

MANIFESTO

Episode 102

"Pure Wudder"

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ACT ONE

OVER BLACK - (JUNE 1995)

TED'S VOICE

*We tell ourselves that we're the
ones in control. They obey us.
Our technology. Our machines.*

We HEAR THEM before we see them -- the CLANKING of metal, the WHIRRING of gears, of hard drives. INSANELY LOUD, a whole aberrant SYMPHONY of MACHINES...

And then we're CLOSE ON:

THE TITLE PAGE OF THE MANIFESTO

*INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE
by FC*

A BANG as a FILTER slides in and suddenly the page is under BLACKLIGHT... A CRASH as the filter changes to UV... IR... RAKING LIGHT... BACKLIGHT... Filter after filter...

TED'S VOICE

*But what would you do without your
car? Your telephone? What if all
the airplanes just... stopped?*

The CAMERA LENS snaps photograph after photograph... Trying to comprehend the document under its machine-eye... The title page, magnified and refracted on a bank of TV MONITORS...

TED'S VOICE

*Ten years ago computers were
expensive toys. Today,
civilization as we know it would
fall apart without them.*

And we see we're in

INT. UTF - FORENSICS LAB (OAKLAND, CA - JUNE 1995)

In the basement of the UTF. Fluorescent-lit, glassed-in, sterile.

Gloved-and-gowned LAB TECHS work behind glass, anonymous, silent. Obeying prompts on the computers, on tele-screens, as

PAGE BY PAGE, the MANIFESTO is processed, picked apart... Submerged in chemical baths, STAMPS peeled away with forceps, test-tubed for DNA analysis. We see the fibers of the paper, individual typewritten letters magnified 10x, 100x, 1000x...

(CONTINUED)

The whole machinery of modern science, brought to bear on this one typewritten document.

TED'S VOICE

We live in terror of a blackout, a computer crash, car that won't start, phone that doesn't ring. So we construct our lives, our whole society, so that won't happen.

INT. UTF - HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE FORENSICS LAB

FITZ paces outside the glass, watching the pages move through the lab one... by... one...

INT. UTF - BASEMENT SERVER ROOM

Andy GENELLI works on the enormous MASSIVELY PARALLEL PROCESSOR (MPP) we saw him constructing in the pilot.

Genelli and his TECHIES climb through the forest of server racks, daisy-chaining wires and cables and fans... It's 1995 and this is clunky, complicated work.

TED'S VOICE

Everything revolves around THEIR needs, not ours. They buzz, we answer. They beep, we jump. So ask yourself: Who's really in control? You? Or them?

Then, for just a moment, we see

A NEWSPAPER MAILROOM

As the mailbag is dumped on the sorting table -- We don't understand why we're here yet and that's okay, for now it's just interns' hands sorting letters, flicking them into pigeonholes one after the other -- *shuk-shuk-shuk* --

And then for a moment we're at

LAX AIRPORT

As the people and cars and planes surge through the airport like ants, like blood cells... It seems associative at first, until we pick up

A SIGNATURE UNABOM PACKAGE as it drops onto a LUGGAGE BELT. We follow the package along the belt, into the AIR CARGO FACILITY...

(CONTINUED)

HANDS grab it from the belt and toss it into a BIN filled with OTHER PACKAGES -- most of which also look just like SIGNATURE UNABOM PACKAGES...

The bin is wheeled away into the bowels of the baggage facility... We see MORE PACKAGES flowing past on the belts... And meanwhile,

INT. UTF - FORENSICS LAB

The MACHINES CHURN ON...

INT. UTF - HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE FORENSICS LAB

Fitz paces. A hound with the scent, but he can't get through the glass. He pounces on COLE and Genelli as they pass by. Hounding them.

FITZ

We just got handed a 56-page Manifesto, written by the most elusive criminal in the world! A Manifesto so important to him that he's asking the Times and the Post to publish it! Everyone in this building should be reading it NOW.

COLE

We wait for forensics to finish.

FITZ

We have to read it. This is the big break in the case!

COLE

The big break in the case is when they pull a fingerprint off those pages. Or another 'Nathan R.' I'd rather they take all year and find one hair, just one! Because reading this dickhead's RANT? Gets us NOWHERE.

GENELLI

Well. "Dad it is I." He got that from reading.

COLE

Yeah, case friggin closed. We WAIT for forensics to finish. A month. A year. However long it takes.

