director Tom Morrow's office

"What you saw on TV is the truth," Fornell told Gibbs and Morrow. "Detectives Cheney, Rapp, Monteleone and Miller are all in surgery. All critical."

"How critical?" Gibbs asked.

"Monteleone saw one of the shooters and pushed Rapp out of the way," Howard said. "His reward was getting half of his jaw shot off. Rapp herself took two shots, one to her collarbone, another in her neck. Cheney barely missed a clean shot to the head, but took three in his stomach. And Miller took three shots, one narrowly missing his heart, another straight through his kidneys."

"Will they live?" Morrow asked.

"They think Miller will survive but he'll be on dialysis the rest of his life," Fornell said. "Monteleone's going to need radical reconstructive surgery. The doctors don't know yet about Cheney or Rapp."

"And what about the detective and doctor, uh, Rinaldi and Ingle?" Morrow said. "Any leads on their whereabouts?"

"Just security camera footage from a nearby restaurant," Howard said. "Shows them being thrown into a black van, by men garbed in black clothing and masks. We ran the plates, they were stolen off
a car from Virginia. We're still looking for the van."

"Has anyone taken credit for the shootings or kidnappings?" Morrow said, getting up from the chair behind his desk.

"No one's claimed anything, but this has Ari written all over it," Fornell said.

"Then I have no choice," Morrow said, as the door to his office flew open, showing Stan Burley, with a faxed sheet of paper in hand.

"Boss you're gonna want to see this," Burley, half out of breath, said to Gibbs.

"Let me see that, Agent Burley," Morrow said.

Burley handed him the sheet, and Gibbs, Fornell and Howard looked over his shoulders.

_JETHRO_

_I AM COMING_

MAKE YOUR PREPARATIONS AND
HAVE YOUR TEAM TEND TO ITS
AFFAIRS

_ARI_

"I want copies and tell McGee to trace that call!" shouted Gibbs and Fornell, simultaneously, as Burley looked at both, momentarily confused.

"Stan, you heard me!" Gibbs shouted, pointing to the doorway, but Fornell stepped in front of the former Marine.

"Jethro," he said. "This is my investigation."

"Your investigation?" Gibbs barked, disbelieving what he heard.

"It's a joint investigation between Metro DC police and the FBI," Howard interjected. "We're involved because of the--"

Howard saw Gibbs' severely intense glare, and momentarily paused. Then he pressed on.

"--because of the nature of the incident, and because of who is involved, and because of our suspect--"

"Who's involved?" Gibbs shouted. "MY TEAM is involved, Howard! I'M involved! NCIS is involved--"

Morrow stepped right in front of Gibbs and held up his hand, signaling for his agent to be silent.

Fornell noticed that Gibbs shut up, and thought if anyone else had been in Morrow's position short of the President himself, Jethro would have kept right on going.
"Jethro," Morrow said. "This is the FBI's case, fully. The FBI director consulted me. I signed off on it."

"You signed off on what, sir?" Gibbs said, quietly and firmly, to his director.

"Jethro, because of this incident I'm benching you and your team for the duration," Morrow replied. "For your own safety."

Gibbs remained silent, standing in front of Morrow, looking off to the side in a daze of disbelief and confusion.

"Jethro," Fornell said quietly. "Cheney's team was targeted by Ari's men. He's doing what our people predicted he'd do. His next step is to try to murder you and your team directly--"

"Director!" Gibbs abruptly said, looking straight at Morrow. "Put me and my team out there. We can find that bastard. We can find him quicker than the FBI will--"

"We can find Ari the quickest as we've been running this operation, agent Gibbs," Fornell responded.

"I know him, Director--" Gibbs.

"We ALL know him, Jethro," Fornell said. "And his people. Inside and out--"

Gibbs ignored Fornell and looked at Morrow, pleadingly.

"Sir," Gibbs said, almost shouting, albeit so loudly that Tony and Kate could hear him from the secretary's office. "My people know this guy. I know this guy. Let me find him. Let ME protect THEM FROM him."

Several moments later, Morrow spoke.

"My objective here is to protect you and your team, and my agents and agency," Morrow stated. "My objective also includes capturing Ari Haswari, and NCIS will play an integral role in that. But neither you nor your team will be involved any further."

"Not involved?--"

"The Office of Special Projects will head NCIS's participation in this investigation."

Gibbs said nothing for several moments, though everyone in the room noticed his expression went from shock, to defiance, to denial, to resignation.

"You will report to your desk, and wait for further instructions, Agent Gibbs," Morrow said to him. "Am I understood?"

"Yes sir," Gibbs said, crisply, and with an undertone of anger, turning on his heels towards the doorway.

"Burley. With me," Gibbs said, seeing his senior agent, and briskly walking out of the office and the secretary's desk - past Kate and Tony - towards the bullpen.
"Stan?" Kate said, unsure of what she had seen.

"Down to the squadroom," Stan told her and Tony. "We'll inform everyone there. You two, call Abby and Ducky up."

Two hours later, Metro detectives and FBI agents found the bodies of Joan Rinaldi and Misty Ingle in Georgetown, with a single gunshot wound to their heads.

Forensics indicated the shots were taken from a couple hundred yards away and that neither woman saw the sniper; the shooter's casings were found on the rooftop of a nearby office building, consistent with known members of the Fighters of God cells in Boston and Los Angeles.

Boston

This is NewsRadio with local news on the hour and at the 10s, weather on the twos, traffic on the fives. At this hour, Mayor Merino has lifted the curfew put into place after the recent terrorist attacks, though the National Guard continues to have a heavy presence throughout the city. Also, the Mayor announced that Boston Police and the FBI are in the process of tracking down local insurgents involved--

Today is not a good day to be Mark Dugan.

It is a very good day to be Dennis Rockmond, as is tomorrow, and the next day, and the rest of the year, and the rest of his life.

Dugan hoped that his Rockmond ID would hold up. He figured he had enough separation between his fake identity and his birth ID that the former would be safe.

Just in case it wasn't, he made plans to escape to Mexico. He thought perhaps he should go there anyway, but figured that Dennis Rockmond disappearing would draw suspicion, and there was some decent money for Rockmond to make.

So, Dennis Rockmond would make his living, and give himself plenty of time for hobbies.

Like settling accounts with all those whores, and with that bitch medical examiner if she makes it back to Boston alive.

Tuesday
Route 17, near Fredericksburg, Virginia

Two Navy lieutenants were on their way, in a rental car, to meet up with two women in Virginia Beach.

They wouldn't make it to their destination.

Dean Westfall, the driver, pulled over after seeing red and blue lights in his rearview mirror. As he and Lt. Curtis Janssen reached for their IDs, the man in the Virginia State Trooper's uniform shot them dead.

Navy Yard, Washington
Agents Jeffrey Carter, Holly Rowland and Jonathan DeGraffenreid, the latter two fresh out of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Georgia, were called up to Director Morrow's office.

"Agent Carter, congratulations on your promotion to field leader of your own Major Case Response Team," Morrow told the six-year veteran. "And I have a case for you."

Morrow pointed to the screen against the back wall of his office, showing the Navy IDs of Westfall and Janssen.

"Virginia State Police just received a 9-1-1 call about two dead Naval personnel found in a car, off Route 17 near Fredericksburg, Virginia," Morrow said. "This could be the work of Haswari. FBI is on its way but because this sort of thing normally falls under NCIS, I'm sending you three to investigate."

"Any special orders, sir?" Carter asked.

"Investigate fully, then get out of there and get the bodies back here to the Navy Yard," Morrow said.

Just over an hour later, Morrow got an urgent phone call from Fornell.

"Director," Fornell said. "I regret to inform you that agents Jeffrey Carter, Jonathan DeGraffenreid and Holly Rowland are dead."

Morrow stood there, silent, then decided to sit down.

"Director...Director? Director??...Director!"

Morrow gathered himself as he sat down.

"Agent Fornell," Morrow said. "Details."

"The agents were investigating the scene. Agent Holt, the ranking agent from the Bureau on site, says they were standing around the vehicle when DeGraffenreid opened the trunk. Holt said moments later the vehicle exploded."

"Was their...was it instant?" Morrow said, solemnly.

"It looks that way," Fornell said. "Our forensics people, and our medical examiner, say that from where they were standing, and where the bomb was placed under the vehicle near the fuel tank, they would have died instantly. They wouldn't have suffered...Director, I'm sorry for your loss."

"Agent Fornell, contact me with any further developments," Morrow said before hanging up.

Jethro's team would have been there, Morrow thought, after he told his secretary to send him contact information for the agents' next-of-kin.

The Director wondered how many more agents he would have to bury before this was all over.
Chapter 62

Chapter Summary

Team Gibbs is benched from working out in the field - but not prevented from working from inside NCIS; Jane lets out her frustrations on Ducky; the NCIS LA team discovers a drone is missing from the company where one of the dead Naval officers worked; and a phone call from Ari throws Gibbs and the rest of his team into an uproar.

Chapter 62

Tuesday evening
Washington, Navy Yard
NCIS garage

"I thought we were being benched by the director."

Abby Sciuto, donned in a red NCIS jumpsuit, looked over the burnt-out husk of the Ford Mustang from the crime scene in Fredericksburg, while talking to Gibbs and Stan in the garage.

"We can work within the building and only within the building - at least that's what the director's saying for now," Stan replied.

"It's so unfair, though," Abby said, turning around to face Stan and Gibbs. "All of it. Ari, the director benching us, telling us we can't work--"

"We can work, Abs," said Gibbs, with a hint of frustration. "Just not out in the field."

"But what can you do to catch Ari if you're stuck in here?" Abby said, before reaching out to hug Gibbs.

"Oh, Gibbs, the director HAS to let you work this case!" she said decisively, then let go of her embrace. "I don't trust the FBI."

"We have to trust them," Gibbs said. "It's their case."

"And you're gonna let them? Just like that?" Abby replied, hands on hips.

"Didn't say that, Abs," Gibbs answered.

"Then what are you saying, boss?" Stan interjected.

"We all have our jobs to do, Burley," Gibbs said, "starting with the Mustang."

In autopsy, Ducky Mallard and Maura Isles and their assistant, Jimmy Palmer, worked on the bodies of the three agents and the two lieutenants. Jane Rizzoli, the only other person in the room, stood across from Maura.
"Won't Agent Gibbs be expecting you in the squad room, Jane?" Maura asked her partner, as she examined a skull fragment.

"I told them I wanted to check on something down here," Jane replied. "I didn't say how long I'd be...and besides, DiNozzo was getting on my nerves."

"Anything in particular?" Maura asked.

"Everything in particular," Jane said. "He's just annoying as hell. If I hear him hit on Paula one more time, or make some smart ass comment to McGee, or even some crack at Kate, I might break my promise to Gibbs."

"And what promise is that, Jane?" Ducky asked, as he examined another skull fragment.

"Not to kick DiNozzo's ass. Notice how he's not screwing around with me since I stood up to him? And that he hadn't said anything to Maura--"

"Jane, if I may," Ducky said, stopping his examination of Agent DeGraffenreid's remains. "Anthony can be...a bit difficult to deal with at times, particularly for certain individuals. Having known him for some time, I feel comfortable in saying that, despite the variety of ways in which he can get under one's skin...Tony is a good agent, and a good man."

"I didn't say he wasn't a good agent," Jane said, exasperatedly. "I'm not saying he's a bad guy - but he acts like a spoiled jock! If DiNozzo was up in Boston, he wouldn't last the morning pulling that crap up in Homicide - Cavanaugh would put his foot up that guy's rear - or kick him out the door."

"Jane," Maura said to her, "he's really not that bad of a guy--"

"When he stopped hitting on you," Jane said, loudly. "Gibbs did put his foot down on that, but still lets him pull his other crap--"

"Perhaps, Jane, Jethro is a little more lenient with Tony that to your liking," Ducky said, walking over to Jane. "I might say, in Tony's defense, that he's not the only person here whom Jethro lets 'get away' with things."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Jane shot back, as Maura quickly stepped away from her table, moving over to Jane.

"Whenever there's a case, Jane, Jethro expects his agents to work," Ducky said, calmly. "If they need to be here, for example, that is fine, but otherwise, unless they also have business in forensics or out in the field, he expects them upstairs."

Ducky looked at Jane and Maura.

"Of ALL the--" Jane shouted, throwing up her hands and walking away.

"Jane!!!" Maura yelled, running after Jane to pull her back in.

"You saying he has a problem with me being with Maura?" Jane yelled at Ducky, while Palmer made his way to the phone in autopsy.
"Mr. Palmer, that will not be necessary," Ducky said to his assistant. "No need to call anyone--"

"His damn Rule 12 doesn't apply to us!" Jane said, losing her composure. "I know DiNozzo's said things. Hell, ALL of them have said things. Well neither of us asked to be here--"

"I realize that, Jane," Ducky said softly, as he made his way to Jane and Maura. "This is difficult on us all. You two aren't the only ones affected by this, and neither are Jethro and Caitlin. All of us - including myself and Mr. Palmer - are drastically affected by Ari. We all want this to be over."

Jane crossed her arms, knowing she lost her composure, albeit mildly, and with a man whom she knew didn't deserve to be the object of her rant.

"Sorry," Jane muttered, before turning towards the door. "I really need to leave--"

"Jane!" Maura said, putting herself between her partner and the door. "Turn around, apologize."

"Maur?"

"Turn around, Jane Clementine Rizzoli. Apologize, to Dr. Mallard and Mr. Palmer, for exploding in a manner that is very much unlike you and beneath you...Jane."

Maura Isles, her own arms crossed, meant business. With anyone else Jane might have let the remainder of her restraint go, and let the other person have it.

But she couldn't do that to Maura.

"Dr. Mallard, Mr. Palmer," Jane said, turning around to face them, "I apologize for...my outburst. It was, as Maura said, beneath me and unlike me."

"Apology accepted, Jane," Ducky said. "It is rather unlike you...the Jane Rizzoli I've come to know over the past several months is a good person, and a good detective, who has been calm and dependable under an extraordinary amount of pressure. That is who I expect will prevail, however much longer this, ah, case plays out."

Jane, embarrased, said nothing, so Maura spoke for her. "Thank you, Ducky...do you mind if Jane and I speak outside for a few minutes--"

"Maura, stay here," Jane said. "I need to be back upstairs."

Jane turned heel and strode through the doorway to the elevator, and Ducky called out to Maura.

"Dr. Isles!" he said, as Jane told Maura to stay put and work, before stepping into the elevator.

"Maura," Ducky said to her. "I believe what Jane needs at the moment is a little bit of space...you'll have time to speak to her soon enough."

"Ducky," Maura said. "You're right. This has been extraordinarily hard on both of us. Although she shouldn't have had that outburst...I'm not surprised by it, at all. And yes, this has been hard on Jane and I, very hard, even with the support you and the team have given us both."

"Maura, I understand," Ducky replied.
"Perhaps," Maura said. "But Jane is right, that people do talk about us, including the people who are supposed to have our backs. I'm insulated from it, because Jane sticks up for me when I go upstairs, and to your and James's credit, you don't interact with me like the others interact with her.

"Jane has to deal with Tony, and Kate, and Paula, and Abby, and even McGee and Stan, and though I know they're all good people, they all, to be blunt, have their dysfunctional characteristics. Sometimes, Tony's the worst, and yes, he acts like a jerk. Paula gossips about us. Kate gossips about us at times. McGee gets pushed around by Kate and Tony, and even Stan seems to let it all go. And Gibbs? The only thing he does is headslap DiNozzo, and Stan.

"Jane has to listen to it, and deal with them at their best and at their worst," Maura continued. "She knows they talk about her being down here with me. Sometimes it's the only thing keeping her - and me - sane, stuck here far from our home. I know Gibbs looks the other way, even though there are times he's pissed at her for doing it. I know that if he didn't, she may have blown up LONG before today and much worse than she did with you."

Ducky took a breath, then spoke.

"You're right, Maura, about all of it," he said. "Yes, Jethro does look the other way when it comes to Jane being down here with you. He makes allowances for her, and for you, as he does for Tony and Abby and the others. And I know they talk and I know they have their more dubious characteristics - just as we all do. But I also know they are good people, who care about you, and would take a bullet for you and Jane both. That goes from Gibbs all the way to Mr. Palmer and I. This entire ordeal has been hard on us all, and we'll get through it only by sticking together."

Ducky nodded towards the remains of the five people laying on the tables.

"Right now, we have an opportunity to help these people and their families, to speak on their behalf," he said, gently. "I would suggest that your partner will be fine, and that you and I finish our work here, to do our part to help find the bastard who murdered these people."

Maura nodded, and she, Ducky and Palmer went back to work.

Throughout the afternoon and into the early evening, all of Gibbs' team worked, tracking and looking at everything from the dead lieutenants' dental records to fragments from the car. The biggest surprises were from shrapnel found in the car and from the remains of the dead NCIS agents, all pointing to military-grade explosives.

"So it looks like the explosive was planted on the fuel tank, rigged to explode when the trunk was opened," Jane Rizzoli said, as the team gathered in the bullpen to discuss the case.

"All of the evidence points to it being a pro job," said Tony DiNozzo.

"They were set up," Paula Cassidy said.

"Were they being targeted, though - or was it us?" Stan asked.

"Us?" Kate said.

"If the director hadn't benched us, we would've been there," Gibbs said.

"Looks like Haswari to me," Jane said. "Or it's a helluva coincidence."
"I don't believe in coincidences," Gibbs told her, and everyone else.

**MTAC**

Gibbs and the rest of the team stood in front of the main monitor, which showed Office of Special Projects operations manager Leon Vance standing in the Los Angeles office's Special Ops center, with agents Lara Macy and G Callen flanking him.

"We appreciate your team working on the evidence there and sending us your findings," Vance told him. "We'll take it from here."

"Glad to help...Leon," Gibbs replied.

Vance continued. "Agent Gibbs, I realize this is difficult for you, and I promise you--"

Gibbs interrupted. "We're just doing our jobs, Leon, as we've been directed to do."

"I was going to say, Agent Gibbs, that I promise you we'll follow through on this. I want that bastard as much as you and your people do."

"I doubt that," Gibbs replied.

"I don't," Vance retorted. "May I remind you I have my own agent Todd, Juliana, whose sister is targeted for death by this maniac. Agent Callen worked with you personally. You and I have worked together in the past--"

"We get it," Kate interjected, surprisingly more firmly than most of her teammates expected her to. "We're all one happy family. An attack on us is an attack on us all."

"You know, Kate," Callen said. "That's exactly what Julie's said - more than once. Despite your differences, she thinks the world of you, Kate, and your team, including Gibbs."

"Tell her I said hi," Kate said.

"You can tell her yourself," Vance said. "She's part of a team already in the DC area, following up on a lead."

"Lead?" Gibbs replied. "Lead on what?"

"Your dead lieutenants worked for a company named Danborne Avionics," Vance answered, "which is working with the Navy on drone technology intended for multiple uses in the field. Our people are following up on Lt. Westfall's connection and if his death was related to the project he was heading up. We'll keep you in the loop."

"Thanks, Leon," Gibbs said, before signaling to one of the techs to cut the feed.

"Drones, boss?" Tony said. "You think Ari's using drones now?"

"What if it's someone else?" Jane said. "Ari's group aren't the only terrorists out there."

**Danborne Avionics**
The four agents breaking into the building weren't officially supposed to be there, and officially they weren't.

Officially, Vance hadn't authorized any kind of operation to break into the building to take stock of what was there and what might be missing. Nor had he authorized any part of an op involving monitoring of the company's security camera footage and computer databases.

Upon hearing from the FBI agents on scene that Westfall's body was seen with his hands cut off, Vance guessed that whomever killed them wanted the hand to gain access into the building - and therefore authorized the op.

