

## Episode 6

### 16 / Explosion

The chilly breeze whipped Sandra’s auburn hair about her face as she stood on the sidewalk. The sky above was clear, cloudless, and blue. Pedestrians jostled her as they hurried past on the busy sidewalk.

Still holding Henry McAllen’s cell phone in her hand, Sandra hailed a taxi. When the yellow vehicle pulled up, she tossed her digital audio recorder into the back seat and slid in.

“Where to?” asked the cab driver.

“Uh, Avenue of the Americas,” Sandra said. “1200 block.”

The distant wail of a police siren caught her attention. Already here she thought. Turning to look through the back window of the cab, she thought she could see the flashing red and blue lights. Other cars were trying to move out of the way, but with the level of traffic, it would still take a minute for the police to get to the church.

Sandra focused on Henry’s cell phone. Pulling up the outgoing call log, she saw that the last phone call out had been made early Tuesday morning. It was now Wednesday afternoon. Sandra thought Sandra as she scrolled through the call log. Henry usually had a lot of cell phone activity — at least eight to ten calls each day before Tuesday. Something was definitely wrong. She decided to call his wife and then the university to see if they had any information on him.

Sandra scrolled through the call log again and noticed which number Henry called most frequently and which number called him most frequently. Probably his wife guessed. She pressed the ‘call’ button and put the phone up to her ear.

She expected to hear a familiar ringing noise, but didn’t. Instead the phone hissed and grew hot against the side of her face. Jerking it down from her ear, she looked at the screen which had gone black. White numbers pulsed on the display.

9...8...7...6...

A countdown; a bomb someone had intended to take Henry’s life.

Sandra yelped and bit her lip as the phone suddenly seared her palm and started to smoke.

“Ma’am, are you alright?” the cab driver asked, glancing at her in the rear-view mirror.

5...4...

Panicking, Sandra fumbled with the back door of the cab,

“Hey, what are you doing?” the cab driver yelled.

3...2...

Shoving the back door open, Sandra threw the phone out into the street and silently prayed that no one would get hurt.

Half a second later, there was a loud bang. A blood-red fireball, followed by a plume of black smoke rose several feet into the air.

Pedestrians screamed and fled. Cars in the congested lanes swerved to get around the explosion. The cab driver suddenly swerved onto the sidewalk, barreling into a hot dog stand. Sandra lost her balance and bumped her head against the back of the front seat. As the cab driver struggled to get control of his vehicle and avoid hitting other cars and people, she could only think of how close she had come to dying.

### 17 / Intruders

Nehemiah Dunn quickly got back to work after his day-long trip to New Hampshire to see his dying father. Though his role as a sergeant usually kept him working long hours, he couldn’t stop thinking about the events that had taken place at Tongass. He also couldn’t stop looking over his shoulder, as Melanie had not gotten back to him on the identity of the men who had attacked them at the lighthouse.

At times, he felt the weight of everything that his father had told them. It made him think that he was a part of a much bigger plan — that great things were afoot, and that he was meant to play a role in them. At other times, he wanted to dismiss the idea of the Correction as a legend that only deserved to be read of in history books, not something he should have to bother with today. But despite his recurring reservations, each night since he had returned from New Hampshire, he pulled the dusty, fragile book from his upstairs study and pored over it. It was written in English, but many of the words were spelled different than any words he recognized, and the text was so worn, faded, and cluttered by fancy flourishes that he never got too far before his eyes began watering and he had to go to bed to be ready for the next day.

That morning, he had taken the safe with the book in it to work with him and showed it to one of his colleagues who worked in forensics.

“You should take it to a preservationist,” she said. “They will be able to tell you how old it is and maybe even where it originated from.”

“I think I know where it originated from,” Nehemiah said.

“Well, based on the date a preservationist gives you, you can find someone who specializes in that area of historical study and they will be able to help you decipher the contents.”

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Now, as he pulled the keys out of the ignition of his patrol car and headed up the walkway to the front door of his house, he had a plan of action — he needed to get in touch with a preservationist and a historian. He planned to look up that information after dinner.

Nehemiah put his key in the lock and turned it, then realized that the door was already unlocked. He sighed. He’ll have to get on Tonya and Cody again about leaving the door unlocked when they get home from school. Pushing the door open, he stepped inside and froze. Something was off. The silence bothered him. Usually when he came home, he could hear Tonya’s music blasting from her upstairs bedroom. Sure, he’d have to tell her to turn it down, but hearing that and knowing all was well was better than this silence.