Cole throws open the door to

A DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE

Where Postal Inspector BURKHARDT (40s, heavy) and some other USPS nerds are working at a whiteboard. A complex flowchart covers the entire board, labeled "POSTAL STREAM ANALYSIS".

TABBY is inside too, sitting on the table eating a Snickers, and staring at the boards in awe.

TABBY

Fitz, dude, you gotta check this out! It's friggin sweeeet.

Cole smirks, motions for Burkhardt to explain it to Fitz.

BURKHARDT

We analyzed the postal stream for the whole west coast. Found a couple of choke points. So if Unabom continues to drop his mail in the Bay Area, there's a ninety-five percent chance his next package will pass through just two sorting facilities. Meaning, we get those handlers and sorters trained to recognize a Unabom package? We could intercept every bomb en route. We'd never have to worry about a Unabom package again.

TABBY

Cool, right?

Fitz takes it in. He's impressed. More than that, he's intimidated.

FITZ

...Yeah. Wow. It's... Yeah.

COLE

Now tell me about "Dad it is I."

Cole gloats for a moment. Fitz starts to turn away in defeat. But then turns back. Rising to the challenge.

FITZ

"Dad it is I" tells us he likes puzzles. Word games. He thinks he's smarter than everyone else, that he can sneak that by everyone. He has trouble communicating normally, so he resorts to cyphers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FITZ (CONT'D)

And he's probably got father issues. That's from ONE PAGE. He just sent us fifty-six. See my point?

TABBY

Aw yeah! That's my partner right there.

Tabby slides off the table and joins Fitz in the doorway. Genelli nods, impressed. But Cole just shoves Fitz and Tabby out the door.

COLE

You'll get your pages. AFTER forensics is finished. Goodbye.

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - FITZ'S DESK - DAY

Tabby sits at her desk, looking at the "Dad it is I" letter. Shakes her head. Impressed.

TABBY

Daddy issues. That's a deep cut, dude. I can barely see "Dad it is I." Gotta like circle the letters.

FITZ

Between us? I used to do the same thing. I was a beat cop in my hometown P.D. Rinky-dink department and my Chief hated my guts. I was banished to graffiti detail for like five years.

TABBY

Jesus.

FITZ

I was watching my whole life being wasted and there was nothing I could do. So whenever I'd turn in a report, I started making the first letter of each paragraph spell out "Screw You," "You Suck," "F the Chief"...

Tabby stares at Fitz, open-mouthed.

TABBY

Fitz. That's weird. It's friggin cool. But it's WEIRD.

(then, realizing:)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TABBY (CONT'D)

... Wait, were you describing HIM
back there? Or yourself? Oh my
God, dude--

FITZ

HIM. I was describing him. And
please don't tell anyone. Please.

TABBY

Scout's honor. But -- you send me
a package, I will NOT open it.

Just then -- a flurry upstairs -- and Fitz turns to see Stan
Cole charge out of his office, yelling on the phone:

COLE

DON'T TOUCH IT!! Nobody touches
it, nobody enters or leaves the
room until we get there! Got it?
(to a SECRETARY:)
Get Genelli, tell him to meet me at
the Chronicle, NOW!

Cole blasts out the door.

INT. THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE MAILROOM - MINUTES LATER

A TYPEWRITTEN LETTER on the mailroom table. Genelli and Cole
stare down at it, grim. We can tell by their faces -- this
is NOT GOOD.

Genelli puts on latex gloves, uses forceps to get the letter
and envelope into clear plastic bags.

GENELLI

We're gonna need to fingerprint
you. You're the only one who
touched this?

The MAIL BOY nods. He's FREAKING OUT. J-school did not
prepare him for this. His hands shake as Cole fingerprints
him.

Genelli gets Ackerman on the phone. He holds the bagged
letter.

WE INTERCUT WITH INT. UTF - BULLPEN

GENELLI

You ready? It's bad.
(reading the letter:)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GENELLI (CONT'D)

"WARNING: The terrorist group FC, called unabomber by the FBI, is planning to blow up an airliner out of Los Angeles International Airport some time during the next six days. To prove that the writer of this letter knows something about FC, the first two digits of their identifying number are 55."

ACKERMAN goes pale. Holy shit. Genelli continues:

GENELLI

Is that number a match? What's the number he sent the Times?

Ackerman yells out into the bullpen:

ACKERMAN

What's the authentication number he sent to the Times?

Fitz grabs the relevant letter from his desk, calls it out:

FITZ

5-5-3-2-5-4-3-9-4!

ACKERMAN

(into phone:)

It's from him! Get back here NOW!