A mere forty minutes after stepping off the Navy plane at Andrews Air Force Base, part of NCIS's elite Special Ops team was inside Danborne Avionics' headquarters, while the rest monitored things from Los Angeles - and Director Morrow monitored from MTAC in Washington.

"Eric," said agent and acting field leader Sam Hanna into his phone, to tech specialist Eric Beale. "You sure these schematics are right?"

"Totally," Beale said. "In fact you're less than 30 feet from the room you need to start at."

Sam and the rest of his team - agents Julie Todd, Mike Renko and Lauren Hunter - made their way to what was the largest room in the building, where the company kept its drones.

"Say cheese, big guy," Callen said from the L.A. office's Ops Center, standing next to Vance, Special Agent-in-Charge Lara Macy and Probationary Agent Kensi Blye. They were watching the four agents through a security camera feed Eric had appropriated.

"How long before someone notices we're hacking into their cameras, Eric?" Vance said.

"If they stick to plan, get in and get out, there shouldn't be a problem," Eric said. "I've got eyes on their guards on the premises and in their control room."

"Too bad we're the only ones seeing the stubble on Renko's chin, and I told Sam not to slick his scalp," Julie joked.

"It's called properly maintaining one's shaved head, Jules," Sam said, with a smile.

"Stick to the mission, people," Vance said.

The agents checked around the room, doing a quick inventory of what was supposed to be there.

"Hey, something's missing," Lauren said. "These drones."

Eric zoomed in on the drones Hunter was referring to, and moments later info about them appeared on the Ops Center's main screen.

"Target drones," Vance said. "Developed three decades ago...info from the database indicates they're not intended to be currently operational."

"They're relics?" Sam said, as he and the other team members looked over the drones.
"Not in current use by anyone," Macy said. "Sam, Julie, how many of those drones are you looking at?"

"One, two, three, four," Julie replied.

"There should be a fifth," Eric said.

"I don't see a fifth," Sam answered, "only four."

"Then we might have a problem," Eric replied.

"Mr. Beale, you're saying there are five of those drones." Vance.

"Mr. Vance, I'm saying there are five of them in their database--" Eric.

"--but there's only four here," Sam mused.

Renko pointed to an empty space next to one of the drones and looked up towards a camera. "Look like where that fifth drone would go to, anybody?"

"Eric," Macy said. "Get me info on those drones's flight systems and who's authorized to use them."

"What're you thinking, Mace?" Julie.

"She's thinking about why Westfall's hands were cut off his corpse," Vance said.

Thirty seconds later, schematics for the drone's flight systems appeared on screen.

"Sending to your smartphones now, Sam," Eric said, and moments later the team on site got the info.

"Biometrics," Sam said. "They used his fingerprints to gain access."

"They got in, took the drone and left," Julie said.

"Now the question is where is it," Callen said.

"And who has it, and where and when they intend to use it," Vance said.

**Norfolk, Virginia**

The drone was in an abandoned warehouse, chosen to be as far as possible from prying eyes.

Fighters of God operatives were quickly working on bringing it online; nearby, C4 explosive lay, waiting to be loaded into the drone.

The FoG leader on site was overseeing the operation, examining one of the techs's work, when his phone rang.

"Ari."

"Ahmad," said Ari Haswari. "How are things going?"
"We're making good time, sir," Ahmad said. "We should be ready to go no later than tomorrow afternoon. If you needed, we could be ready by dawn--"

"No need to rush, Ahmad," Ari replied. "The event is in the afternoon. That's our target. I want to be sure things are ready then."

"They will be, sir," Ari was told; satisfied, he ended the phone call, jumped on his motorcycle, and took a ride.

**Washington, D.C.**

Minutes later, Ari arrived at his destination, a coffee shop downtown.

Ari pulled up outside the shop, took off his helmet, put on a pair of glasses and walked in.

He ordered a pastry and coffee, then sat at a table. He took his bag, pulled out a device, put it under the table, finished his pastry, got up and walked out back to his bike.

Then he made a call on his cell phone, to Leroy Jethro Gibbs.

**Navy Yard**

Jane Rizzoli sat at her desk and tried to hide.

*Were these people really all that bad,* she thought, as she watched Gibbs's agents work.

Having had some time to settle down - and having a conversation with Maura after she and Ducky finished their examination of the dead agents and Navy lieutenants - Jane saw that Team Gibbs wasn't all that different than the people at Boston Homicide.

Homicide had its share of jerks, and many more decent, hardworking people. Thinking objectively, Jane would put any of these agents in the latter category, the same one she placed Korsak and Frost in.

In fact, all of them, even the rookie McGee, would fit in well in Homicide, Tony included. Jane remembered that DiNozzo was himself a Homicide detective in Baltimore, and wondered if he was the young cop Cavanaugh had put in a call about a few years back.

What if Cavanaugh had offered the job to DiNozzo instead of Frost? Would he have been a different guy...or would he have driven Jane crazy?

*Maybe I'll ask Tony about it,* she thought, as she got up and walked over to the fax machine.

Gibbs' phone rang, and rang, and everyone else was too busy to notice.

Jane picked it up.

"NCIS," she said.

"Jane Rizzoli," the man on the other line said. "Get me Leroy Jethro Gibbs."

Jane felt her spine run cold.
"Who is this?"

"You know who I am," Jane heard Ari say. "FIND GIBBS."

Tony looked over at Jane and saw her eyes pop out.

"Rizzoli, you alright?" he said.

"It's him," she said, "it's Haswari. He wants Gibbs."

The entire squad room went silent.

"Give me the phone," Tony ordered, taking the receiver from Jane's hand, then pointed to McGee. "Probie! Get Gibbs. NOW!"

"Tony DiNozzo," Tony said.

"Where is Gibbs," Ari said.

"We're getting him."

"Work faster, Mr. DiNozzo," Ari said. "And tell Ms. Rizzoli - or is it Ms. Rizzoli-Isles? - NOT to put me on hold again."

Tony hadn't seen McGee run up the stairs - or anywhere for that matter - since he met the probationary agent the year before.

Neither had he ever seen his boss, Gibbs, run as fast as he did out of MTAC and down the stairs to his desk, before grabbing the phone.

"Ari," Gibbs barked.

"Gibbs," Ari said, calmly, as he sat on his bike, on the street outside the coffee shop. "It's been a while."

"Not long enough," Gibbs replied, hastily scribbling a note: MCGEE TRACE THE CALL.

Tony, Stan and Kate looked over McGee's shoulder, as he worked to find Ari.

"Six months and you finally surface," Gibbs said. "Wanna do us all a favor and just give yourself up?"

"You know I've made other arrangements," Ari replied. "My itinerary is quite full. Regrettably, for you, I won't show up."

"Lots of people are looking for you, you bastard," Gibbs said, glaring at McGee.

"Of course," Ari stated. "My father, in Mossad. My half-sister, who is my Judas Iscariot. And your own federal agencies."

"They're looking for you, alright," Gibbs said. "Looking to put your head on a stick."
"No, Jethro, that's you."

"Ari, I don't need to put your head on a stick. Shooting you will do me just fine."

Stan was almost cheek-to-cheek with McGee, who had Tony breathing down his other shoulder and Kate peering over the top of his head.

"Tell me you've got a trace," Stan said.

"It's jumping all over the grid," McGee said. "Washington, New York, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware--"

Gibbs looked at Stan and Tony, both of whom shook their heads.

"Your team's customer service leaves a bit to be desired," Ari said; Gibbs thought at least he's willing to talk. Maybe long enough for McGee to trace the bastard.

"That's the least of your worries, Ari," Gibbs replied.

"Take Jane Rizzoli, for example. Scared, frightened--"

Gibbs looked over at the Boston detective, who was still bug-eyed, even as Paula Cassidy tried to calm her down.

"Rizzoli can handle herself," Gibbs said, loud enough for Jane to hear him. "Damn good at her job, which isn't to make you feel good."

"And DiNozzo," Ari continued. "Your lap dog. I wonder if he would have found a certain bomb attached to the fuel tank of a certain car that I'm sure you have in your possession."

Gibbs looked back at Stan, Tony and Kate, all of whom shook their heads.

"Perhaps I'm being too difficult on your team, Gibbs," Ari said, fiddling with a burner phone that he pulled out of his bag. "How is Dr. Isles doing with Dr. Mallard? She reminds me somewhat of Caitlin, although their personalities are very different. And not just her Sapphic tendencies. She has more in common with Dr. Mallard, and Agent McGee--"

"You have a problem with me, Ari, that's fine," Gibbs said. "Take it out on ME."

"I don't understand, Gibbs," Ari replied. "Take what out on you?"

"You've put my team and a whole lot of other people through hell for the past six months," Gibbs yelled. "Why don't you tell me WHY you've done that."

"I haven't done anything--"

"BULL! This is ALL because of YOU!"

"Why, Gibbs, perhaps you give me more credit than I deserve," Gibbs heard Ari croon, while he himself threw his hands out towards McGee.
Tony ran over to his boss. "Can't get a trace," he whispered. "It's jumping all over the east coast."

"Where ARE you, bastard?" Gibbs shouted. "Do you want ME. You want to kill ME? Fine. Name your time and place."

Gibbs heard nothing for several moments, even as Kate ran to him with a note.

**CALL IS BEING RECORDED HERE AND BY L.A. OSP**

"Ari?" Gibbs said, several times, while paying closer attention to the background. He heard cars and trucks drive by, and people talking.

**HE'S ON A CITY STREET,** Gibbs scribbled on his notepad, handing it to Kate.

"Ari...ARI!"

"Gibbs," Ari finally said. "You're trying to find me."

"Why don't you make it easy on yourself and tell me where I can pick you up," Gibbs retorted.

"Your team is good, but my team is better," Ari replied, hitting the on button on his burner phone. "Speaking of your team...may I ask how Caitlin herself is doing? I've thought a lot about her since my last visit."

"You get anywhere near her, and if the FBI and CIA and the rest of NCIS don't get you first I WILL!!!" Gibbs shouted, drawing everyone's attention, even McGee, who was on the phone with Eric Beale in Los Angeles.

"I wouldn't have it any other way, Gibbs," Ari said. "But as I said, I suppose you're trying to find me."

"For the last six months," Gibbs told him.

"You won't trace this call, and I won't take you up on your offer to surrender, but I will give you a clue as to my whereabouts," Ari said, as Gibbs motioned to Stan and Tony.

"What are you going to do, Ari?" Gibbs asked, unsure of what was coming next.

"You'll find out very shortly," Ari said before ending the phone call.

He dialed a number on the burner phone, then started his motorcycle, and drove away from the coffee shop, then hit send on the burner before tossing it to the ground.

**Navy Yard**

"He hung up!" Gibbs shouted, slamming the receiver down on his desk phone. "Burley. DiNozzo. MCGEE. TELL me you have a TRACE on the bastard--"

"Boss, we couldn't get a definitive trace," McGee said.

"Morrow called L.A.'s tech guy and he and Probie couldn't trace it," Tony said.
"And their guy's as good as Tim," Burley said.

"Everybody!" Gibbs shouted to the bullpen. "The recording. Listen for anything and everything: traffic, people, conversations--"

Kate noticed a red flash on Gibbs' desk phone; she picked up the receiver, and pushed the button.

"Haswari," Kate stated grimly, as Gibbs did a fast 180 degree turn and everyone else turned their heads towards her.

"Not him," said the man on the line, FBI agent Tobias Fornell. "Fornell. Where's Gibbs?"

"Here," she said, handing the receiver to Gibbs. "Fornell."

"Fornell," Gibbs said.

"You just talk to Ari?" Fornell replied.

"Yeah, I did. We couldn't trace his call--"

"That's something I want to talk to you about but not why I called."

"Tobias, I'm damn busy--"

"Turn on your TV, Channel 8," Fornell interjected. "And I think you'll find out where he was just now."

Gibbs motioned for DiNozzo to turn the TV behind his desk from ZNN to the local CBS affiliate, where they saw a special report.

...reports of a massive explosion at Dom's Cafe downtown, taking out the coffee shop itself, heard as far away as the Navy Yard. Police have the immediate area and adjacent cross streets sealed off...

"We know where he was, alright," Gibbs said to Fornell. "And he's probably still here, in D.C."
Chapter 63

Chapter Summary

Chapter 63 features the RI&K version of NCIS Season Two's season-ending episode Twilight, with the Los Angeles Special Ops team racing to stop Ari's men from launching a deadly drone, while Team Gibbs monitors from the safety of the Navy Yard; however, as twilight falls on the D.C. area and the team travels to its safe house, Ari's still in play - and ready to finish off the team.

Chapter 63

Early Thursday morning, right after 2 a.m. Eastern Time
Andrews Air Force Base

The C-130 Hercules US Navy plane landed on the strip without incident, albeit under heavier security than usual.

With confirmation of Ari Haswari having been behind the bombing of a Washington-area coffee shop - and the Fighters of God claiming as such in emails and faxes to D.C.-area and national media outlets - every military facility in and around the Capitol was on heightened alert.

The C-130's flight was a specially-arranged flight by NCIS Director Thomas Morrow and Leon Vance, the agency's operations manager of its Office of Special Projects. Its cargo included the three members of the OSP's elite team not already in town - special agent in charge Lara Macy; senior agent G Callen; and probationary agent Kensi Blye.

All three were met by their four teammates and NCIS assistant director Jenny Shepard.

"We're going back to Danborne Avionics," explained special agent Sam Hanna, who headed the OSP team that visited the complex a few hours before. "Got the head of the company out of bed; he's on his way here, should arrive in a half hour."

"So they're missing a drone," Macy replied. "Have you confirmed Haswari and FoG has it?"

"Not fully, but I'd like to know who else would," Hanna replied.

"We have confirmed that Westfall's fingerprints were used to get into the building, right?" Callen asked.

"Yeah," said special agent Julie Todd. "The drone that's gone is a target drone, one of their older models."

"A model someone might not notice as readily," Callen mused.

"Whatever type of model it is, it's in the wind, and if it's flyable it can be used as a WMD," Shepard said. "What we need to do right now is find a way to trace it, preferably back to its thieves...and this is why we put so much money and resources into the OSP, gentlemen and ladies. We have to find this drone before Haswari or whomever stole it uses it."
"And no idea for certain on the target," Macy said. "Are we assuming Gibbs and his team? NCIS? The Navy Yard?"

"We're assuming that, and everything else of military and political importance in the region, including the White House, Capitol and Pentagon," Shepard replied. "Every intelligence asset is being brought to bear to find out who might have this drone--"

"So why is our entire team here, Ms. Shepard?" Macy asked. "Is there something we need to know?"

Shepard opened her laptop and, after it exited sleep mode, she pushed a few buttons and called up an audio file.

"My contacts in Mossad intercepted this phone call a few hours ago," she told the group. "This is why I wanted the entire OSP team here."

She played the file, of two FoG operatives speaking in Farsi, about a drone and a planned attack.

"...the Americans and their families will not know what hit them'..." said Hanna, repeating a portion of the audio file. "Is he talking about Gibbs and his team?"

"We thought that was a possibility," Shepard said. "However, six Naval ships are scheduled to return to Norfolk later today. Those ships were part of a Marine/Naval joint operation. And there will be families and friends of personnel on those ships to meet them."

"Does Mossad think those people are the target?" Callen asked.

"NSA thinks they're the likely targets," Shepard said. "Gibbs and his team are very well-protected and have been benched" - she continued, much to the OSP team and especially Julie Todd's surprise - "and that is why I've called your entire team in. You need to find that drone, and whomever has it, before it's used."

"Why not put the harbor and port on lockdown, then, if the people are the targets?" Macy asked.

"SecNav and SecDef are discussing that right now," Shepard said. "But NSA conjectures that the drone could still be used against one of the ships, or against a different target in Norfolk or here in D.C. Regardless, we need to find that drone and those using it...and the clock is ticking."

**Navy Yard**

Gibbs told Morrow - and his team - that he wasn't about to go back to his house. He was going to stay and work at NCIS as long as it meant he'd still be able to work, but his team should leave and get some rest.

He stayed at his desk, examining paperwork related to the dead lieutenants and NCIS agents, as well as preliminary FBI reports on the explosion at the coffee shop.

Then he got up and walked down to autopsy to look at the bodies one more time - only to find Palmer asleep on a cot.

He didn't need to wake him up, Gibbs thought, and snuck out of the room as quietly as he could. Gibbs knew that Ducky was at his home, under heavy FBI guard, with his mother.

Gibbs then made his way to forensics, where he found Abby asleep on another cot, hugging her Bert the Farting Hippo doll. He pulled Abby's blanket up to her neck, careful not to wake her, then
quietly walked out to the elevator.

When he walked back onto the third floor, he found his agents - plus Dr. Isles - asleep behind their desks.

He saw Jane and Maura asleep, Maura's head nestled on Jane's shoulder, behind Jane's desk. Paula was snoring with her head on her desk, Stan laid back asleep in his chair, McGee asleep sitting in his chair.

Gibbs found Tony snoring, with a magazine in his lap, and a slice of pizza on his keyboard. He found Kate asleep behind her desk, head on her arms, and pulled her coat up to her neck.

He walked over to the windows near the bullpen, said hello to the two Marines standing guard, and looked out at the D.C. skyline.

Something was bound to happen soon, Gibbs thought as he sipped his coffee. I hope we all get out of this alive.

Norfolk, Virginia
Naval Station Norfolk

The OSP team members were awakened at dawn from their too-brief nap with some good news.

They scrambled out of their cots to the base's hastily set-up Special Ops center, speaking to Morrow, Vance and Gibbs by video.

"Ms. Shepard's Mossad contacts came through with a welcome break," Morrow said. "Chatter confirms that the FoG is in Norfolk and Haswari is said to be with them."

"Where are they at in Norfolk?" Macy said.

"An abandoned warehouse, west side of town," Morrow replied. "We believe they are still there and that now is the time to move."

"An assault team is on its way to meet you," Vance said. "You and they will go to the site, take out the operatives and recover the drone."

"And Haswari is to be captured alive," Morrow interjected.

Callen saw Gibbs' reaction. *I'd rather kill the bastard too Jethro*, he thought. *And everyone else here feels the same way."

"People, I've seen first-hand what you've done," Morrow continued. "Honolulu. San Diego. Long Beach. You're up for the challenge and I expect you to accomplish your mission. Agent Gibbs and I will observe from MTAC, Mr. Vance from Los Angeles. Bring Haswari and the drone, and any prisoners, back to the naval station, and you'll receive further orders there."

"Understood, Director," Macy said. "You heard the man. Let's move."

As the OPS team walked the short distance to meet the NCIS assault team, Julie Todd walked alongside Callen.

"Hell of a thing to wake up to," she said. "One minute you're asleep, next minute you're running to a tent, next minute you're told you're going to take down Ari Haswari himself."
"It's not like this job is run of the mill ordinary," Callen replied.

**Washington**

Gibbs walked down the stairs to find his team wide awake and anxious; word had already spread through the building that the OSP was on its way to take down Ari.

He spied Kate, and motioned for her to follow him, behind the stairs.

"I know you're worried about your sister," he told her. "She's trained for this, and so are the rest of them. I know Callen and Macy, I've heard about Hanna. I know your sister. They're as ready for Ari as anyone."

Kate looked at Gibbs silently.

"She's not," Kate finally said. "No one is. That guy's the devil...and I've got a bad feeling--"

"Kate, we're gonna get the guy. We're gonna get him soon."

"Gibbs...I had this dream...that he got everyone, and I was left, and I turned around and saw him standing, smiling, knife in hand and gun in the other...his eyes were dark...then I saw myself in a coffin, in a dress--"

Gibbs grabbed Kate by the shoulders.

"Kate! *Nothing*’s gonna happen to you!" he shouted, so loudly the rest of the team heard him over in the bullpen. "I promise you, *nothing will happen*!"

She began to tear up, then wiped her eye and straightened herself up.