Nehemiah quietly placed the safe down on the couch in the living room and walked quietly toward the kitchen. Sliced apples and bananas sat on paper towels on the dining room table. So, his kids had come home. But, where were they now? He turned and headed toward the stairs.

Before he could place his foot on the first step, a high-pitched voice called loudly, “Take one step up those stairs, mister, and I will shoot you.”

“Tonya?” Nehemiah said.

“Dad?” Tonya and Cody answered as they stepped into view at the top of the stairs. Their eyes were wide, and Tonya was holding the handgun Nehemiah kept in the top drawer in his bedroom.

“Hey, put that down!” Nehemiah said.

“Okay, okay,” Tonya answered quickly setting the gun down on the floor.

“Are they gone?” asked Cody peering down the stairs behind his father.

“Is who gone?”

“Those men who were searching the house.”

Nehemiah’s gut tightened as he jogged up the stairs and picked up his gun. “Tell me what happened.”

“I was upstairs doing my homework when Cody came in from the kitchen and said a truck had pulled up outside,” Tonya said. “When we looked out the window, we saw two men get out. They were wearing masks and they had guns. When they got to the front door, they started doing something to the lock. But, we didn’t wait and see.”

“I suggested we get your gun,” Cody said. “So we went to your room and got it, then we heard them coming up the stairs so we hid under the bed.”

“Did they come in the bedroom?” Nehemiah asked.

“Yeah, at least one of them did,” Tonya said. “We could see his feet from under the bed.”

“Tonya wanted to shoot him,” said Cody. “But I didn’t think that was a good idea.”

“No, it wouldn’t have been,” said Nehemiah. “But, you did good. You both did good.” He pulled his kids into a hug, and then the three of them went downstairs intending to inspect the damage. But, as soon as Nehemiah picked up the safe containing the book which he had taken with him that morning, he knew what the mysterious intruders had come for.

### 18 / One of the Thirteen

He turned his attention to the senior Senator who was sitting across from him at his desk. “If we could formulate the articles of the Correction into a bill and introduce it in the Senate and get our colleagues in the House to do the same, we could begin making major changes to America’s system of government. It would be a second Revolution — not one won by guns and blood, but by reason and dialogue,” Rory said. “As it is, with only the Constitution at our disposal, our hands are pretty much tied.”

The senior Senator tapped his expensive, gold-tipped cane against the carpet. He was dressed in a brown suit and had tufts of white hair on both sides of his head. His name was Gregory Pierce. “Like I was saying,” Gregory said, “before anything is done, you must find the original Correction. A copy is not good enough.”

“I don’t see why that is the case,” said Rory.

“Oh, it is very much the case,” said Gregory. “If the original Constitution were not preserved, we would never make progress as a nation. Someone would always be raising questions about whether the Constitution allowed for this or objected to that.”

“I see,” said Rory. “And what if the original has been lost?”

Gregory shrugged and spread out his palms. “Then, there’s nothing we can do.”

Rory Phillips cocked his head and eyed Gregory. “Are you sure you are one of the so-called ‘thirteen?’” he asked.

“I am certain,” Gregory said. “I have traced my family’s lineage all the way back to William Pierce, one of the original thirteen who helped draw up the Correction or so they say.”

“What made you do that?” Rory asked.

“When my father told me about this strange matter, I didn’t believe him. But he begged me to believe him and made me promise I would pass the knowledge down to my children as well,” Gregory said. “Before he died, I began to research my family’s lineage to see if we were somehow tied to the so-called founding fathers, or at least those who would have been founding fathers if they hadn’t left the Constitutional Convention early.”

“I see,” said Rory. He thought for a moment before continuing. “Do you believe the original document of the Correction still exists?”

“Why, of course I do.”

“Then, how do you propose that we find it?”

“I believe that there is one family among the thirteen families that holds the clue as to where the original might be.”

“You do?” said Rory, his eyes growing wide with anticipation.

“Yes.”

“And who might they be?” Rory said leaning eagerly across the desk.

A twinkle grew in Gregory’s eyes and a smile turned up the corners of his lips as he said, “I haven’t the slightest idea.”