(to his SECRETARY:)

Get the Governor on the phone.
LAPD Commissioner. F.A.A. And Janet Reno. Get them at home if you have to. Make it clear -- we have a potential mass-casualty situation.

INT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

On the huge FLIGHT STATUS BOARD, every single flight flips to "DELAYED." SWAT TEAMS with RIFLES and K-9 UNITS flood the terminal as the whole airport GRINDS TO A HALT.

ON THE RUNWAYS: EVERY PLANE ROLLS TO A STOP.

IN THE TERMINAL BUILDINGS - LATER

We see the beginnings of AIRPORT SECURITY as we know it today. Endless lines of travelers being put through invasive searches... Scanners, pat-downs, dog-sniffs, soldiers with M16s... The whole machinery of ritual humiliation, control...

OUT ON THE RUNWAY

An indelible image -- every plane stopped in place, bellies open, workers unloading every scrap of luggage and cargo directly onto the runway. It looks like the planes have vomited their contents all over the tarmac.

BANKS OF TELEVISIONS

Repeat, refract, amplify the news:

REPORTERS

*Panic at LAX... / A new, deadly
threat from the elusive
Unabomber... / He almost brought
a plane down in 1979, and his craft
is exponentially better now...*

The echo chamber of the news, shouting from the TVs in LAX...

INT. UTF - CONFERENCE ROOM

And from the TVs in the conference room, where Ackerman's WAR CABINET is in session. Barking into phones and drawing up plans. A blueprint of LAX on the wall.

Cole considers the bagged ENVELOPE while he waits on hold.

COLE

Look at the return address.
"Frederick Benjamin Isaac Wood."
FBI Wood.

GENELLI

His idea of a joke.

COLE

"549 Wood Street, Woodlake, Ca."
I'm telling you, this "wood"
thing...

(then, coming off hold:)

Phil! Where are we on those
refraction-beam scanners?

Genelli sits in his chair. Looking at Unabom letter to the NY Times. The identification number: 553254394.

Genelli considers the number. Tries writing the numbers in a 3x3 grid. Nothing. Then tries it like a phone number: (553) 254-394_. Not enough digits. Then he lights up-- realizing--

INT. UTF - BASEMENT SERVER ROOM

Genelli gives the word and the MPP BOOTS UP. The whole thing THROBS and WHIRS, incredibly loud. Rows of lights blink on.

TECHIE

We're at about 30 percent. But the big databases are up and searchable: IRS, USPS...

GENELLI

Social Security?

Genelli holds up the paper where he's written: 553-25-4394.

With the dashes added, the Unabom identification number is suddenly a SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER.

The techie enters THE NUMBER into the search.

The MPP HUMS and WHIRRS around them. Genelli, awestruck, dwarfed by his own creation. Then, GREEN LIGHTS and results scroll on the screen. Genelli's eyes go wide.

GENELLI

Gadzooks...

A big dot-matrix printer starts CHURNING OUT PRINTOUTS.

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Cole and Genelli come running toward Fitz and Tabby.

GENELLI

Come on, we gotta go. Now! I think the computer found him!

FITZ

Found who?

GENELLI

HIM! We just found the Unabomber!

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. NATALIE'S CAR - PRE-DAWN [RAIN] (1997)

Fitz and NATALIE in her car. Natalie drives through the night. Dark country roads. RAIN. Fitz stares out the window. He still looks ragged -- a mountain man dragged back to town and unsure how he feels about it.

(CONTINUED)

NATALIE

You know, Fitz. Whatever this is you're dealing with, it didn't start two years ago. It didn't start with this case. It started a long time before Unabom. It must have.

FITZ

I know. But I just don't know when. When I started to feel so... Powerless, caged.

Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

That's what everyone feels. Everyone feels like that, all the time. "Pinned and wriggling against the wall." That's life.

FITZ

That's what I can't understand. Everyone feels that way. But what do they do about it? Nothing. We LIKE it. We like being crushed and powerless. Because somehow, freedom is more terrifying to us than slavery.

NATALIE

There's nothing TO do! That's life. You suck it up and you live.

FITZ

That's not living. That's sleepwalking. Eating trash and watching TV and working to become what other people think we should be... And nobody does anything about it. Nobody even tries. Nobody except for HIM.

NATALIE

Yes, Fitz. But he's EVIL.

Silence from Fitz.

NATALIE

He's EVIL, Fitz.

More silence from Fitz. Then Fitz points to the turnoff.

(CONTINUED)

FITZ
It's down here.