"Is there a way to monitor the team in Norfolk?" she asked Gibbs.

"You'll be up in MTAC with me monitoring them," he said, "along with the rest of the team."

**Virginia**

Both teams drove to the abandoned warehouse in west Norfolk, only to find nothing but empty space.

Macy shrugged her shoulders and held up her arms to the video camera outside the screen.

"Nothing, sir," she said into the camera. "If they were here they cleaned up perfectly."

**Washington, MTAC**

While Morrow spoke with the other intelligence directors on audio, Gibbs had a brainstorm. It involved using two NSA satellites, and placing a phone call to a number that Mossad suspected belonged to Ari or one of his lieutenants in Norfolk.

"What are you going to say to him, Gibbs?" Morrow asked.

"Nothing," Gibbs replied. "Just place the call and put my name on his caller ID."

After the call was placed and Ari picked up, Gibbs talked to Ari, with OSP listening in.

**Los Angeles, NCIS Office of Special Projects**
Vance ordered his tech specialist, Eric Beale, to work on finding the location of the cell phone - even as NCIS and NSA techs were doing the same back in Washington.

"He needs to keep Haswari on the line just a little bit longer," Beale said.

"How close are you?" Vance replied.

"THIS close," Beale answered.

Beale cracked the location just seconds ahead of his counterparts in Washington.

"Sending coordinates to Washington and to Mace now," he said. "Director, we've narrowed him. He's still in Norfolk, in a different part of the city, close to the Naval Station."

OSP - still at the other warehouse - looked at their phones.

"Mossad was wrong about that one warehouse," Hanna said. "But we're really close to this other location...Eric, what do those satellite feeds show?"

Back in L.A., Beale and Vance were looking at a live image of the suspected location - the same image those back at MTAC in Washington were looking at.

"There's a couple of vehicles and some kind of movement on the ground," Vance said. "They may be setting up some kind of launch pad for the rocket...you need to move NOW!"

"On it," Macy said. "Everyone - let's roll!"

**Washington, MTAC**

"Gibbs," Morrow said in a near-whisper, "This is as good of an opportunity as we've had to end this."

"Put me out there, director, I can end this too," Gibbs replied.

"You know I can't do that, Gibbs," Morrow replied. "SecDef is talking more extreme measures if this doesn't work."

"Got a SEAL out there right now," Gibbs replied, referring to Sam Hanna.

"Hanna's good, but SecDef's concerned that not even a team of SEALs will be enough to get this guy. They're talking Black Ops. Same contingency plans in place to capture bin Laden."

**Norfolk, Navy Pier**

A young boy, with his parents, awaited one of the Navy ships to pull into port, and they were just a few of hundreds of people waiting to welcome their loved ones back home.

Ten feet behind the young boy, a 19-year-old young man, of Somali descent, made his way through the crowd, speaking every so often in perfect English, and telling random people about his cousin.

He struck up a conversation with the couple and their son, and said he was thankful for the opportunity his family had to emigrate from the Sudan to America and for he and his cousin being born here, and his cousin to serve his new country as a sailor.

Everyone smiled, and talked about pride in America, and pride in its military.
The young man slipped something into the woman's purse surreptitiously, and a few minutes later, after some well-wishes from both parties, he left them.

Then he placed a phone call, waiting until he was out of earshot by anyone in the crowd, telling Ari that the target was set. Then he walked briskly back to his motorcycle, and sped back to the warehouse.

He parked his cycle a block away, looking around to make sure no unwelcome visitors were nearby.

He didn't check thoroughly enough, as his face met Sam Hanna's fist.

"Eric," Macy said to Beale on her phone. "You got eyes on this place?"

"Nothing, Mace," he told her. "No security cameras within two blocks. All I have is the blueprint to the building."

"That's better than nothing," she told him.

"How are we doing on jamming that drone?" Vance asked.

"The drone works on one of three frequencies," Beale said, with the entire team listening in on their phones. "Someone there will have to jam them."

"That's you, Lauren," Hanna said to Lauren Hunter. "You've got experience. Remember Hawaii?"

"Sun, surf, jamming terrorists' cell phones. How could I forget?" she cracked.

"Then start working on it," Vance said.

"Once you jam the right signal, then there's no way they can control the drone," Beale said.

"Find the right frequency and we'll get control of the thing," Callen surmised. "How long?"

"A minute or two for each frequency," Hunter replied.

"Do it, now," Macy ordered. "You'll have two assault team members with you, and Kensi and the two on the roof up there" - nodding towards a building on the opposite side of the lot - "have eyes on you in case anyone tries anything."

Macy took a breath.

"The rest of us - move in, on my mark," and three seconds later the rest of the OSP and assault teams moved in on the building; Callen, Mike Renko and two assault members used a ladder to get to the roof, while the rest of the team rushed the building's entrance.

"SAM!" Julie yelled, spotting a shooter, before pulling the trigger on her rifle and putting a round between the shooter's eyes.

Hanna rewarded her by shooting another terrorist just a few yards behind her.

And on the rooftop, one of the terrorists - the man who murdered Lt. Westfall - was making final preparations to launch the drone.

While the team inside the warehouse tried to take down AK-47 wielding shooters, Callen, Renko and the others reached the rooftop, only to take fire.
The next few minutes seemed like hours to Julie Todd. She wondered if she would have enough ammo to get up to the roof alive.

And then she reached to reload her rifle and found an empty cartridge, and saw Macy fire over her head to take down two of the bastards.

"Reload," Macy said to Julie. "Sam we got them all??""

"Clear!" he yelled. "Powell?"

"Clear!" yelled the Assault Team leader.

"Let's go," Macy shouted.

On the roof, the terrorist working the drone took Lt. Westfall's severed finger and scanned a panel with it.

As Callen took down a terrorist, he, Renko and the two assault team members heard a loud noise, and looked in horror to see the drone take off.

"Drone's away!" Callen yelled into his cell phone, before hitting the ground to avoid being shot.

In the parking lot, Hunter and her guards saw the drone flying away.

"Eric!" she shouted into her phone. "I've jammed two of the frequencies--"

"That means the drone is attuned to the third," Beale replied. "Jam that frequency you jam the drone."

"How long to its target?" Vance said.

"Probably a couple of minutes, Mr. Vance," Beale replied.

"And it takes a couple of minutes to jam each frequency -- Callen!" Vance said. "What're they using to control the drone?"

"Looks like a laptop," Callen replied, between shots.

"You, Renko, whatever it takes get to that laptop!" Vance barked.

Macy, Hanna, Julie and their assault team comrades broke through the door opening up to the rooftop, taking out the two shooters firing at Callen and Renko.

The terrorist who launched the drone - and another of his comrades - then fired at Macy and her group, causing them to duck for cover.

Renko jumped up and rushed the duo; he got off three shots, missing the launcher but killing the other one; the launcher fired two rounds into Renko's shoulder and arm.

Macy got up and fired two rounds into the launcher's head, killing him instantly.

Callen rushed to the laptop, while an assault team member and Hanna ran to Renko.

"He's alive, Mace, G!" Hanna shouted, "but he needs medical attention now!"

"Eric!" Callen shouted into his phone. "Tell me how to shut this thing down!"
"It's going to take me a minute just to get patched into the operating system," Beale said in frustration.

"We don't HAVE a minute!" Vance barked. "Suggestions. Anyone!"

"You know how to operate this, Eric?" Macy shouted.

"If I can get INTO the system--" he blurted.

"Shoot the thing!" Vance said; Callen stood up and took aim on the laptop.

Hidden nearby was one of the terrorists, who took aim at Callen.

Julie saw him out of the corner of her eye, and instantly rushed to put herself in the line of fire.

"SNIPER!" she yelled, as she took the shooter's bullet; he in turn took rounds from two assault team members, and Macy, and Hanna.

Callen quickly looked around, then emptied his gun into the laptop.

"Where's the drone, Mr. Beale?" Vance said, looking anxiously at the big screen in the L.A. Ops Center.

"Upper right," Beale said, as he, Vance and everyone else in the Ops Center - and in MTAC in Washington - watched live footage of the drone bypass the crowd at the pier, and fall harmlessly into the Hampton Roads Bay, and moments later everyone in both places cheered wildly.


On the rooftop, the team was busy checking on Julie Todd, who took a bullet right in her chest.

Fortunately for her, the bullet-proof vest she had on saved her life.

"Whew," Macy exhaled, picking the blunted bullet out of Julie's vest. "That was a close call."

On the other side of the roof, Renko was still being attended to, with assault team leader Powell having called for a helicopter to evacuate him to a hospital.

"How's Mike?" Julie said, as Macy and Hanna helped her up, and Callen walked towards them.

"Stable," Hanna said, "but he needs to get to a hospital."

"Good news," Callen said. "They're cheering back at Ops. The drone fell into the bay."

"You hear that?!! The drone fell into the bay!" Macy shouted, and everyone else shouted in response.

"You did good, Callen!" Julie remarked.

"Just doing my job, Jules," Callen replied.

"Well, you deserve the compliment--"

Julie then heard someone yell "SNIPER" and felt Macy yank her to the ground.

And heard the whiz of a bullet from out of nowhere miss her head by an inch.
"SNIPER!" Powell shouted, seeing the glint on the rooftop of another nearby building.

"Kensi!" Macy shouted into her phone. "We just got shot at!"

"I see him," Kensi said from her perch on another nearby rooftop. "Mace...it's him."

"Him who?"

"Ari Haswari."

"Agent Blye. Take him out. That's an order."

Kensi lined up Ari in her sights - seeing him preparing to take another shot at the agents, waiting for someone to give him a target - then felt herself knocked down by assault team member Halloran, then looked up to hear, and see, bullets whizzing by.

"She's taking fire, Mace," Callen said.

"Everyone stay down!" Macy shouted. "Vance. We're taking fire."

"Sitrep!" Vance said, as the mood in the Ops Center abruptly changed.

"Someone shot at us and nearly took Julie's head off, and Kensi, Halloran and Pierce are taking fire," Macy said. "Haswari's on the rooftop of the building directly across from us."

"Eric, send in the Marine copters, tell them Haswari and other possible hostiles are firing at our people," Vance ordered. "Kensi! Halloran! Sit rep!"

Halloran looked up, then ducked, as moments later another bullet whizzed past he, Kensi and Lt. Pierce.

"We're taking fire, Mr. Vance," Halloran said. "Blye says she saw Haswari--"

"Blye, Halloran," Vance barked. "If you have a shot take it!"

Kensi crawled back to her rifle, and Pierce looked through her binoculars.

"I see a shooter, on top of a shack of some kind on the roof," Pierce said. "Doesn't look like Haswari."

"Look below," Kensi shouted. "You see him? Haswari?"

"I don't see anyone," Pierce said.

"I'm gonna try to take that guy out, whoever he is," Kensi said, and crawled back to her rifle.

She lined the shooter in her sight, even as he lined her in his own.

She got off the first, and last shot, hitting the sniper in the forehead as a Marine AH-1W Super Cobra approached the building.

The attack helicopter circled the building, its pilot confirming the kill, and no sign of Haswari.

"Get out of there," Vance ordered, before sending in a team of Marines and two more Super Cobras to make sure his teams got out of there safely.

**Late Thursday afternoon**
Gibbs and his team left the Navy Yard in a caravan of SUVs, all heavily armored, outfitted with eight-inch thick windows, and shadowed by Marines front and back.

On Morrow's order, all of them - even Ducky Mallard's mother - were going straight to a safe house in an undisclosed location, until Haswari was found. Morrow's order even extended to special agent Julie Todd, after he determined that Haswari probably intended to take her out in Norfolk.

The caravan traveled south, to an undisclosed location in Virginia, though Tony and Gibbs thought it might be the same rural house Jenny Shepard met Ziva David in back in November.

The caravan ran every red light and stop sign, under orders not to stop for anyone or anything.

It was twilight.

And as Ari Haswari lie in the brush, with his lieutenants, he waited for the caravan to pass by, his sniper rifle loaded, ready to put a bullet through someone's head.
Gibbs and his team are ambushed while traveling to their safe house, and tragedy strikes as a beloved member appears to be struck down from out of nowhere.

Chapter 64

Author's note: this chapter contains an apparent major character death, with emphasis on the word apparent...things are not as they appear.

Late Thursday afternoon
Fairfax, Virginia

Fritz Howard, Special Agent, FBI, pulled up in his car into the parking lot of a Starbucks, got out, and walked in front of the Fairfax police cars blocking off the area.

"Honey, I'm sorry your parents aren't happy, I'm sorry you're not happy-no, it has nothing to do with your dad nor your mom...yeah, everything to do with something I'm working on here in D.C. ...you okay?...good. Look, we'll talk about your parents and their wanting to move from Atlanta and we'll talk about Pope and Taylor when I get some down time...promise, Brenda-

Howard crossed the street, past the police cars into the McDonald's parking lot, and walked right into two Fairfax police detectives and fumbled his phone.

"Aw, dammit...sorry," he said, after causing one of the detectives to spill his coffee onto the asphalt, before pulling out his wallet. "Here's a five, coffee's on me."

"Brenda? Still there?...look, I've got to go...I'll call you tonight, I promise, okay?"

Howard moved past parked customer and police cars and the officers and detectives standing around, and made his way to the back of the restaurant, and the crime scene - while patiently listening to his lady friend on his cell and trying to politely end their conversation.

"Look, I gotta go. Call you later...love you, bye."

Howard flipped his phone shut and walked over towards the lead agent on the scene, Ron Sacks, who nodded towards an older woman sitting nearby in her car, with another FBI agent keeping her company.

"Lady saw the shooting," Sacks said. "Saw what she called some 'foreign guy' jump out of a black SUV, shoot all three of the victims, gun in both hands, then jump back into the SUV and take off. Third shooter looked to be the driver, who shot one of the victims - probably the Rizzoli lookalike on the right, here - from the vehicle."

Howard looked down at the victims: three fellow agents from the Bureau, all part of the operation to protect NCIS agents Leroy Jethro Gibbs and Caitlin Todd, Boston police detective Jane Rizzoli and Massachusetts medical examiner Maura Isles.
The Gibbs, Jane and Maura lookalikes had bullet holes in their foreheads, and there was a heavy amount of blood splatter on the ground and the drive-thru menu.

"Lady over there is frazzled out of her mind," Sacks told Howard. "From what little we got out of her, it sounded like the shooters were pros."

"They never even got their guns out of their holsters," Howard said, looking at the bodies. "Got caught by surprise?"

"Sounds like it," Sacks replied.

"What about the other member of their team?" Howard asked. "We know where she is?"

"She's alive and we have eyes on her."

**Virginia, south of Fairfax, State Road 612**

A caravan of eight SUVs headed south down a back road, headed towards an undisclosed location known only to the FBI, NCIS Director Thomas Morrow, and selected agents and officials from the CIA, the NSA and Homeland Security.

Among those in the caravan were the NCIS agents and employees whom Morrow authorized - over their objections - to be placed into a safe house until Ari Haswari was captured alive or dead.

They were, in effect, being placed in a form of witness protection; one of the extreme measures being considered on their behalf included changing their identities, and occupations.

It was considered to be a last-ditch measure, but some of the officials discussing the matter were beginning to push for it to be quickly implemented, as a way to remove the issue of their safety.

Leroy Jethro Gibbs knew of all the options on the table, and he just wasn't going to sit by and let Morrow and his cronies do whatever they wanted.

He, Tobias Fornell and Tony DiNozzo rode together in one SUV, mostly in silence. Every so often Tony tried to lighten the mood with a joke or observation about a movie he had seen.

While Fornell bantered with Tony in the rear seat, Gibbs - sitting in the middle seat - kept silent, listening to what his preferred senior agent and the older FBI agent were talking about and simultaneously immersed in his own thoughts.

"Boss?" Tony asked Gibbs, as the caravan passed out of a middle-class neighborhood.

"Yeah, DiNozzo."

"You notice Kate this afternoon?"

He had, just as he had noticed everyone else.

"What about her?"

"She doesn't seem like herself, boss," Tony said. "Something's off."

"Looks fine to me, DiNozzo," Fornell interjected. "Nothing major."

"You think, Fornell?" Tony said.
"Yeah, DiNozzo, I do," Fornell answered. "Everyone's off. Everyone's probably been 'off' at least a little bit since this whole thing started. You've been off-"

"Define off, Fornell," Tony said. "I haven't had a real date in weeks, I've got Ron Sacks hanging out in my living room while I'm trying to sleep, while I'm trying to watch a movie, while I'm shaving-"

"You worried about Sacks?"

"-but I'm still myself," Tony said, glaring at Fornell. "As far as I know, I'm myself. Everyone else is themselves. Even Kate. Until this afternoon."

"What are you saying, DiNozzo?"

"I'm asking you if you've seen anything unusual about agent Kate Todd this afternoon, including when we left."

Fornell leaned forward.

"Gibbs?"

Gibbs turned backwards.

"Tobias," he said, looking over his shoulder at Fornell. "Something you haven't told us?"

"Gibbs...DiNozzo...neither I nor the Bureau have noticed anything different about any member of your team...including agent Todd," Fornell said, carefully choosing his words. "You'll see that for yourselves when we arrive at the safe house."

"When we arrive at the safe house," DiNozzo said, still glaring at Fornell. "Uh huh."

Fornell turned forward, trying to look past Gibbs' stare.

Gibbs glanced back at DiNozzo, gave him a quick nod and a brief smile, then turned back around.

In another SUV, FBI Agent Gabriel Dean sat in front of Jane Rizzoli and Maura Isles, holding hands, with Maura's head laying on Jane's shoulder, and Jane trying to be - and look - strong for her partner.

Behind them sat NCIS agent Julie Todd, worried sick about her sister whom she hadn't seen since Christmas, and hadn't spoken to since before the Norfolk op. The FBI would not let her see Kate, even for a moment, and especially when she and Gibbs' team were being herded into the caravan back behind NCIS headquarters earlier that day.

One way or another, Julie would see Kate when they got to this safe house, and bide her time until she could plant the bug that allowed Vance and the OSP to monitor her and Team Gibbs.

Dean put the Sports Illustrated issue he was reading on the floor, then turned around to talk to Jane and Maura.

"You two are good for each other," said Jane's former, and last, boyfriend.

"Took us long enough to figure that out," Jane replied. "Thanks."

"Yes, Agent Dean, thank you for your support," Maura said. "It's very reassuring that someone who knew us from back home is accepting of us, without reservation."
"Why would *that* be any problem?" Dean told her and Jane.

"We still have to go home and deal with our...relationship," Jane said. "One thing to be together away from the people we know, it's another to, ah, come out in front of all of them."

Maura wrapped her arms around Jane's waist.

"They already *know*, hon," Maura told her. "Besides, I could care less what Dr. Pike thinks or has to say about the matter-"

"You mean Dr. Papov," Jane replied. "Pike's gonna rot in the federal pen for a long, long time."

"And you got plenty of friends back in Boston," Dean reassured them. "I know Frost has no problem with it. Korsak told me he has your back. Frankie even told me if any uniform runs his mouth, he and a dozen more will shut it for him."

Jane and Maura laughed.

"Nothing could surely be worse than what we went through when we showed up here back in November," Jane said, as Maura and Dean looked confused. "The conference room? Maura and I, with Gibbs and your buddy Fornell."

"Ah, Fornell," Dean said in recognition. "I heard about that - went sideways, though he didn't intend things to go that badly...I take it the guy's not on your Christmas list, Jane?"

"We might send him a card," Jane smirked.

"Jane, we'll do *more* than that," Maura replied. "We'll send him a card...he's not a bad man."

"That's what Kate said," said Julie, playing with Jo Friday in her lap and checking on Bass in his cage behind her seat. "A little annoying."

"That's an understatement," Jane replied. "Wonder what he would have done if things were reversed. If I grilled him and, say, Gibbs-"

"Now THAT would be a weird pairing," Julie interjected.

Jane chuckled at Julie, then continued. "If it were me, and Cavanaugh and Frost or Korsak up in Homicide grilling them-"

"He wasn't grilling us, Jane," Maura said, correcting her. "He told us the FBI had to observe us because Haswari was already doing the same, and that they surmised - correctly - we were a couple."

"Okay," Jane said. "What if I told Fornell we had pictures of he and Gibbs holding hands at the boatbuilding show, holding hands at the gay bar, making out-"

"EWWWWWWW," said the blond-haired Special Ops agent sitting behind Jane and Maura, rather loudly, causing Jo Friday to bark.

"I agree with them," Maura quipped.

"My point is, what if he went through what Maura and I felt," Jane said.

"Point taken," Dean said, "but it's been six months...you're *still* sore over that?"

"She is," Maura said, and Jane nodded.
"You think he's bad," Dean said, leaning over closer to Rizzles. "You ought to meet his ex-wife. Makes him look like a teddy bear."

"Really," Jane said. "What does that mean? That she's the devil?"

"Ask Gibbs," Dean said.

"Gibbs?" Maura said. "Do they know one another?"

"Gibbs married her, too," Dean said, as Jane, Maura and Julie's mouths opened wide.

"You mean...Gibbs and Fornell...married the same woman?" Jane said, and Dean nodded.

"Tell. Us. Everything. NOW," Julie half-shouted, as Jane and Maura leaned in to listen.

In another SUV, Abby Sciuto sat next to Tim McGee, with Ducky Mallard, his mother Victoria, and Ducky's assistant Jimmy Palmer behind them.

FBI agent Seeley Booth sat up front, explaining to Abby his new assignment at the Jeffersonian Museum.

"Once this gets settled, I'd love to have you meet Dr. Brennan," Booth told Abby. "I think what she and her team does is right up your alley."

"Sounds great," Abby said, half-enthusiastically, looking out the window.

"Hey, Abs," McGee said. "You okay?"

"Of course I'm okay," Abby muttered.

"No, you've been like this since we left D.C.," McGee said.

"Of COURSE I'm not OKAY," Abby said. "McGee. Agent Booth. Ducky, Jimmy, Mrs. Mallard. I'm NOT okay-"

"I would say it's not an exaggeration to suggest that any of us are 'okay', Abigail," Ducky replied. "Perhaps it would greatly help you if you tell us what specifically is bothering you."

"Not in front of your mom," Abby insisted.

Mrs. Mallard was asleep on Palmer's shoulder.

"I don't think she'll notice," Palmer said, a bit uncomfortably.

"Mr. Palmer is correct; Mother is having a nap," Ducky said. "Please, Abby, tell us what's bothering you."

"Come on, Abs," McGee said.

"We want to help," Booth said.

Abby looked at McGee, and her eyes started tearing up.

"I had a dream last night," she said. "We were in a caravan, like this...and we stopped, and had to get out suddenly...I heard a shot, and I saw..."

Abby began crying, softly.
"You saw what, Abby?" Ducky said.

"...I saw...Jane, and Maura...with blood on Maura's blouse, and on Jane's jacket...the same ones they're wearing today...and I saw Tony in shock, and Gibbs running screaming...and..."

"And what, Abs?" McGee said.

"They wouldn't let me see Kate," Abby replied. "I broke free, and when I got to her...I woke up, and I knew something really, really bad had happened to her, and then I realized I was in my bed...the nuns broke in behind agent Melissa and said I was screaming-"

McGee, Ducky, Palmer and Booth did their best to console Abby, who fought back tears.

"Abigail, it was just a dream," Ducky said.

"And we have the very best protection for Kate, and each of you, and every one else," Booth said. "We won't let anything close to that happen to any of you."

"Agent Booth," Abby said, "don't make promises you can't keep."

**Interstate 64, north of Williamsburg, Virginia**

NCIS's Special Ops team raced north towards Richmond - and D.C. - 20 miles above the speed limit.

The special agent in charge, Lara Macy and her senior agent, G Callen, were on the phone, trying in vain to convince director Morrow to let them join the caravan and take the team into their protection.

"The matter is settled," Macy and Callen heard Morrow say on the cell phone speaker. "And your concern for your teammate and your fellow agents is duly noted. They are under the protection of the Bureau from here on out, and you are to await your new assignment. Am I understood?"

"Yes, director," Macy said.

"Then report to the Navy Yard, where I will debrief you and agent Callen on your team's next assignment. I will see you this evening," Morrow said, before hanging up.

"Great," Callen complained. "We're supposed to move on. Just like that."

"We have an assignment, G," Macy replied. "I don't like it any more than you-"

Her phone rang; Vance was on the other line.

"You'll find out your assignment when you get to the Navy Yard," Vance said. "Afterwards, contact me, and we'll talk about how we're going to keep eyes and ears on Julie and the others."

**Virginia, State Road 612**

**Bull Run Marina**

"Pretty country, huh?" Fornell said, as the caravan passed over the river outside the marina.

"Toby, we going back to that house where Jenny talked to Ziva?" Tony asked, referring to when he, Booth and Mossad officer Michael Rivkin spied on assistant director Jenny Shepard's meeting with Ari Haswari's half-sister Ziva David.

"I'm sure the cable TV and internet's great all the way out there in the middle of nowhere," DiNozzo joked.

"Don't worry, we'll stock the man cave with plenty of DVDs-" Fornell said, before their SUV skidded to a stop, barely missing hitting the one in front of it.

"Abby get down while I check on Mrs. Mallard," McGee said in their SUV, just before a bullet shattered the rear driver's side window.

"What the hell?" Jane shouted, as her SUV skidded to a stop. Moments later, she looked out the front window, and saw the lead SUV sideways, with what looked like a flat front tire on the driver's side.

Then she felt shards of glass from the window shattering next to her, and pushed Maura down to the floor.

"Everybody out!" Dean shouted. "And hit the ground! - leave the animals!"

Jane pulled Maura out of the SUV and pulled out her weapon.

"Jane! Let me look at you!"

"Maura I'm fine," Jane said as heavy gunfire erupted around them.

"No you're not!" she said. "You're bleeding!"

"I don't feel a thing-DAMMIT! OUCH!"

Shards of glass from the window had embedded themselves in Jane's scalp and her neck, and Maura broke free long enough to rush to the SUV, throw Jo Friday in his cage, and grab her medical bag.

"WHAT are you doing Maura-"

"Treating you, Jane," she said. "Lie flat, let me take a look."

Gibbs, Tony and Fornell lay under their SUV, hearing steady gunfire, most of it from the brush.

"We are taking FIRE, repeat, HEAVY FIRE, State Road 612 just south of the River and Bull Run Marina," Fornell screamed into his phone. "Need backup YESTERDAY-"

Another window shattered above them, and Gibbs had enough.

"See the bastard, on your two?" he said to DiNozzo.

"Yeah."

"On three...one...two...three."

Gibbs and DiNozzo both jumped up; Tony shot dead a shooter just ahead of them to their right, while Gibbs took out another shooter on their left; then, both agents dove back under the SUV.

"ARE YOU INSANE?" Fornell shouted.

"Two less bastards to deal with," Gibbs replied.

One long minute later, backup arrived, in the form of four vehicles full of Marines and FBI agents tailing the caravan.
The next few minutes seemed like hours, and not everyone made it out alive.

Jane and the agent who drove the SUV she rode in took out a shooter 15 yards from their position; moments later, as she began to congratulate him on his kill, she saw his head explode, and blood and brain matter splatter all over her jacket and on Maura's blouse.

"DOWN!" Dean screamed, as she covered Maura, and barely noted Maura wriggling free to check on Jane, and agents Dean and Julie firing round after round.

Not far away, Abby covered her ears with her palms, looking up only after McGee gently shook her shoulder.

Abby looked up, and heard an eerie calm, saw Gibbs, Fornell and Booth doing a head count, then saw Gibbs rush towards the lead SUV.

Abby saw Kate jump out and yell at Gibbs about an agent having taken fire.

"Prentiss got hit!" Abby thought she heard Kate say - her own ears were still ringing from the incessant and loud gunfire - and saw a Marine, a nurse and Dr. Isles rushing to the SUV.

Abby looked around, and saw blood on Jane's jacket, and people looking over the man who drove her SUV, shaking their heads.

She thought she heard Ducky and Palmer trying to get her attention, and Stan and Paula rush from another SUV to her, and then up towards the front.

Abby turned around again, and this time McGee gently, and firmly, grabbed her by the shoulders.

"Abby, Abby!" McGee said to her. "Abby! You with me? You okay?"

"Yeah... McGee... I'm fine... I think," Abby muttered, unsure at the moment what state they were even in. "Is it... is it over?"

"Yeah, I think it is," McGee replied. "I think we got them all."

**BLAM**

Abby saw McGee jerk his head towards the front, and moments later heard Gibbs telling people to hit the ground, and then heard more gunfire.

When she looked up, she saw agents rushing to the front; she felt McGee and Palmer's hands on her arms, and she managed to break free, running faster than she ever had.

As Abby got to the lead SUV, she saw blood splatter on Tony's face, and Gibbs looking desperately into the woods.

Then, Abby looked down, and saw special agent Kate Todd lying on the ground, eyes open, bleeding out, with a bullet hole in her forehead.

"Kate... Kate! Kate! Kate!... KAAAAATTTITEE!" she yelled, and she felt herself being pulled back, before collapsing in sobs and screams.

**The woods, nearby**

Ari Haswari ran off in the confusion, jumping on his mountain bike and rushing away as quickly as he could through the woods, to the first of a series of getaway vehicles.
Ari thought if he had shot her right in front of Gibbs, he might have apologized to the man. Then he thought, he really had nothing to apologize for.

**Washington, Navy Yard**  
**NCIS headquarters**

Jenny Shepard got the news about the ambush, and the dead agents, via an email on her office computer.

She leapt up from her desk and stormed to Morrow's office, rushing past his secretary and bursting unannounced into his office.

"WHERE IS SHE?" Jenny yelled, as Morrow looked up from his phone call, surprised at the intrusion.

"I'll call you back," Morrow said to the Secretary of Defense, hung up, and looked at Jenny indignantly.

"The time for games is OVER, director," Jenny said angrily, leaning over his desk. "Where is she? Where are they?"

"Assistant director Shepard...and that is who you STILL are for the moment...do NOT get ahead of yourself," Morrow replied. "Everything is going according to plan-"

"IS it," Jenny shouted.

"As I said, Ms. Shepard, do NOT get ahead of yourself."
Chapter 65

Chapter Summary

Team Gibbs arrives back at NCIS, and their leader is angry. While the other agents determine to follow his lead, Ducky and Maura conduct the autopsy of the team's murdered colleague.

What they find, however, is not what they expected...and it leads to the question of who really is on the slab - and where their friend and colleague really is.

Also, the OSP team - minus two members (one of whom is with Team Gibbs) arrives at MTAC, waits for Morrow in frustration, then is taken by a certain colorful ex-hacker/FBI technical analyst to their temporary headquarters.

Chapter 65

Virginia

Forty minutes after sunset, the team silently and mournfully stepped onto a Sikorsky CH-53 "Super Stallion" U.S. Navy helicopter, after a cleanup team - and SEALs and Marine snipers assigned to guard them - piled off, to process the crime scene and the bodies of the shooters.

The Super Stallion itself was escorted by an AH-1W Super Cobra Marine attack copter, and every intelligence asset was pulled to make sure both vehicles got back to the Washington Navy Yard safe and sound.

Aboard the Super Stallion, the only words spoke were by the pilot and co-pilot in the course of their usual duties; words of comfort spoken to Julie Todd, Abby Sciuto and Maura Isles; and a few words of prayer quietly spoken by a few team members and others.

Washington, Navy Yard

MTAC

The Special Ops team filed into the room, still in shock after hearing of the ambush and being told of agent Kate Todd's death.

Macy, Callen, Sam Hanna, Lauren Hunter and Kensi Blye fidgeted in the theater-like seats along the back wall, anxious to speak with director Morrow, as well as to find out how their teammate Mike Renko was doing.

They waited patiently for a little while longer, before getting up and milling around; the techies in the room professed to have no idea what was going on. When Callen ran up the ramp to the entrance/exit door to leave, he found it to be locked.

So, Macy called Vance back in Los Angeles - Hanna gave the techs a 'do anything and I will kick your rear end' glare - and the team got some answers.

"Renko is in surgery; he should be out within a half-hour," Vance said on the big screen. "I'm waiting to hear from the head surgeon on his status, and afterwards you'll be the first ones to know."
"What about Gibbs' team?" Macy.

"Headed your way," Vance replied. "Fornell's sending them back there while the agencies figure out their next moves, including the safe house and Haswari."

"What about us, Leon?" Callen asked. "We were supposed to get orders from Morrow. No one's seen him in hours."

"Your orders are to wait on the director of NCIS," Vance replied. "I'm sorry, Callen, Mace, Sam, Lauren, Kensi, but that's what was sent to me. You wait there in MTAC until the director shows up."

"Until Morrow shows up," Hanna said. "You know if we had been there none of this might have happened. Kate Todd wouldn't be dead. That FBI agent wouldn't be dead. Hell we may have captured Haswari and ended this."

"Agent Hanna," Vance retorted. "You may not have gotten there in time. And each of those men and women knew and understood the risks that normally came with their jobs."

"Doctor Isles and Doctor Mallard are physicians and Abby Sciuto is a forensics specialist," Callen retorted back at Vance. "Mallard's elderly mother was in that caravan. Don't tell me Morrow, FBI, YOU expected her to be as well trained as Gibbs."


"They're not trained for this--" Hunter.

"Rizzoli and DiNozzo were former detectives who faced the potential of death as part of their civilian police--" Vance.

"Those...scum that ambushed them weren't carjackers and drug dealers, Leon," Macy said. "They were terrorists. Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, FoG trained professionals. One of us was there - Julie - and I'll give you Gibbs and maybe Kate. The rest of them. Not trained like WE are.--"

"No they weren't," Vance replied, "and if I could have done anything more to protect them myself and ourselves I would have."

Callen started to speak up, then stopped himself.

"You have your jobs," Vance said, carefully. "The director will tell you her-the director will you what that entails. In the meantime...ask someone for some coffee and donuts."

"What in hell--" Macy said, as Vance signalled to Eric Beale (off screen) to cut the feed, and the screen went to static.

"Now I've seen everything," Hanna shouted, throwing up his hands in frustration. "Mace this is insane!"

"It is," Macy replied, noticing Callen in thought, then motioning to him and the others. "Everyone, huddle up."

Hanna, Hunter and Blye followed suit, though not knowing what on earth Macy was doing, and Callen joined them.

"Notice what Leon said?" Callen asked.
"Bullshit," Hanna answered.

"What he did and didn't say," Callen continued, as the others thought on it for a few moments.

"If he could have done anything more-" Hanna said. "He's following orders. So I guess Morrow did put a leash on him."

"And what he said about the 'director'," Macy continued. "He slipped up. Said 'she' before catching himself."

"If he did catch himself," Kensi spoke up. "What if he's trying to tell us something, like Morrow's not the director?"

Moments later, the rest of the team came to the same conclusion.

"Good job, rookie," Hunter said, patting Kensi on the back. "Notice how those tech specialists in here, the agents downstairs, the security guards always referred to 'the director' and not 'director Morrow'?"

"If Morrow's not the director, next person in line is Jenny Shepard," Hanna said.

"But that begs the question: what happened to Morrow, and why?" Callen.

"Maybe this blew up in his face," Hunter.

"Maybe he's trying to save his own ass," Hanna.

"Whatever happened to Morrow, it sounds like Leon was trying to tell us he's gone and that Shepard's now the director," Macy said. "He said something else, remember?"

"Coffee and donuts," Kensi said. "What's that about?"

"Let's find out," Macy said, leaving the huddle to speak with a tech.

"Do you have any coffee and donuts?" she asked a slim man in his mid-20s who reminded her of a well-dressed Eric Beale; he merely pointed to a blonde, heavy-set, colorfully dressed blonde woman on the other side of the room.

"Coffee and donuts?" she said to Macy, standing up from her chair and shutting down her terminal. "If that's what you want. But I can get you better than that. There's a spread out there, and I know you guys have been waiting here far, far too long."

Who on earth is this woman, Macy thought as she glanced back at her team; Callen shrugged, and the others looked at her, confused and a little bewildered.

"Come on," the woman said to Macy and the others. "Food's gonna get cold. We gotta get you crime-fighters well-fed before she sends you out."

Macy nodded to her team to follow her lead, as she followed the woman out of MTAC, down the stairs, off the third floor and down to an empty CyberCrimes room.

"Welcome to your temporary headquarters, super agents," the woman said. "I'm Penelope Garcia, on loan from the FBI, and we'll be working together to capture Ari Haswari. You can call me Garcia. Just do me a favor - eat up, and don't leave this room until the director gives the all-clear, okay?"

The third floor of the building
Gibbs and most of his team somberly made their way to their desks, with Gibbs preparing to go down to autopsy to check on Ducky and Maura's process with the bodies.

McGee was in Forensics with Abby, who hadn't stopped crying from the aftermath of the shooting until Gibbs left McGee and the Marines with her in her laboratory.

Abby was a mess, Gibbs knew, and he hoped McGee would be able to help her get herself together enough to work by the end of the night. If not, he'd have to poach someone from Norfolk, Great Lakes, San Diego, Rota or the other regional offices to fill in.

"How's Abs, boss?" Tony asked, as Gibbs walked behind his desk.

"How do you *think*, DiNozzo?" answered Gibbs, royally pissed off.

"She gonna be able to work?" asked Stan, as Tony, Paula and Jane looked on.

"If she can't I'm gonna headslap her till she *can,*" said Gibbs, as Jane dropped her bag of chips, while Paula and Stan glanced at each other. "And if I have to headslap Abby, I'm gonna punch the hell out of the *director.*"

Jane's mouth flew open, and Tony grinned.

Julie Todd came in with the rest of the team and stopped at the window; she hadn't moved since.

Gibbs slammed the receiver on his desk phone down in frustration.

"Gibbs, you okay?" Jane said, cautiously; he merely glared at her for a moment, before picking up the phone and dialing the same number a second time, and again getting nothing but a ring tone.

"Boss?" Stan said.

"Trying to call Vance," Gibbs said in frustration. "He's not picking *up.*"

Gibbs noticed Julie standing, motionless, in front of the windows; two Marines had taken up positions behind her, and both were packing M249 SAW automatics.

Jane noticed Gibbs looking towards the window, and she saw Julie, then walked towards her, only to stop when she felt a hand on her shoulder.

It was Gibbs.

"Let me handle this, Jane," he said, walking over to Julie.


A minute later, Julie followed Gibbs back into the bullpen, and sat down behind her sister's desk.

Kate's twin sister was sullen, her eyes damp, but appeared ready to work, to go out on a case, to do something.

Gibbs, without a word to the rest of the team, left the bullpen and ran up the stairs.

"Where's he going?" Paula asked no one in particular.

"And what do we *do*, Stan?" Jane asked Burley, to Tony's annoyance. "He still hasn't given us any orders, told us what we're to do-"
"He'll tell us soon enough," Burley replied. "He's probably trying to find out what all is going on before he gives out assignments."

"What can we do, though?" Jane said. "We're benched. They're probably going to put us in another safe house-"

"Gibbs is through sitting around and waiting for Fornell and Morrow and whoever else tell him what to do and where we're gonna hide," Tony said abruptly. "He's pissed. He's angry. He wants to punch people. And he wants to avenge Kate and to kill Ari."

"We all do," said Julie, stepping out from behind her sister's desk, holding a framed photo of herself, Kate and their siblings at a family Christmas gathering sitting next to Kate's desk phone. "I do. Gibbs wants it even worse than I do. And no, I damn guarantee you we're not sitting around any more. That's over."

"Not if the director and FBI wants us benched," Paula said, as Tony and Julie glared at her; Paula didn't shrink in response, but glared back. "Not that I want to hide."

"I want in, too," Jane said. "Haswari turned my life upside down. He turned Maura's life upside down, and threatened her. And he murdered our friend. I want that asshole, too."

"Then wait on Gibbs and see how he plays this," Tony said to them.

**Autopsy**

The bodies of FBI agent Carl Torsen and the shooters who ambushed the caravan in Virginia lay on the various slabs in the expansive autopsy/morgue of NCIS.

The shooters had only been given a cursory examination, however, with Ducky telling Gibbs earlier that all were of Middle Eastern descent.

While Palmer examined agent Torsen's body, Ducky and Maura were working on the body of Kate Todd, initially examining the head, including what remained of the back of her skull.

"I'll need that knife, Dr. Isles," Ducky said to her, pointing to the instruments on her side of the table.

"You're going to cut into her?" Maura asked.

"Yes, but we have been, ah, asked to conduct a full examination," Ducky said.

"By whom?"

"Agent Fornell."

"What does he expect to find, Ducky? The cause of death is obvious. I see no real need to cut into her chest."

"Neither do I, Maura, but perhaps the Bureau, and Director Morrow, want to be certain this is Caitlin and not some plant."

Maura reached for a knife, then hesitated.

"Ducky...if you wish, I can finish the autopsy myself. You've known Kate much longer than I have and I realize how difficult this must be on you-"

Ducky paused. "This is difficult on you as well, Maura," he told her. "I see it in your eyes, just as
"surely as you see it in my own, and we see it in Mr. Palmer's. And she was your friend, more closely than I was."

Maura paused herself, forcing back a tear. "Jane and I came to regard her as a sister, and a friend," she said, quietly. "A close friend."

"I regarded her as a close friend as well, Maura," Ducky replied. "I would not want to not conduct this examination, nor would I want anyone other than you and perhaps Mr. Palmer to help me."

Maura smiled, albeit still in pain over seeing her friend's corpse on the cold, stainless steel table.

"Then let us proceed," she said, handing Ducky a knife.

Gibbs showed up at the door, which was locked from the inside.

"Ah, Jethro," Ducky said, momentarily stopping. "We're in the middle of the examination. Would you like to observe?"

"I'll come back," Gibbs said, through the door. "Check on Abby."

Ducky cut open Kate's chest, and he and Maura proceeded as usual.

They both stopped when they noticed something very abnormal.

"Ducky, would you take a look at the pancreas?" she asked, and they both closely examined the organ.

"Mr. Palmer, would you come over here, please?" Maura said, as Jimmy put down his instruments and walked towards her and Ducky. "What does that look like to you?"

"Maura, this is not the time for teaching-"

"Ducky, I beg to differ," she said. "And I want a third pair of eyes to confirm or deny what I'm seeing."

Palmer looked at the organ. "Adenocarcinoma," he said. "Tumors. All over the organ."

Maura gingerly removed the organ, and held it up for she, Ducky and Palmer to examine.

"This is very advanced," Ducky said.

Maura looked closely inside the cavity.

"Gentlemen," she said. "Look at the liver."

They looked at the liver, and at the colon.

"Consistent with pancreatic cancer spreading to the liver and the colon," Ducky said.

"Dr. Mallard?" Palmer said. "I didn't know agent Todd that well...but she looked fit. Extremely healthy...how does someone that fit have this type of cancer?"

"She can't," Maura mused. "Mr. Palmer, would you take fingerprints?"

"Fingerprints?" he asked, before it dawned on him what Maura was getting at.

"Yes, Mr. Palmer. Collect fingerprints, and pull all of Caitlin's medical records," Ducky said, with a
"I conducted her annual physical examination four months ago," Maura said, running over to collect some needles to draw blood. "That would include x-rays and lab results."

"We'll compare the x-rays and bloodwork from the exam with those from the body," Ducky said. "Maura, draw the blood, and quickly! Then Mr. Palmer, take the samples to Abby."

"Ducky," Maura said, as she drew blood and other samples from the corpse. "She was in no shape to do anything when we got here."

"Oh yes," Ducky said. "But we need her now as much as we ever have...where's Jethro?"

"Said he was going to check on Abby," said Palmer, and Ducky ran to his desk; he called the lab, spoke with Gibbs and got halfway through explaining the situation when Gibbs hung up.

"Mr. Palmer," Ducky said after putting down his phone, "when Dr. Isles is finished, take these samples over to Abigail, and if Jethro is there, tell him I would like to see he and Abigail here immediately."

Before Maura could finish, Gibbs, McGee and Abby burst through the entrance.

"Duck," Gibbs blurted, "what in hell are you saying?"

This time, Ducky fully explained what he, Maura and Palmer found, and showed Gibbs, McGee and Abby the cancerous organs.

"No way Kate had cancer," McGee said.

"She didn't," Gibbs shouted. "She doesn't...this isn't her."

Abby raised her hands over her mouth, and began crying.

Gibbs turned from the body, hurried to Abby and grabbed her by the arms.

"Abs!" he said, pleadingly. "I need you. I need you, we need you like we've never needed you before, to do what you do."

"That's not her, is it?" she asked Gibbs. "Is Kate alive? Who is that?"

"We need to find out what's going on, here," he reiterated. "Do you know of any other ways we could identify Kate's body...like that tattoo she took?"

Abby walked past Gibbs and told Ducky and Maura where to look; it meant resowing the chest, but they found the spot where Abby saw Kate get her tattoo.

"There's no tattoo," Abby said. "Nothing."

"You sure?" Gibbs said.

"That's exactly where she had it," Abby said. "Or should have it. I saw it myself."

"I would recommend taking a tissue sample to confirm," Maura stated, "but upon initial visual examination, I would say this person never had any type of tattoo applied on this part of her body at all."
Moments later, Abby screamed in joy.

"McGee, you're with me," Gibbs ordered. "Ducky, Abby, Maura, Palmer. Check the body, confirm it's not Kate, and find out who she is."

"Where are you going, Jethro?" Ducky said, as Gibbs and McGee walked out.

"Start looking for Kate, and lay into Fornell and Morrow's asses!" Gibbs shouted, he and McGee hurrying to the elevator.
Chapter 66

Chapter Summary

Special Ops meets the new director and their new supervisor; Gibbs confronts the former director over Kate and Haswari; Kate is reunited with the team and with her sister; Gibbs and the new director determine to bring the operation to a close; and Abby is shot at while working in her lab.

Chapter 66
Washington
NCIS headquarters, Navy Yard

"'Super agents'? 'Crime fighters'? Really? Who are you anyway, lady?"

Lara Macy was having none of whatever was going on with her team – being stuck in MTAC and unable to even leave to go to the restroom, then being led by a rather colorful woman to the basement of the building, where there were separate heads for men and women, and a spread of food, coffee and soft drinks waiting on them.

And as many questions about what on earth was going on as they had before.

"Well, that's what you are, or so I'm told," replied the woman standing before Mace: Penelope Garcia, blonde, bespectacled, heavy-set, adorned in jewelry and clothing that reminded Macy of Mardi Gras. "I'm here to help."

"One of our agents was murdered, and one of our teammates is mourning her loss pretty damn hard," said G Callen, standing next to Mace. "Whatever you're doing, it better be to help us find the murderer of Julie's sister, and end this thing once and for all."

Garcia saw the ferocity in Callen's face, and in his teammates', especially that of their leader, Macy, who stood with her arms crossed.

"You may want to start talking, Ms. Garcia," Macy said.

"Excuse me?" replied Garcia, who then realized that she was representing something she had nothing to do with and was in way over her head.

"She means tell us what's going on," said Sam Hanna. "Full disclosure."

"Uh, guys, I can't," Garcia answered. "Not without permission from your director and my own—"

"I'm sure they won't mind if we overlook that technicality," said Lauren Hunter. "I'm also sure they might mind if we just get up and leave—"

"—but we don't really care, at this point," Callen finished, and he and his teammates stared, very intensely at Ms. Garcia.

"Uh, er, maybe I can talk to Hotch – uh, I mean my own boss, my direct supervisor," Garcia stammered, "and see if I can get permission—"
"That won't be necessary, Ms. Garcia."

Garcia was relieved to see the red-haired woman, wearing a black pinstriped suit and a red, open-collared blouse, walk through the entrance to CyberCrimes, with two Marines and a diminutive, bespectacled woman in a grey suit right alongside her.

"Assistant Director Shepard," Macy said. "It's good to see you…and I hope you have some answers for my team. Starting with where is the director?"

"You're speaking with her," Shepard said, to the team's surprise. "And before you glare at Ms. Garcia – who is only doing her job – glare at me instead."

"You're Director?" Callen asked.

"Effective today," Shepard said

"So, was it you or Morrow who made us wait up there, and put us down here," Macy stated.

"MTAC was Director Morrow; when I learned you were there, I ordered you to be brought down here, where you will be working for the duration of your stay here in Washington," Jenny said. "I also arranged for you to get some food and coffee, after the job you did in Norfolk – and congratulations, by the way – and I am sure you're appreciative of that."

_This woman's got some sass to go with her swag,_ Garcia thought. _Impressive._

"With all due respect – Director - we'd like to know where Julie is and then get back out there to find Haswari and avenge Kate!" said Macy, intently and with a hint of anger. "We need to be out there doing our jobs and Morrow—"

"—is no longer in the picture," Jenny continued. "You'll be working from here, and with Ms. Garcia here" – Jenny nodded in Garcia's direction – "who will work with you on your impending op, along with Ms. Lange."

Jenny smiled, and gestured towards Henrietta Lange, the short, older woman standing next to her.

"Hetty?" Callen and Lauren said, nearly simultaneously.

"Mr. Callen, Ms. Hunter," Hetty replied. "It is a pleasure to see you again…and a pleasure to meet you in person, Ms. Macy, Mr. Hanna and Ms. Blye…and Ms. Garcia, a pleasure to meet you as well."

Callen and Lauren's teammates looked askance at them, then back at Hetty, and Jenny.

"I understand you and Ms. Lange have a history, Agent Callen, and Agent Hunter," Jenny said. "Then you'll extend that history in your new assignment, which Ms. Lange will oversee on my behalf. She will give you, and you, Ms. Garcia, the details. In the meantime, I have other, equally important business to attend to. If you'll excuse me."

With that, Jenny exited the room, accompanied by the Marines, leaving Hetty Lange standing by herself.

While the others tried to figure out what to make of what transpired, Hetty walked back to the doorway and looked down the hallway, then walked back into the room.

"As the saying goes, ladies and gentlemen, there is 'no time like the present' to begin," Hetty said,
"but you are a person down—"

"I'll say," Lauren interjected. "What the hell's going on here, Hetty?"

"Ms. Hunter," Hetty replied, "let us not get ahead of ourselves—"

"We don't even know what she, you, the people running the Ari op want us to do now," Callen said. "What's going on?"

"What do you want to know?" Hetty asked the group.

"What we want…Hetty…is to find Ari Haswari and get Julie back," Macy asserted. "And I want to know why this woman" – referring to Garcia – "is here and why we're not working with Eric. And where Leon is."

"Ah," Hetty mused. "Then you know the object of this operation already. And as I was attempting to explain, you are a person down, and Juliana will return to you very shortly. Mr. Beale is working with Mr. Vance on a project related to the Haswari operation, and the FBI has kindly agreed to lend us the services of Ms. Garcia for the duration."

"Where is Julie?" Macy said. "And what about Leon?"

"Mr. Vance works more directly for the new director now," Hetty replied. "In regards to Juliana, Ms. Shepard and I determined she would need a little extra time with her sister."

"In the morgue," Hanna stated.

"No, Mr. Hanna," Hetty said, "though I suppose they could meet in the morgue if they wish. I would think Caitlin would prefer to reunite with her sister and her teammates upstairs."

"Upstairs?..." Callen mused, then grasped what Hetty was hinting at; the rest of the team caught on.

"Kate's alive?" Kensi shouted, as she and the others hollered in celebration. "How?"

"All that will be explained," Hetty replied. "But for now, I need to fill you in on the next phase of the operation—"

"You're filling us in," Macy said, "and not Leon. You haven't told us yet your title, and where you fit into the food chain."

"Where I fit in, Ms. Macy, is I answer to Mr. Vance, and you answer to me…as the new operations manager of the Office of Special Projects," Hetty answered.

**Upstairs, Third Floor**

Gibbs strode to the elevator, apparently ignoring the two Marines following a few feet behind him.

"I don't think those guys are going to let him out," Jane said to the others.

"I don't think they'll say no to Gibbs," Tony replied.

"How's he going to get out of here?" Paula said. "The whole place is on lockdown, and you remember how many times we were told what all protective custody meant."

"Hey," Tony said to Paula. "He's Gibbs. You going to tell him 'no'?"
The elevator dinged as Gibbs began arguing with one of the two Marines, and moments later Tom Morrow stepped off, with two guards of his own.

"We won't," Stan said. "But Morrow will."

Morrow stepped off the elevator and got to the point with Gibbs.

"Going out for coffee, Agent Gibbs?"

"Going out, Director, to get some answers…you'll do."

Morrow punched the button next to the elevator door, and moments later it reopened. He spoke with his guards and the Marines and told them to wait outside, then nodded for Gibbs to follow him.

Moments after the door shut, Gibbs flipped the switch which dimmed the lights and brought the elevator to a stop.

"Where's my agent?" Gibbs said. "Where is Caitlin Todd?"

"I see…you've discovered that the woman in Dr. Mallard's morgue is not Agent Todd," Morrow said.

"But we have no idea where Agent Todd is," Gibbs fired back.

"Perhaps your contacts at the FBI would be willing to tell you."

"Is she alive? Or is she dead?"

Morrow noted the concern, frustration and fear in Gibbs' face.

"She's alive," Morrow told him. "Perhaps your contacts at the Bureau can tell you where they are keeping her—"

"What I WANT, Morrow, is her back HERE. NOW."

Gibbs shouted angrily into the face of the former Admiral whom he, until recently, maintained a great deal of personal and professional respect for.

Referring to him by his name, much less screaming at him, was out of the question.

Was.

Gibbs had gone along with just about anything Morrow and his fellow directors wanted him to do, even as his own team complained about what they had to do and weren't allowed to do.

Kate's apparent murder changed everything.

As he rode back in the Marine copter, in his mind he saw Kate standing up front, with a hole in her forehead and the back of her head blown off.

He saw her ask him why he was giving up, and what he was going to do.

He knew better than to speak out loud, so he thought his response.

"Avenge your murder, Kate."

Then he heard 'Kate' ask him something unexpected.
"How do you know I'm dead?...weren't you wondering if that was me before the ambush? … Then what are you thinking now? That I'm dead?...what does your gut tell you?"

Gibbs looked off to the side, to one of the Marines accompanying the team back to the Navy Yard, then looked back up front, and saw she was gone.

He would wait until Ducky and Dr. Isles finished their autopsy, which he expected to confirm was his gut was telling him.

And, although protocol demanded deference to Morrow, Gibbs' gut told him to lay into the director.

"If you had given me the go-ahead a year and a half ago, we wouldn't have had this problem!" Gibbs yelled at Morrow. "I could have shot him, dead, in the morgue. This would have been over. Do you know how many lives have been upturned because of that bastard? How many are dead now because of him?"

"Too many," Morrow conceded.

"Glad you finally realize that…director," Gibbs retorted. "I'm finding that bastard and I am ending this for good."

"I cannot allow you to do that, Gibbs—"

"You going to STOP me, Morrow?!"

"…but I am no longer in a position to prevent you, either."

Morrow reached around Gibbs and flipped the switch back.

"And what is THAT supposed to mean?" Gibbs said, as the elevator reached the second floor, and two Homeland Security agents stepped on.

"Agent Gibbs," said one, all six feet, eight inches, 280 pounds of him.

"Meet Agent Gallagher," Morrow said. "Homeland. Former Navy SEAL, former linebacker at the Naval Academy. And Agent Mudd, also Homeland, former Army Ranger and Armed Forces Mixed Martial Arts champion in his weight class—"

"This meant to intimidate me, director?" Gibbs said, standing in Morrow's face as the elevator went back up to the third floor.

As the door opened, Morrow gestured to the hallway.

"Let's continue this conversation outside, Agent Gibbs," Morrow said, "as befitting a federal agent and his superior."

Tony, Stan and the others couldn't hear what Gibbs and Morrow were saying in front of the elevator, but they could see the two men in suits flanking Gibbs, the confused looks on the Marines and NCIS agents near them…

…and the 'I could kill you' look on Gibbs' face.

"Boss is in trouble," Tony said.

"Not for long," Stan said.
He, Tony, Jane, McGee, Paula and Julie rushed to the elevator.

Morrow, noting the large audience around he and Gibbs, placed his hands in his pockets.

"Gibbs, I cannot accept your resignation," Morrow said, as Gibbs stood in his face, badge in one hand, and his other hand clenched.

Neither man said anything for several moments, only glaring at one another.

Stan attempted to step in between Gibbs and Morrow, but was blocked by Gallagher; Mudd blocked DiNozzo, and then both Homeland agents shoved Gibbs' two senior agents to the ground before taking up positions next to Morrow.

"Need backup now!" Mudd said into his phone.

Jenny Shepard walked off the back elevator with her guards, noticed the scene on the other side of the floor, and they sprinted across.

"Assistant Director Morrow," Shepard said – as some of the agents heard and were surprised by the reference – "we seem to have a misunderstanding."

"No misunderstanding," Gibbs interjected.

"I disagree," Morrow continued. "We do have a misunderstanding. For some reason, Agent Gibbs seems to wish to tender his resignation to an assistant director of Homeland Security."

That surprised everyone but Jenny, Morrow and the two Homeland agents guarding him.

"I would hate to see him actually leave NCIS, as he has done nothing but a stellar job throughout his career," Morrow continued, looking into Gibbs' eyes. "But if he wants to tender his resignation to the director of his agency, that is his choice."

"Everyone," Jenny said – remembering that circumstances had not yet allowed for a formal announcement – "Director Morrow is now the former director of NCIS, having resigned to accept an assistant directorship at Homeland Security, which he started today. On behalf of the agency, I wish to congratulate you, Assistant Director Morrow, on your new position and thank you for your years of service to our agency."

"And I wish to congratulate you, Director Shepard, on your new responsibilities as director of NCIS, an agency I have taken a tremendous amount of pride in and care very much for," Morrow replied, not moving but glancing over at Jenny. "I am sure you will do a tremendous job leading this agency forward…now if you will excuse me, I have business to attend to in my new position."

Morrow and agents Gallagher and Mudd stepped back on the elevator, without a word.

"What about Agent Todd…'Assistant Director Morrow'? Where is she?"

"As I said on the elevator, follow up with your contact at the Bureau," Morrow said, as Gallagher and Mudd stepped back in the entrance to the elevator.

"I'm following up with you, 'Assistant Director'," Gibbs said. "If Kate wasn't in the caravan, if that wasn't her who was shot, then where IS she?"

"Agent Gibbs. Stand down," Jenny ordered.

"Call Fornell. Lay into his 'ass' like you wanted to lay into my own," Morrow replied.
Jenny stepped in front of the Homeland agents. "Mr. Morrow," she said. "I'm bringing this to a close."

Against his own better judgment, Morrow continued.

"I did have the option to name you as an assistant director, Gibbs, to offer you the position after I resigned," he said. "I thought, and still think, that you could one day lead this agency…but not yet, and definitely not after this evening."

"You definitely know that I don't take orders blindly, Morrow, and you damn well know I don't throw my people under the bus for anyone," Gibbs shot back.

"Well, your future is not for me to decide," Morrow said. "Although I am glad Jenny is running the department right now and that Leon is her second at present. I do like you, Gibbs…but putting you at the top of this agency, given the present situation would be like shooting it in the head."

Julie Todd and Jane Rizzoli, having heard that, both shouted "WHAT?" simultaneously; Tony, his tailbone still aching after he was shoved to the ground earlier, found himself grabbing both Jane and Julie by the arms.

The Homeland agents stepped back, hit the button for the ground floor, and the elevator door closed.

Tony pulled Julie and Jane sideways to tell them to stand down. "He's not worth either of your badges," he said.

In front of the elevator, Gibbs stared at Jenny, putting his badge back on his belt.

"I take it you've reconsidered your resignation," she said.

"Only thing I've reconsidered is how I'm finding Kate," he replied. "You tell me where she is, and I'll go pick her up."

Jenny paused. "I believe they're bringing her to you. Fornell's bringing her back here."

"When?"

"Anytime."

Ten minutes later – after a cell phone conversation with Fornell – Gibbs, with Jenny and Julie next to him and Gibbs' team and the Special Ops team behind them, waited in front of the elevator.

Kate and Fornell stepped off, trailed by two FBI agents; Kate saw Julie and Gibbs, reached to hug them both, then embraced her sister.

"What'd I miss?" Fornell quipped, having seen Morrow and his agents downstairs.

The tears, hugs and embraces didn't stop for a full 40 minutes; Gibbs finally pulled away, and followed Jenny up to her new office, for a debriefing and scolding.

The Office of the Director of NCIS

"You know that episode in the elevator's going to cause us some problems with Homeland," she told Gibbs. "We'll have to work with them, and at some point probably will have to work with Morrow…before you say a word, you know why he did what he did?"

"Ari," she answered. "And protecting you and your team and those two women you're supposed to be protecting, and everyone else working at this agency. Morrow knew you wanted to be out there leading the hunt for Ari. He also knew that would make the odds of Ari killing most of you much greater than if you were reigned in."

When Gibbs didn't answer, Jenny continued.

"Ari's motivation is to kill you, Kate and Detective Rizzoli and Dr. Isles. When – not if, when – he finds out Kate survived, he's going to go into overdrive. And when he does, I'm not sure there's any place we can protect any of you—"

"When he finds out' Jen?" Gibbs said. "How is he going to find out?"

"Ari has a mole," Jenny said, surprising Gibbs. "We think he's in CyberCrimes. Someone's been feeding him intel on the caravan and the operation from both our and FBI's ends."

"How much does he know?"

"Enough to know where the caravan was," Jenny replied. "Leon's leading that investigation from our end and Special Operation's technical expert is involved, along with someone the FBI loaned to us. We're zeroing in on our suspects; once we identify him or her, Special Ops will apprehend the suspect."

"And what about Ari?" Gibbs asked Jenny. "Any leads on him or his people?"

"He's somewhere in the D.C. area, we suspect. FBI has seen some suspicious movement near the location where Ari was suspected of running the aborted planned attack on Marine One a year ago. My contacts in Mossad are trying to get confirmation on his location. We know there's a split of some sort, and that Ari may be on his own."

"That makes him more dangerous than he already is," Gibbs said.

"Especially if he learns that he didn't murder Kate," Jenny said. "The concern was, and is, that if he attempted an assassination and failed, he would double and triple his efforts on the person in question and the others. Now the concern is about family members, coworkers, friends, acquaintances. And we're still concerned about the people on the 'Kate List'."

Gibbs sighed, and sat in the chair facing Jenny's desk.

"This can't go on forever, Jenny," Gibbs told her.

"No, it can't," she told him. "And, against my better judgment, I'm not benching you…unless you still want to resign."

"Only if you want to bench me," he said.

"Then go downstairs, talk with your team – including Kate – and meet me, Henrietta Lange and Agent Macy back here in twenty," Jenny said. "When Ari resurfaces, I want us ready to face him and put this to an end."

**Abigail Sciuto's laboratory**

Abby ran the results from blood and DNA tests on the corpse. They verified the body was that of FBI Special Agent Amy Sutton, and also showed the steroids and other drugs her doctors were using to keep her alive and healthy during her op.
Fornell said very little about agent Sutton, other than that she was a standout agent and volunteered selflessly to protect Kate's life and help stop Ari.

Abby hated to work with unwanted guests in her lab, but by now she had gotten used to the two FBI agents assigned to guard her, and even befriended them.

Members of Team Gibbs, of course, were welcome to come in as they wished.

Like Tony DiNozzo, there to follow up on the casing of the bullet from the shot that killed agent Sutton.

And Gibbs, who came down to check on Abby, and on what she found about Sutton and the casing.

He walked in to the lab just in time to see FBI agent Ballard tackle Abby and hear one of the windows shatter.

While Ballard checked on Abby's safety, her fellow agent, Colton, looked out the now broken window; Gibbs switched off the lights in the lab and joined Colton near the window.

**Anacostia Park**

Across the river from the Navy Yard, Ari tried to refocus on his target, albeit frustrated that he couldn't see anyone.

He clicked his rifle anyway, only for the round to drop out into his hand; he threw it out the window, and then swiftly drove off.

The Navy Yard went into lockdown a minute later. Ari's vehicle was discovered, abandoned, within the hour, along with the rifle he used to shoot into Abby's lab.

**The next morning, NCIS**

Tony woke up at 0500, glad to get a few hours of sleep, and that the cot they assigned to him actually slept well.

He looked around him, and saw the other men of Team Gibbs still asleep near him, and the women on the other side of the NCIS garage sound asleep.

Tony wondered what it would be like to put McGee's hand in a bowl of water, then wondered if he could sneak a peek at the other side of the room.

Then, he noticed Gibbs walking up behind him, and instinctively ducked for the impending head slap.

Only thing was, Gibbs didn't have the annoyed look on his face he had when Tony said something stupid.

Gibbs put on his best all-business poker face, but Tony noted a little bit of fear in his eyes.

"Boss?" Tony asked him. "Everything okay?"

"Get the guys out of bed, DiNozzo," Gibbs said, as he walked to the other side of the room. "We've got a problem."

"What's wrong, boss?"
"Ari's kidnapping our own people now. And making demands."
Chapter 67

Chapter Summary

The identities of the men and women who were abducted are revealed to the team; Jane and Maura confront Jenny Shepard over how long it's taken the feds to bring the Ari case to a close; Jane and Maura watch a suspected collaborator of Ari's being interrogated; a ex-boyfriend of Jane's goes AWOL; and Ari contacts Jenny with his demands.

Chapter 67

Washington, Navy Yard

Jenny Shepard’s second full day on the job began with a short and terse phone call from the FBI Director at 4:20 a.m.

She then called her driver, pulled together the best outfit she could on five minutes notice, then had him speed down the D.C. roadways and run red lights to the Navy Yard.

Jenny rushed past the rather-full bullpen, up the stairs, into her office. She downloaded dossiers on the five missing civilians; scanned through them very briefly; picked up her phone to place another call to Homeland;

And heard someone burst through her office door.

She looked up, to see Gibbs standing in front of her desk, flanked by Kate Todd, Jane Rizzoli, Maura Isles, Stan Burley and Tony DiNozzo.

“You should knock before you come in and bring your entire team with you…Agent Gibbs,” Jenny said, indignantly.

“Well, we know where Ari is,” Gibbs replied impassively. “And WHO he has with him.”

“And what WE want to know” – said Jane, stepping up next to Gibbs and very pissed off – “is how he got MY father and Maura’s mother—“

“—MY sister—“ Kate.

“And my own father,” Gibbs said.

“And, a woman who neither Jane nor I have met before who was not on your ‘Kate list’,” Maura added.

“These are the four people we’ve learned about this morning. Who else has this psycho abducted—“ Jane shouted before the director stood up and stepped around to, literally, talk face-to-face with her, even as Maura stepped shoulder-to-shoulder with Jane.
"Detective Rizzoli — and Dr. Isles — “ Jenny said in very measured tones. “We are doing everything to track down your loved ones and find the terrorist we suspect of—“

“With all due respect, director, that is the same explanation Jane and I have heard ever since we were placed under your protection,” Maura said, in equally measured tones.

“And it is the truth,” Jenny replied.

“Yeah right,” Jane snapped.

Gibbs’ team looked at him to step in and end this before Jane or Maura said something all of them might regret, but the special agent in charge said nothing.

“Do you have a better suggestion, Detective,” Jenny shot back.

“If only you’d listen,” Jane growled. “Six months of this crap that none of us are going to ever get back—“

“Agent Gibbs, tell your agent and your medical examiner to stand down.”

“Lady, Maura and I aren’t his and we damn well aren’t YOURS.”

That took everyone by surprise, except for Maura….and Gibbs.

“Director,” said Maura. “There are things Agent Gibbs and Agent Todd, and agents DiNozzo and Burley, can’t say because of their jobs and who they work for. But we” – pointing to Maura and herself – “don’t have those restrictions because we don’t work for you.”

“Detective Rizzoli, and Dr. Isles,” Jenny said, “may I remind you that, technically, under the terms of your protection agreement we made with the Boston Police Department and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as liaisons you DO work for NCIS. And for me.”

“Okay…”BOSS’,” Jane made the ‘quote’ sign with her fingers in a very exaggerated manner. “Since Maura and I work for you, let me give you a piece of my damn mind.”

“By all means, Ms. Rizzoli,” Jenny smirked, “give me a ‘piece’ of your ‘damn mind’.”

“This crap has gone on way too long,” Jane said. “Morrow almost never gave either of us the time of day. The few times he did, he either patronized us or gave us the run around. NCIS this, NCIS that, we’re under the finest protection the government can provide. Nothing about not just Maura and I, but the hundreds of other people affected by that asshole. The few in this room, the others outside and especially five people kidnapped god knows where. What’s gonna happen to them, director?”

Jenny stepped past Jane – whose mouth flew open – and stepped right into Gibbs’ space.

“Agent Gibbs,” she told him. “Send your team – including the two who forgot they are still members for now – down to the bullpen, while you and I discuss certain matters.”

“May want to hear out Dr. Isles…Director,” Gibbs replied.

He’s in on this too, Jenny thought, as she turned to face Maura. “Doctor. Do you have something
further to add to this ‘conversation’?”

She did.

“The statistical base for victims of terrorist kidnappings is very limited,” Maura told Jenny and everyone else. “The public record is, more or less, edited by government and military sources for a variety of reasons, adding to the difficulty of finding a representative sample to determine survival rate amongst such victims. However, taking information from cases involving civilian relatives and associates of American military and government personnel, plus business leaders, celebrities and politicians, and combining them with similar cases from other western nations, the retention list seems to vary, from 26 to 67 percent.”

“What retention list – where did you – how did you – where did you get that information?”

Maura pulled a folder out of her bag and handed it to Jenny.

“Amazing what you can find in government databases,” Gibbs said.

Jenny nodded, decided against placing the folder on her desk, and instead held on to it while walking to the door.

“Follow me,” she said, “down to your bullpen. Let’s at least make sure we’re all on the same page.”

**Bullpen**

Downstairs, McGee sat at his desk, working on the bios of the five kidnapped people he expected Gibbs to ask about when he returned.

He saw Ducky place a large coffee on his desk.

“Thanks, Duck,” McGee said, as he saw Ducky and Jimmy Palmer do the same for the other agents.

“Yeah, Duck, thanks,” said Paula, who – like everyone else – looked like they could use a full day of sleep.

“It’s the least I could do, Paula and Timothy,” said the older man. “One of the few saving graces of this ordeal is that we now have a Starbucks-quality coffee machine here, in the building, available to us even at this ungodly hour.”

McGee kept working on his files, checking NCIS records against information from an email the FBI just sent over.

“McGee,” Paula said, “better get that wrapped up.”

“I should have this done before Gibbs gets back,” he told her, not looking up from his screen. “I realize he’s gonna want to see this—”

“Not just me,” McGee heard Gibbs say, looking up to see Jenny standing next to him in front of the big screen, and the other team members gathering behind them.

*Good thing I’m actually done,* McGee thought to himself, as he pulled up pictures of the five suspected victims.
“These five individuals, according to the email sent into NCIS and the FBI two hours ago, were abducted either directly by Ari Haswari or by agents acting on his behalf,” Paula said. “Their whereabouts are unknown, and the email gave no reason for their abduction.”

She held up the remote and cycled through each headshot, culled from state drivers’ licenses and passports.

“Jackson Gibbs, storeowner from Stillwater, Pennsylvania and the father of NCIS Special Agent Leroy Jethro Gibbs. Last seen entering the front door of his home nine hours ago after dinner at a neighbor’s house. FBI is investigating now to see when the abduction took place.”

Tony leaned over to Kate’s ear. “Did you know Gibbs had a father?” he whispered; she answered with an elbow to his gut.

McGee continued. “Dr. Rachel Cranston, a psychologist working for a private practice in Miami, and the sister of NCIS Special Agent Kate Todd. Last seen leaving a restaurant in downtown Miami after having dinner with a local businessman; FBI has him in for questioning.”

“Miss Constance Isles, an American citizen who lives and works in Europe, as an artist and a professor of art history. Last sighted in Cannes 32 hours ago; French authorities and Interpol were informed of her abduction the same time NCIS and FBI were. She is the adoptive mother of Dr. Maura Isles.”

“Mr. Francesco ‘Frank’ Rizzoli, Sr., the father of Detective Jane Rizzoli, Officer Frankie Rizzoli Jr. and Tommy Rizzoli, and husband of Angela Rizzoli. A plumber by trade and a native of Boston, he and his wife recently separated and he moved down to Florida. Last seen in Fort Myers 48 hours ago; his live-in girlfriend, Lydia Sparks—“

Jane nearly choked on her coffee upon hearing that.

“—reported him missing 42 hours ago, and claims she hid in a hall closet for 24 hours after receiving a phone call telling her to inform the FBI that Ari has her boyfriend.”

“Finally, Interpol and Scotland Yard received another email at the same time messages were sent about the other four people. Dr. Hope Martin, an American citizen, a forensic pathologist and gynecologist working in London was last seen three days ago. Colleagues reported her missing yesterday. Scotland Yard is working the case in Britain.”

“Two men, three women, four related to the primary four objects of Ari’s wrath, and one whom on initial glance possibly is related to either Dr. Isles or Agent Todd,” Jenny said.

“It would appear, director, that Ari Haswari is heading towards his end game.”

Everyone looked around to see who was talking; Stan and Jane first noticed a very short woman pardon herself, pushing past them and making her way up front until standing in front of the monitor, where everyone could see her.

“Henrietta,” Jenny said. “This is Henrietta Lange, the new operations manager of the Office of Special Projects.”

“Director, as much as I would love to exchange pleasantries, time is of the essence,” Hetty replied.
“Agent McGee. Please open the file I just emailed to you.”

“File?” he said, then walked to his desk; he saw the email and attachment, then opened it.

On the screen, appeared the photo of Omar Abel, a very recent hire by NCIS’s CyberCrimes division.

“Mr. Abel is actually Omar Al-Sharif, a Kuwaiti computer programmer who fell under the sway of men who were associated with Hamas and who knew Ari Haswari,” Hetty explained. “Ari met Omar in Dubai and offered him a chance for greater glory than he ever could achieve on the football pitch or working in information technology. The FoG fabricated a cover story for him with the express purpose of getting him embedded with an American agency.”

“We have been watching Omar since he applied for a job at CyberCrimes,” Jenny added. “On the authorization of former Director Morrow, only he, Ms. Lange and myself within the agency had knowledge of the investigation.”

“So has this guy accessed any intel on us?” Gibbs asked.

“Until two days ago, we thought not,” Hetty said. “We have since learned that the night before the caravan taking you and your team to the safe house in Virginia, Omar accessed NCIS files from his home and passed them along to FoG operatives—“

“Which allowed them to ambush us,” Gibbs said, pissed. “Tell me, Jenny, you got this guy.”

“Actually, Jethro, I can confirm that,” Hetty interrupted. “Agents Callen and Hanna are bringing him in as we speak, for interrogation.”

NCIS, Interrogation Room #1

Every agent in Gibbs’ team stood behind the glass window separating the observation room from the interrogation room, where Omar sat, nervously, as Gibbs, Callen and Hanna prepared to begin.

“Any thoughts on what’s going on in there, Miss Profiler?” Jane asked Kate.

“Guy looks like he’s about to crap his pants,” Kate replied. “Very nervous, probably because of what he’s about to be accused of.”

“Or where he’s headed,” Tony added. “Gitmo.”

Callen began talking, reminding him of what America does to terrorists and where it sends them, and Omar began sweating bullets.

“That guy’s a kid,” Jane said. “Is he even old enough to drink?”

“File says he’s 25,” Kate answered.

Then Hanna stepped in, and asked him about the ambush and the murder of a federal agent.

“Did he just pee his pants?” Kate said. “Ewww.”

“A very understandable reaction,” Maura said. “Fear can cause someone to urinate in their
pants….the urinary control in the body involves parasympathetic nervous system control of the muscarinically-innervated detrusor muscles, and sympathetic nervous system control of the urinary sphincter’s alpha-1 receptors.”

With the blank looks on the faces of everyone else in the observation room, Maura continued.

“When one becomes frightened, adrenaline in the body can increase rapidly, and affect the alpha-1 receptors in the urinary spinchter. If the source of the fear is, for lack of a better term, frightening enough, the urinary spinchter will contract and release urine provided there is a sufficient supply of urine in the bladder—“

“Maur,” Jane said.

“What you’re saying, Maura, is Hanna made that guy pee himself,” Kate said.

“Well…if you put it that way…yes, I suppose he did,” Maura said.

“I would’ve been worried about Gibbs making that kid piss his pants,” Jane added, “though I’d definitely want the big guy on my side.”

“I’m more worried about Gibbs giving the kid a stroke,” Tony said, smiling and waiting to see what would happen next. “Hey Kate. Where’s your sister?”

“With Macy,” Kate said, as Gibbs sat down in front of Omar.

A few moments later – to everyone’s surprise in observation – Julie Todd burst through the door into interrogation, kicked over the table, and laid into the suspect. And Omar looked much more scared than when Hanna ‘questioned’ him.

“Damn!” Tony said, enchanted. “Kate can I get her number—“

Kate smirked. “She’d eat you for lunch, DiNozzo.”

Julie Todd, her blonde ponytail swaying as she moved around Omar, screamed at the man. Who was he? Why is he here? What did he tell Ari? Why did he try to murder her sister? Why make her, and his, and others’ lives a living hell? What did Ari promise you?

“Stinks in here,” Callen said to the window separating the two rooms. “Hope you guys have a diaper for this clown.”

Gibbs got up, walked over to the suspect, and asked him his own series of questions.

“I…I was set up to pass along information,” Omar said, nervously. “A mole…I passed along information on the caravan to Ari, directly.”

“Why shoot Agent Todd?” Julie said, bluntly.

“Ari says you would know that,” Omar continued, half-stammering. “He – he didn’t tell me why. Just wanted information on people.”

“Which people?” Gibbs said.
“You and the rest of your team, Agent Gibbs, even those you used to work with,” Omar stammered. “Vivian Blackadder. Mike Franks. Gerald Jackson. Ari asked about Gerald, wanted to know where he worked and where he lived now.”

Tony pulled out his cell phone. “Stan…tell the Director Ari has intel on Gerald. Mike Franks, even Viv.”


“There was talk,” Omar said, “on message boards. FoG boards. Kidnapping plots, to get Ari out of the States…exchange of lives for money and transportation.”

“Where?” Gibbs.

“Somalia, Iran, Pakistan.”

Gibbs picked up his cell phone, listened, then hung up; a minute later, Jenny walked through.

“Show us these message boards, and help us with any and every – and I mean EVERY – piece of intel on Ari and his group we want – and I will do what I can to see that you live,” she told him.

“You’ll get me out of Gitmo?” Omar stuttered.

“You’ll be lucky to get solitary confinement there for life,” Jenny said, before walking out. “And before he sits down with our agents, someone get him cleaned up.”

As Omar sat with McGee, the OSP team and his former supervisor and associates from CyberCrimes, Gibbs went back to his desk to call Fornell and get an update on any leads relating to the hostages.

He saw a blonde woman, in Army garb, waiting for him.

“Lieutenant Colonel Hollis Mann, U.S. Army,” she introduced herself. “Attached to the Army’s Criminal Investigation Division.”

“Leroy Jethro Gibbs, NCIS,” he replied. “Can I help you?”

“I can help you,” she said. “We just got intel passed to us within the past hour, and having heard about your case I thought it best to tell you and Detective Rizzoli directly.”

Jane overheard the Lt. Colonel mention her, and made her way towards them.

“Excuse me? Did you say you needed to speak to me?” Jane said to her.

“Yes, Detective,” she answered, opening her laptop. “Do you know this man?”

Jane saw a headshot of her last boyfriend, Army Lt. Col. Casey Jones, whom she last spoke with on video back around Christmas.

He took the news of Jane’s dating Maura well enough, but Jane opted to cut off the friendship from that point.
“Yeah,” Jane simply said. “He was in Afghanistan, last I heard. Is he okay?”

“Detective Rizzoli,” Lt. Col. Mann said somberly. “Lt. Col. Jones went AWOL eight days ago. A half-hour ago we received an email and photo from an IP address known to belong to Fighters of God and known to have been used by Ari Haswari. The email stated that Lt. Col. Jones was in FoG custody and that the CID and NCIS should await imminent information on his whereabouts.”

Jane put a hand over her mouth. “Ohmigod,” she muttered to Gibbs. “They have him, too.”

“Lt. Colonel,” Gibbs said to Mann. “You said there was a photo.”

“Yes, and it doesn’t appear he has been badly injured,” she replied.

“doesn’t appear he was badly injured’?” Jane said. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

Mann opened up an attachment, showing the photo in question to Jane and Gibbs; Casey Jones was shown conscious, lying along a wooden wall, with braces on his legs.

**Director Shepard’s office**

Upstairs, Jenny’s secretary urgently ran to her desk.

“Ma’am,” she said. “A man claiming to be Ari Haswari is on the line. Wants to talk to you and you alone.”

Jenny picked up her phone, dialed Lara Macy in CyberCrimes and Gibbs in the bullpen.

“I’ll take the call up here, and I want a trace on his location,” Jenny told them. “Cynthia. Patch him through.”

Jenny pushed the button to talk to the man who was probably the most notorious and wanted man on Earth behind bin Laden.

“Director Shepard.”

“Director. A pleasure to speak to you. Congratulations on your promotion, by the way.”

“Haswari. If you’ve come to surrender, I certainly want to hear whatever it is you have to say.”

“Director, my intentions today aren’t to surrender, but I do have other things of interest to you and your agency that I am certain you would like to discuss.”

“Such as?”

“I realize that certain civilians and a United States Army colonel are missing, and that your FBI is fulling its obligations to find them and their kidnapper,” Ari said, smoothly. “I also realize that NCIS is taking an active role; whether it is or is not overstepping its boundaries is not for me to say—“

“What’s for ME to say, Ari, is we’re looking for you,” Jenny shot back. “Do you have those people? Where are they?”

“As a matter of fact…I do ‘have them’, as you wish to put it, and I do know where they are,” he
replied. “I am willing to make an exchange.”

“What kind of exchange, Ari?”

“I have unfinished business with Leroy Jethro Gibbs and Caitlin Todd that I want to conclude, and I also wish to wrap up my affairs with Jane Clementine Rizzoli and Maura Dorthea Isles. And, Director Shepard, I have need to do these things very soon; the longer I wait, the longer my guests become more of a liability.”
Chapter 68

Chapter Summary

The final chapter of Rizzoli, Isles and Kate sees Gibbs, Kate, Jane and Maura confront Ari. We also learn what happens to everyone in the aftermath, and we look ahead to the sequel rizzles & kibbs.

Chapter 68

Washington

7:15 a.m.

Whenever Gibbs wanted to talk with someone in secrecy – and stay in the NCIS building – he always "conducted" meetings on the elevator. They would board, he'd flip a switch stopping the elevator and dimming its lights, they'd discuss business, then he'd flip the switch allowing the elevator to resume motion.

This particular meeting, involving Jenny, Jane, Kate, Maura and himself, was about as serious as things could get.

Jane – still perturbed over her earlier 'discussion' with the director – opted to shut the hell up unless she had to say something, like now.

"Rondo, my C.I. – criminal informant, Kate – is probably there. Giovanni, the guy Maura and I first, uh, came out to, is missing. He's got Susie Chang. He's got Martinez, a guy I used to partner with a long time ago on the force…"

"He's got Abby's friend, Carol," Kate said. "He kidnapped McGee's sister. Tony's dad. Tried in front of the FBI for my parents, my brother, Admiral McGee, Ducky's mom, Jane's mom…"

"He also has Stephanie," Gibbs said.

"Who's Stephanie?" Maura asked.

"My ex-wife…one of them," he replied.

"The one who hit you with the bat?" Kate.

Gibbs chuckled. "…yeah, Kate, that's her."

"And Ari has them all," Jenny said. "You all know why we're here. And that none of you have to go through with this. OSP is working with the task force regardless of what you decide and whatever goes on in the White House. I spoke with SecNav right before we stepped in here; he's on our side and will argue our interests. All I have to do is call him with your final decision."

"It has to be unanimous," Gibbs said. "None of you go in alone. All three of you agree with this or none of you go."
"What about you, Agent Gibbs?" Maura said. "If we don't agree you don't go either—"

"I go regardless, Maura," Gibbs replied. "I'm expendable. You're not; neither are you Jane, and neither are you Kate…left a note for DiNozzo, if something happens to me. I signed it in front of the director" – nodding to Jenny – "with my recommendation for Tony to be special agent in charge and you, Kate and McGee to be his senior agents. Paula, too if she wants to stay; Stan wants to move on."

"You're not expendable," Kate whispered, reaching out to touch Gibbs' hand, then pulling back when she noticed Jenny's surprised look.

"I'm expendable, Kate," Gibbs replied, softly. "None of you are."

Then, looking at Kate, then Jane and Maura, Gibbs said: "you sure you want to go through with this?"

"Without a doubt," Kate said. "Rachel's not expendable. Neither are any of those other people Ari's kidnapped."

"Same here," Jane said. "Dad's a bastard, but he's still my dad. I'd rather kill him myself," she quipped, causing Maura to laugh. "Rondo, Giovanni, Susie…even the ones he didn't get don't deserve this…I'm a cop, Gibbs. I put my life on the line all the time. How's this any different?"

"And I feel the same way for myself," Maura said. "I'm not a police officer nor an agent, and I never have been. I speak for the dead, and sometimes I've even saved lives. I can do that now. I don't want to die, but if my sacrifice can save those I love and care about I will not hesitate to step forward."

"Well said," Kate replied. "I was Secret Service. Sworn to protect the President at the cost of my own life. I joined NCIS, and I'm still in a dangerous job. I was ready to sacrifice myself to save the President and the Israeli Prime Minister and others, you know, when Ari kidnapped me a year ago. He didn't kill me, but I was ready then if necessary…and I'm ready now."

"Then it's settled?" Jenny asked, and the other three women nodded their heads. "Then I'll inform SecNav."

"And we'll go over our part of the mission," Gibbs said, flipping the switch, taking them back to the third floor.

The White House
Situation Room

It's 8 a.m., and every federal intelligence agency is now fully aware of the kidnappings, and of Ari's phone call to the director of NCIS with his demands.

Every important, and self-important, official within the government and military knows of Ari's 4 p.m. deadline, and of the plans to send in SEAL Team Six, Army Rangers, Delta Force and every elite unit available to extract the hostages and take out Haswari once and for all.

But only a few know of a plan to actually deal with Ari, dreamt up by a few federal agency heads, with the express intention of leaving NCIS out of the loop.

This was one of the dozen plans that the President, Vice President and others reviewed, shortly before the emergency, 8 a.m. meeting in the White House's Situation Room.

SecNav wasn't in awe of a lot of things, even the White House, nor the Oval Office and not the
Situation Room.

Not that there wasn't any disrespect intended. But SecNav was all business when meeting with the President, and the topic on the table was as serious as anything since 9/11.

SecNav found himself seated next to SecDef, and at the same table with the Joint Chiefs and the heads of every intelligence agency except for NCIS, plus the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State.

The door into the Situation Room opened, with the President himself followed by the Vice President, and the Senators from Arizona and Illinois who were expected to win their respective parties’ nominations for the Presidential race later that fall.

Everyone stood until the VP and the Senators got to their seats, and the President signaled everyone to sit.

"Gentlemen, I've read this folder, I'm up to speed on the situation, and I'm waiting to hear you make your case," he said to the directors of Homeland and FBI.

To FBI's surprise, Homeland put forth his proposal: sacrifice Ari's requested targets, and the hostages, in order to extract Ari and use his knowledge to gain valuable intel on al-Qaida, Hamas and Hezbollah and on insurgents throughout the Middle East.

FBI was surprised, thinking Homeland went along with his suggestion: use the targets as bait, send in the elite forces to protect them and extract the hostages while capturing Ari alive.

CIA suggested Ari was too far gone mentally to be of any use, and Joint Chiefs saw little strategic value in a supposed asset that had, in essence, split a wanna-be major terroristic player.

The President listened patiently to everyone, including the Senators, then asked the V.P. his assessment.

"FBI has the most sound suggestion," he said, "assuming this involves the terrorist's personal agenda and only his agenda."

Homeland was taken aback.

"May I suggest, sir," he said to the V.P., "that your assessment may be misinformed, in part by your personal attachment to the former Secret Service agent."

The V.P. more firmly repeated his assessment, and emphasized that he saw no value in wasting American lives and assets for a terrorist with limited intelligence value.

Then the President spoke up, and asked several questions around the room:

Does Ari possess a weapon of mass destruction? No.

Does he possess the capability of producing such a weapon, be it nuclear, biological or chemical? No.

Does he have direct links to the big players within the major terrorist groups. No.

Is he, in effect, a wanna-be major player? Yes and no; he wants to be a big player, for the purpose of executing his personal agenda against his father, Mossad, Israel, and the four Americans he's targeted for death.
"Tell me, sir," the President said to Homeland, "why I should let this bastard kill innocent Americans."

Homeland repeated, and tried to justify, himself, and neither the President nor the V.P. were buying any of it.

"The shit-storm this will bring on our government - not just on the President and the White House, but all of us - isn't worth it," V.P. said. "Haswari has no WMDs, no connection to al-Qaida, no plans nor the real ability to conduct terrorist operations within the homeland on anything other than a small scale."

"Sir, I disagree," Homeland insisted. "He is a major asset. This is the only way we can get him, and take advantage of his knowledge. The country is at stake."

"Looks to me," said the President. "you're so hung up on this fella you're ready to save your ass by throwing away another agency's people."

Homeland, to his credit, had the courage of his convictions - but not a lot of sense to know when to stop speaking his mind.

"I insist, sir, your personal attachment to one of the objects of the asset's intent is adversely affecting your judgment."

"You saying I don't know what I'm talking about? And that the Vice President doesn't know what he's saying? Wanna repeat that?"

Homeland finally deferred to his better judgment. "I've stated my case, sir, and I maintain it is the best course."

"Well, I think it's crap and you and some of your buddies trying to save your asses by hiding the fact you've let this thing drag out way too long," the President said. "I agree with the FBI director, and what I'm told is the opinion of the new director at NCIS who should be here...but I'd like to ask one more person. Mr. Secretary; what do you think about this?"

"You saying I don't know what I'm talking about? And that the Vice President doesn't know what he's saying? Wanna repeat that?"

"Then, gentlemen and ladies," the President said. "I authorize Plan Beta, to begin immediately, and expect full cooperation from all of you and from your personnel at all levels of your organizations."

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"Then, gentlemen and ladies," the President said. "I authorize Plan Beta, to begin immediately, and expect full cooperation from all of you and from your personnel at all levels of your organizations."

After the President left the room, SecDef pulled SecNav aside.

"I was about to fire Morrow if that opportunity at Homeland hadn't come up," SecDef said.

"I'm sure it was a coincidence," SecNav smirked. "I'm glad I don't have to inform Shepard we're choosing to kill her people so that those idiots in Homeland can tell their cronies they bagged the
next bin Laden."

"Your people good enough to pull off the operation?"

"They're the best."

**3 p.m.**

**Virginia**

After more debate, and the determination of Gibbs, Kate, Jane and Maura to do whatever it took to save their loved ones, Jenny authorized their participation in the operation.

She contacted Ari at his contact number, and he in turn provided coordinates for the location he expected them to travel to by 1600, or 4 p.m. local time.

All four were armed and wired as discreetly as possible, their black Chevy Suburban was wired and loaded with bugs and other surveillance equipment, and NCIS and the FBI discretely lined the travel route with undercover officers and vehicles.

Whatever it was that was going to happen, the feds would have eyes and ears on it the entire way. And the four would not be alone.

The NCIS Special Ops team was part of a 100-person task force, consisting of Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, Delta Force, and other special operations agents and special forces personnel who had trained for this type of mission for the past four months.

Their task was to take down Haswari and his men, while protecting the foursome and safely extracting all the hostages.

"Those guys are putting themselves on the line," said Kate, remembering her Secret Service career. "I feel like I should be protecting them. Protecting all of you."

"It's their job," said Gibbs, driving the Suburban. "Callen, Macy, your sister. They know the risks. Just like we do."

"Secret Service training kicking in?" asked Jane, sitting in the back seat, behind Kate, with Maura.

"Yeah."

"I shot myself in the stomach, you know. To stop a guy we thought was a good cop, one of our own, who nearly killed my brother."

"Yeah. Read the report," Gibbs said. "Would have chewed you out for doing it too. Even more if you hadn't got the bastard."

"I got him alright," Jane said, smiling.

"One of the worst days of my life," Maura replied; Jane reached over, grabbed her hands, and pulled her into a tight hug, as Gibbs’ cell phone rang.

"Gibbs."

"Jethro," Jenny said on speaker. "Ari's plane is waiting at a strip five miles southeast of the farmhouse, and we have his money ready to be transferred into the Swiss account on his word."
"I'm sure he'll appreciate that, and the F-16s ready to launch a rocket up his ass when his plane leaves the ground," Gibbs quipped. "We're real close to that place. Probably a half-mile."

"Don't pull any crazy moves and we'll get you all out there alive," Jenny replied. "Like Paris."

"Aw hell, Jenny, that was nothing," Gibbs said. "Should've seen me in Kuwait during Desert Storm; pulled some real crazy moves then."

"I don't doubt it," Jenny said. "Good hunting, Jethro."

"Gotta go, Director. Hate to keep the bastard waiting."

As Gibbs pulled up to the large tree in front of the farmhouse, Kate said a prayer and Jane and Maura clasped hands.

Then, all four got out and began walking towards the house, and not the barn adjacent to it.

Three hundred yards away, two Rangers and two NCIS agents, hiding behind a bush, had eyes on the four.

"They're walking towards the house," said agent G Callen, on phone with Jenny and the OSP's new supervisor, Hetty Lange. "I see a couple of armed guys holding what looks like semi-automatics, probably 40 feet away. Not sure if our people see them yet."

Ari's men saw them shortly afterwards, and a dozen men, all armed, ordered the four to stop, patting them down thoroughly.

"No signs of the big man," said OSP special agent in charge Lara Macy, observing from a hiding point nearby. "Wait...someone's walking out the front entrance...Director, Hetty, that's him, that's Haswari."

"Roger that," said Sam Hanna, from yet another vantage point.

**Washington, NCIS**

**MTAC**

Jenny, Hetty and new Assistant Director Leon Vance were watching live satellite footage of the scene, all of them wearing headsets that allowed them to communicate with their agents and the task force team leader, an Army Ranger.

"They've been stopped," Jenny said. "Team Leader, you still have eyes?"

"Affirmative, Director," Team Leader said from his vantage point. "All of us do. We're in position."

**The farmhouse**

Eight of Ari's men approached the four. While four of his men raised their semis at the four, their compatriots patted the four down, head to toe, pulling out Gibbs' cell phone.

Then, Ari Haswari himself stepped out the front door – flanked by two armed men – and made his way to the four.

"Welcome," he said. "I trust your trip was a safe and enjoyable one?"

None of the four said a word.
"Perhaps you are enamored with the scenery," Ari continued. "It IS beautiful, more so than what I have been, ah, used to over the past year… anyway. I spent some time getting to know about each of you, and our guests."

Jane flinched in anger, and Kate looked repulsed.

"It is a wonder, how technology makes it possible to learn so much about someone – and, sometimes, perhaps more than I wished to know," Ari said, smiling. "It was particularly helpful in learning about the process of your love story, Detective Rizzoli and Doctor Isles; almost romantic in nature."

Now, Maura looked revolted.

"And, you, agent Gibbs, your own love story, and your family, and the sad, sad fate of your wife and daughter," Ari said. "One wonders who fired the shot that killed them – and what happened to him. Was he brought to justice? What about his own family? What would they do – what would they pay – to find out who his killer was?"

Gibbs flinched.

"I am sympathetic to your situation, believe it or not, Gibbs," Ari said. "Some may be less so than I, and more vengeful than I."

"Can't think of any bastard more vengeful than you," Gibbs said to Ari, who laughed out loud, then left Gibbs and made his way towards Kate.

"You are more beautiful now than ever," Ari said, stroking her hair and her cheek.

She replied by spitting in his eye, and for a moment, she thought, she saw a spark of … darkness?

Within that moment, she thought he just might reach up and snap her neck.

But he didn't. He wiped his eye with his associate's handkerchief, threw it down to the ground, then looked at her, politely.

"And, I might say, you are direct in your feelings," he said. "Many keep such thoughts to themselves. Sometimes to their benefit."

Then, he made his way to Jane and Maura.

"Allow me to formally introduce myself," he said. "I am Ari, and I am a man of some means, and a man of taste. I've been a part of your lives for some time, and I am sure you have had some doubts as to how things would, end… I am pleased to meet you, of course. But I am sure you have questions."

"Really, jackass?" Jane said. "'Sympathy For The Devil'?"

Ari laughed. "Ah, a fellow Stones fan," he said. "I like you already, Detective. I understand you are a classic rock fan yourself; I heard the Rolling Stones when I was a child – away from the auspices of my father, as he was a rather strict man – and enjoyed their albums when I attended medical school in Scotland... the same one your associate, Dr. Mallard, attended, Dr. Isles. And the same one your mother visited—"

"What do you know about my mother?" Maura said, measuredly.

"Your adoptive one or your birth one?" Ari replied.
Ari studied her face; Maura studied his. Jane thought this must have been how she responded when meeting Charles Hoyt in prison nearly a couple of years ago; she had said she told Hoyt she wasn't frightened by him.

And Maura obviously wasn't frightened of this bastard. That made Jane proud.

"In the spirit of Misters Jagger and Richards, you must be confused as to the nature of my game—"

"Not confused at all, Ari," Gibbs interjected.

Ari composed himself, then stepped back to address the four.

"As I was saying…it's said every cop – detective and agent – is a criminal, all of the sinners saints," he continued. "And you are my guests, as are your friends and family in the barn across the way. But I do have a few house rules. Please have some courtesy, and some sympathy and some taste, use all your well-learned politesse—"

"…or you'll 'lay our souls to waste'," Gibbs stated. "That what this is about, Ari?"

Ari walked to Gibbs. "What is 'this', Jethro?"

"This," he said. "You here to kill us?"

Ari laughed. "You disappoint me! I'm not 'here' to merely kill you."

He looked at his lead lieutenant and said "bind them, and take them to the farmhouse, the barn. And do so securely. Then take them to the center of the circle."

With rifles pointing at their foreheads, Gibbs, Kate, Jane and Maura were securely bound, then led at riflepoint to the farmhouse, where they saw their loved ones, also bound, and kneeling in a circle. The four were led between Rondo and Constance Isles – and their captors yelled at the four to keep their eyes straight ahead, NOT to look down – then forced down, on their knees.

Ari walked into the main house, placed a call to NCIS; Jenny Shepard picked up on the other end.

"Where are my people—" Jenny said, before being cut off.

"Begin the wire transfer now," Ari ordered her, "and drop off the white Camry at the rear entrance of the property. Have the pilot ready at the strip, and tell him he will fly me to Cuba."

"Cuba?" Jenny said. "Are you out of your mind—"

"Do all of those things, Director, and you will be able to see your people in 30 minutes," he said. "Show one more instance of insubordination, and they will see what the back of an agent's head looks like when a bullet enters from the forehead."

Then he hung up, and walked to the barn. "Prepare your weapons, prepare to dispose of the hostages, and prepare for travel to the safe house," Ari stated, as he loaded his Bravo 51 rifle.

350 yards away

"Bastard's preparing to kill them," Hanna said in his phone. "Mace, G, we gotta move."

"Not my final call, but I agree," Macy said. "Team Leader."

"Get ready to move on my signal," Team Leader said. "All units. Report in."
All 'units' reported in safe and sound.

"How many of them, not counting Ari and the hostages?" Team Leader said. The estimate was thirty men, in the barn, the house and along the property.

"Then we pick them off," Team Leader said. "Silencers for the sentries, and we move in silently, and as quickly as possible…Katsa. Move into position."

"Roger," Katsa said. "Orders?"

"When the rest of us are in position and I give the go-ahead, take out Judas," Team Leader said, "if Haswari makes a move to kill any of the hostages. Authorization Order Gimel Vav Chet Shin."

Team Leader thought he heard a slight gasp at the other end of the line. "Acknowledged," Katsa said.

**Barn**

Gibbs, Kate, Jane and Maura found themselves surrounded by their and their friends' loved ones, but not able to look at them, given the barrel of the rifles digging into the back of their heads, and Ari standing in front.

"How in hell are you going to get out of here, Ari?" Gibbs dared to ask, and was rewarded with a kick to the back.

"Not yet!" Ari shouted to the man, who was pulled back by two other men, and replaced by another with his own rifle.

"You ask a good question," he said. "I am certain your government has made appropriate arrangements – especially if they wish to see their people again."

"You'll never get out of the state," Gibbs continued. "The entire American intelligence community, the entire military, the government even up to the President himself, are looking for you. They know you're here. And if they don't get you in your car, they'll bring you and your plane down."

"You seem to think things will end for me, Gibbs," Ari said. "I know you and all of the rest of you are hopeful your situation will end today. You might think this will end today."

"I agree," Gibbs replied.

"It will end today – for you. But my work is not done."

Ari picked up his phone and made a call.

Then, of all times, Gibbs's father chose now to speak up.

"LEROY! Don't give him what he wants! He's going to kill us ALL—"

Something in Ari snapped.

"—going to kill us ALL, son! He said he would force you—"

Ari kicked Casey Jones over, causing him to double over in pain, and Jane to gasp.

"—force you to give up—"
Ari kicked Jackson Gibbs in the head, unconscious.

Katsa, standing over the bodies of two of Ari's dead associates, radioed in.

"He's attacked Gibbs's father!" she whispered. "Orders?"

"Sit rep," Team Leader said.

"Kick to the head," Katsa said. "I cannot see blood. He did not shoot."

"We're almost in position," Team Leader said. "Will contact you in sixty."

Ari looked at Jackson Gibbs, now unconscious, blood slightly leaking from his lip.

"He'll live," Ari muttered, "if nothing else happens to him."

He ordered the hostages on the edge of the circle to be gagged, and the lieutenants taped their mouths shut with duct tape.

Then two of the men turned Gibbs around, to see his father, and Ari saw a look of anguish on Gibbs' face.

"What…why?" Gibbs said, indignantly. "Why attack him? Why not attack me?"

"Oh, but I am," Ari said, "and am not yet finished. While my men destroy our evidence, we will prepare for disposal."

"Disposal? Ari, what are you—"

Ari kicked Gibbs in the mouth; he turned his head just in time, to keep from being knocked unconscious. As he fell to his side, he knew only he was still aware, and the pain in his jaw wasn't as bad as he expected.

Gibbs was raised back up, and looked at the three women next to him, all of whom were being looked over by Ari.

Jane has a look of anger, which Ari seemed to expect.

Then Ari looks over Kate, stroked her hair and cheek, and asks her if she would like to accompany him overseas.

She spit in his face, and his countenance changed from neutrality to contempt.

Maura noticed his eyes were pure black, ice cold - and wonders am I the only one who sees it?

She wasn't.

Ari realizes it, and walks over to her.

"Dr. Isles," Kate shouted. "Don't say a word. Don't react to him. That's what he wants."

Ari grabs Maura by the back of her hair, and pulled her up to her feet.

"LET HER GO!" Jane yelled, and Ari kicked her square in the jaw, knocking her backwards.

"You…evil son of a bitch," Maura said, calmly, firmly. "I wish agent Todd had killed you. I wish agent Gibbs had killed you. So that Jane and I could not have had to go through the hell you put us
through. So that everyone else here and not here wouldn't have had to go through that hell, and so that Gibbs and Kate wouldn't have had to go through your hell."

"You through, bitch?" Ari spat.

"Gibbs is right," Maura said, in a tone and demeanor that reminded him of Kate. "You won't make it out alive. You WILL get killed—"

Ari pulled out his pistol and aimed it at her head.

"What do you see, doctor? Tell me what you see."

"Death."

"Your own and those around you."

"No. Yours."

Ari cursed, put his pistol back in its holster, then rears back and hits her hard in the jaw, three times.

Maura fell backwards, knocked out; Jane looked on, in pain, then tried to get up.

Ari pulled her up and punched her three times in the face, then threw her down to the ground.

Then, he looked at Gibbs and Kate.

"Gibbs, you are right. This will end, for you. But not for me." He looked at his two top lieutenants. "Shoot them in the head, save Gibbs and Caitlin for last."

"You're a psycho," Kate growled at him.

"IF only things had turned out differently," Ari says. "Unfortunately for you, you must pay the price."

Then, he turned around, walked 12 yards, picked up his Bravo 51, and – to Gibbs’ horror, and the other hostages around them, took it and aimed at Kate's head, and prepared to fire.

Gibbs tried to move to put himself in the line of fire, but the two men next to him pushed down more firmly on his shoulders.

As he looked at Ari, trying to speak, he heard a shot.

And the back of Ari’s head explode.

Then he heard shots above him, and saw the two men next to him fall, and heard the one behind him fall, as did the one behind Kate.

For moments, all hell seemed to break loose, as Kate yelled to the hostages to get down; around him, Gibbs could see men falling in gunfire, and SEALs, Marines, Rangers, Delta Force and OSP rapidly converge on their position.

Gibbs looked up, and saw Callen and Macy above him; next to Kate was her sister Julie and Hanna, and SEALs above Jane and Maura.

And he heard only the sounds of allies shouting.
"Jethro! Gunny! You alright?"

"Kate! Katie! Honey you okay?"

Gibbs couldn't speak; bastard must've broken his jaw, and the adrenaline must've kept him from feeling the pain.

"We're here," Macy said. "We got them all. Gibbs, we got them all."

Callen and Macy helped Gibbs up, while Kate tended to him.

All Jethro could do was hold his hand up in the "OK" sign, then nod over towards Julie and Rachel Cranston.

As Kate ran to her sisters, Gibbs tried to check on Jane and Maura.

"Agent Gibbs, they look alright, though they're unconscious," one of the SEALs said. "We need to get them – and the rest of you – to a hospital."

"Let's get you up, Gunny," Callen said, as he and Macy helped him to his feet.

He saw the Army officer Casey Jones, being tended to by two Army Rangers and a medic, demanding the Ranger remove him out of there before Jane could see him.

And he saw Hope Martin run to Maura and Jane – insisting she was a doctor – and checking on them both.

Then he remembered his dad, and tried to break free from Callen, who understood, and helped him over to Jack Gibbs.

"He needs a hospital," another medic said. "We get him there, he should be fine."

Then, Gibbs looked in the distance, near the entrance, and saw Ziva David talking to a Marine.

She noticed him, and nodded.

"Katsa," Macy said. "The one who took the shot that killed her brother."

Gibbs understood. She killed Ari. She ended this. She ended their nightmare.

And, perhaps, began one of her own.

He nodded back, before being brought into the moment by his ex-wife, Stephanie.

"Oh god, oh god, Jethro…oh god, I'm glad you're okay…"

As Stephanie embraced him, and as he saw Fornell rush through the entrance looking for someone, Gibbs saw Ziva walk up to him. They nodded, and he watched her walk over to Ari's body and stand.

"Jethro!" Fornell said. "Jethro…can you talk?"

"We think he has a dislocated jaw," Callen told him. "He needs to get to a hospital."

"Understood," Fornell said. "Everyone else?"

"Fine, and in the same situation," Macy said.
Gibbs wondered what Ziva was doing, then saw her kneel, and begin to cry.

He saw a notepad and pencil in Fornell's hand and took them.

"Director Shepard wants to talk to you, Jethro, " Fornell said. "Wants to debrief—"

Gibbs wrote something, in all caps, then handed it to Fornell.

LEAVE HER ALONE
LET HER MOURN

He nodded over towards Ziva, and Ari's body.

"Got it," Fornell said, making his way towards Team Leader.

As the hostages were being led out, Gibbs lingered back. The last thing he saw was Ziva, crying and singing Hebrew prayers over her brother's body.

**Postscript**

All of the hostages were taken in for observation; Gibbs had the worst injury, a dislocated jaw. Amazingly to most people – not so much to those who knew him well – he walked out of the hospital two days after being admitted, just in time to work a case involving a copycat of a serial killer he helped put behind bars.

Over the next three weeks, the few remaining FoG operatives loyal to Ari were either rounded up or killed; when the last one – Mark Dugan – was judged by the FBI to have drowned in the Charles River, the 'all clear' was given for everyone to return to their 'normal' lives.

For Jane and Maura, that meant going back home – albeit a bit more reluctantly than either anticipated.

The entire NCIS team had become like family to both women, and the knowledge they could always make phone calls and send emails didn't make the departure any easier. It was countered by the joy of returning home to Boston, and to the family, friends and colleagues they knew and loved.

Maura, of course, resumed her position as Chief Medical Examiner of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Jordan Cavanaugh accepted the job of Assistant Chief M.E., which placed her second only to Maura; given the medical examiner's office had plenty of work to go around, both Maura and Jordan wouldn't lack for work.

And Jane resumed her job as a detective in Homicide, once again working alongside Barry Frost, and often with Vince Korsak and his new partner Roz Framus. Often times as Jane walked down to the morgue to chat with Maura, she'd see Woody Hoyt doing the same with Jordan.

Jane and Maura's families were affected by their year-long absence and by the abductions; they moved forward, the Rizzolis largely because they were so closely knit.

Maura leaned on Jane, Angela, Tommy, Frankie, the Homicide unit and her staff for support, even as Hope Martin went back to England to "figure things out", and Constance Isles went back to Europe after promising to return for Jane and Maura's wedding.

Maura had questions about Hope – who was she really? How did Ari find her? What was her
relationship with Paddy really like? Now wasn't the time to follow up on it, but that time was coming, and soon.

Jane in turn leaned on the same people Maura did, and took a bit of comfort in knowing that Charles Hoyt was no longer around to possibly terrorize her in the future.

On the other hand, Casey Jones' physical and mental health bothered Jane greatly. She realized he knew they had no future together, with or without Maura; she wasn't going to change who she was, even for him. At the hospital after the rescue, Jane finally tracked down Casey, and tried to encourage him to find someone who would love him as he was and who was truly right for him.

He would have none of it, and brusquely sent her away. Knowing he was wrong for her didn't make seeing him in that bed, with his braces, any less sad. She really did want the best for him.

Maura and Jane had old and new friends, and family, who loved them, and accepted them as they were – even as many joined Giovanni in saying they knew all along they were in love.

Still, they had their guards up on their first day back at Boston P.D., with Jane swearing she'd "knock out the first idiot" who made a remark.

No one ever said a thing, especially not near Jane or Maura.

Back in Washington, Team Gibbs got back on track quickly.

Stan left for an Agent Afloat position on the USS Carl Vinson. Paula – after filling in for Kate on the Kyle Boone case – resigned to accept a position as the special agent in charge of the NCIS Pentagon office.

Kate returned for a case involving a dead Marine found in a Civil War-era casket, in which she ended up saving Ducky's life. That night, she dreamed that she died on the rooftop in Norfolk, then woke up and had an epiphany: what was she going to do with herself?

She called her sister, Rachel.

"You have your whole life ahead of you, honey," Rachel said. "No one is guaranteed a single moment. Not you, not me, not anyone. So you might as well live life with gusto."

After hanging up with Rachel, she called her brothers – including Daniel, who was grateful to hear from her despite spending the last 14 hours on an FBI case in Rhode Island. Then she called her other sister, Julie, in Los Angeles.

"I want to stay in NCIS," Kate told her, "and not just for the reasons you think."

"Really?" Julie said. "Is there someone special there?"

"Yeah…and it's not DiNozzo," Kate chuckled.

"It's not?" Julie said.

"No," Kate said, then paused. "It's Gibbs."

Kate explained that through this ordeal, she gradually found herself caring about him, first as a coworker, then as a friend, and now more.

"It scares me to death," Kate said. "And I will never say a word, because I don't want to lose what I've got here. I'm not just talking about career limbo either; these people are growing on me, like
family I never knew I had. Tony is my fourth brother, even if he aggravates the hell out of me; McGee my fifth brother whom I've been way too mean to – hell, you and Jane both told me that. Abby's my other sister, Ducky's the grandpa I never knew I had. And Gibbs…"

"He's your boss," Julie cautioned. "At best, he should be like an uncle."

"I know."

"Does anyone else there suspect what's going on? Does he know?"

"Jules, I don't know….maybe Abby, but she hasn't given any hints she's thinking it. And Gibbs sure hasn't…I've never said a word to anyone about it, except for you tonight."

"Katie, you have any idea of what you're going to do with that?"

"None."

Gibbs threw himself into his job, rebuilding his team around its original configuration of himself, three agents, plus Abby and Ducky, while learning how to work with Jenny Shepard as his new boss. He worked, worked and worked more; when he wasn't working at his job, he was working on his boat in his basement.

He seemed to be the same old Gibbs to everyone.

Almost everyone.

Mike Franks – his former boss – stuck around D.C., staying in Gibbs' house. In his way, before returning to Mexico he wanted to make sure his Probie was alright. And for the most part he was.

However, there was the elephant in the room that only Mike Franks and a shot of bourbon could bring up, about a subject that not even Ducky or Abby would broach.

"And I ain't talking about your damn boat, Jethro," Franks said, "though before I die I want you to tell me how you get the damn thing out of this basement."

Gibbs chuckled, took a drink, then went back to working on the boat.

"When you going back to Mexico? Ever?"

"End of the week. What about Kate?"

"What about her?" Gibbs asked, hammering in a nail.

"You gonna break Rule 12?"

Gibbs stopped hammering. He laid down the hammer, stepped out of the frame, and sat down at the table across from Franks.

"What the hell are you saying, Mike?"

"Come on, Jethro, I can tell you have a thing for her, and I know she has a thing for you," he said to Gibbs. "You gonna break Rule 12 or you gonna keep it to yourself?"

Gibbs drank the rest of his bourbon, then poured himself another glass, and drank half of it.

"Life's too damn short, probie," Franks says. "She'd want you to be happy, if you really found
"Someone." Gibbs stared at his former boss.

"Shannon wouldn't want you penned up down here, building that damn boat," Franks said. "She'd want you to be happy, to find someone. Especially if that turned out to be Kate."

"I have a damn good reason for these rules, Mike. Especially the 12th one."

"Unless I'm wrong and you have a thing for Jenny—"

"Well you're wrong about Jenny and I don't have a 'thing' for my agent."

"I think you're lying, Probie."

"Lying?"

"Lying to yourself. Kept a lid on it, thinking no one else would notice. Hoping you wouldn't notice."

That was the last to be said of it, for the rest of the evening.

The next morning, Tony, Kate and McGee reported for work and saw Mike Franks lying back in Gibbs' chair and pointing towards the balcony.

As Tony asked Franks question after question about Gibbs, Kate's phone rang; Jenny and Gibbs were upstairs and her, Tony and McGee's presence was requested immediately (Franks could stay downstairs).

They all walked upstairs, and into the director's office – Kate and McGee for the very first time – and were in for a shock.

"Agent DiNozzo, Agent Todd, Agent McGee," Jenny said, introducing the young woman sitting across from their boss. "This is the new Liaison to NCIS from Mossad. Ziva David. And, being that you're a person down, I've made her new assignment the Washington Major Case Response Team."

"Our team," Kate said.

"Working with us," Tony said.

"Yes," Jenny said, smiling. "You may have noticed a new desk in your bullpen, across from McGee's. That is where Ziva will sit, as she will begin her new assignment immediately. Any questions?"

"Got your gear?" Gibbs asked his three agents.

"I think the director was asking about Ziva," Kate said.

"Well grab it, Kate, DiNozzo, McGee. Missing corporal's wife who may have been abducted."

Gibbs got up and walked out of the office, then walked back, and stared at his team.

"Coming boss," all three said in unison; Ziva looked at Jenny, who nodded.

"Go," she told Ziva, who followed after the three agents.

One Year Later
The statue on the campus of Boston Cambridge University was bleeding, and attracting quite a bit of attention.

The crowd observed from a distance, however, as the park the Venus de Milo duplicate was found in had become a crime scene. The only people near the statue were Boston Police Department and BCU Campus Police uniformed officers; three detectives from Boston PD's Homicide Unit; and the state's chief medical examiner.

"This is plaster," said Detective Barry Frost, "not bronze. Paint's chipping off quickly, too."

"And the body is very cold," said the M.E., Maura Isles. "Consistent with prolonged refrigeration. It would account for the degree of decomposition."

"Frozen," said Detective Vince Korsak. "But why?"

"That's what they pay us to find out," Detective Jane Rizzoli said, before noticing something odd at the base of the statue. "Korsak. Gimme that knife."

Jane cut away the plaster where she noticed the unusual protrusion and found a laminated badge, then pulled it away from the base to examine it.

"Frost, Korsak, Maura. It's a Navy I.D."

Frost took the laminated I.D. from Jane and looked it over. "She's a Petty Officer."

"And that makes it our case," said a gruff male from six yards away.

Maura, Jane, Frost and Korsak turned around and saw two familiar faces: Leroy Jethro Gibbs and Kate Todd.

"Dead Petty Officer places this under NCIS jurisdiction," Kate said.

"Not here," said Jane. "Our city, our case."

"Joint jurisdiction, then," Gibbs replied. "Besides. There's plenty of work to go around."

"Gibbs, what are you talking about?" Jane asked.

"I think he's referring to another statue," said Frost. "Just got a text. Another Venus de Milo, three miles away. Woody and Roz are working it, with some feds."

"We know," Kate said. "The rest of our team's there, along with our M.E. Victim's civilian, and the girlfriend of a Marine."

"Same thing as here," Gibbs told them. "Venus de Milo, plaster casting, bronze paint."

"Serial killer?" Korsak asked.

"Don't like the sound of that at all," Jane said. "Let's find out what the hell's going on here. We can sort out jurisdiction later."

TO BE CONTINUED

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rizzles & kibbs
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