**EXT. FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION, DUBLIN, CALIFORNIA -
DAWN [RAIN] (1997)**

Barbed wire and searchlights and a miserable grey dawn.
Natalie pulls to a stop out front. Fitz gets out into the
rain. Starts for the entrance.

NATALIE
Wait! Listen, Fitz. You're not a
stray dog to me. You understand?

Beat. He looks at her through the car window.

NATALIE
I'm not looking for someone to take
care of. Some lost cause to nurse
back to health. That's not what
I'm looking for. You hear me?

FITZ
I know that. That's why I'm here.
I want to put this all right, make
it work. But I can't. Until I
figure this out. Until I look him
in the face.

A beat. She nods. Then watches him walk away. Toward the
huge prison gates. Into the darkness.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY (1995)**

A run-down strip mall on the outskirts of Sacramento. In the b.g., Cole and Tabby get out of their respective G-CARS. Genelli walks ahead with Fitz, explaining with a gearhead's pride:

GENELLI

Think about all the data the government has on its citizens. Addresses, employment, military, census... 100 years of data on 350 million people. But nobody's ever brought all that data together. That's why I built the MPP. Imagine if we collected everyone's phone records. Every book checked out of every library. Every web site, every e-mail. Pull it all into one big computer. We'll be able to see EVERYTHING! It'll be the end of crime.

COLE

(catching up)

Computers watching me jerk off.
Creeps me out, Genelli.

GENELLI

Well, we're not there yet anyway. But look -- FC's authentication number. Looks like a Social Security number, right? So I did a search. And it's a MATCH.

Genelli shoves the stack of printouts onto Fitz's arms.

GENELLI

Belongs to a guy named Allen Meeks. Forty-year-old white male. IRS data says machinist training but never had a real job. Then I crunched USPS data, look where Meeks lived the last thirty years.

FITZ

(reading the printouts:)

Oakland. San Fran. Salt Lake
City. Sacramento.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

FITZ (CONT'D)

All the key locations associated
with Unabom activity. Wow. Where
is he now?

GENELLI

Get this: he's ALREADY IN CUSTODY!
Sacramento P.D. picked him up four
hours ago on weapons possession.
It gets better: wanna know where
they arrested him?

Genelli stops. Indicates -- RIGHT HERE.

Fitz looks around, realizing -- they're right outside the now-
abandoned RENTECH COMPUTER RENTALS AND SERVICES. A
dilapidated box store. Signs fading. Fitz's jaw drops.

FITZ

Rentech. The site of the Hugh
Scrutton bomb.

GENELLI

Unabomber's first kill. Returning
to the scene of the crime. They're
pulling Meeks out of lockup, won't
be long. Thought we'd want to see
the place. Over there's where they
scraped Hugh Scrutton off the
pavement. What they didn't find
there, they found on the roof...

Genelli hands Fitz a DOSSIER on the bombing. Forensic
sheets, crime scene photos. As Fitz pages through it, he
finds himself drawn...

INT. RENTECH

The place is abandoned now, dark and dusty. The metal
shelves empty. But as Fitz reviews the documents, he starts
to SEE IT as it was in 1985.

INT./EXT. RENTECH - FEBRUARY 1985

Fluorescent lights flicker on, muzak plays. Fitz wanders
down an aisle, the shelves filled with bulky computer towers,
green-screen monitors, dot-matrix printers.

HUGH SCRUTTON, 30s, a harmless nerd, bagging yesterday's
trash. His two employees prep the store for the day.

One of them, HEIDI SHUMWAY (20s, too pretty to be working
here) looks up from the churning PHOTOCOPIER -- and, through
the window, sees a MAN IN A GREY HOODIE enter the lot.

(CONTINUED)

The man reaches into a white canvas bag, pulls out a PIECE OF LUMBER with NAILS sticking out. Carefully places the lumber down in the parking lot.

HEIDI

Hey Hugh! Come and look at what
this asshole is doing!

THE MAN hears -- turns. And for a moment, FITZ, now standing in HEIDI'S SPOT is face to face with THE UNABOMBER. Grey hoodie, sunglasses, moustache. For a moment, neither one knows what to do. Then he turns and RUNS OFF. Gone.

EXT. RENTECH - A MOMENT LATER

Scrutton rounds the corner, carrying two big trash bags to the dumpster. He sees the nail-studded lumber.

Scrutton kicks it with his foot and -- nothing happens. Huh. Must have been a dud.

He tosses the trash bags in the dumpster, then returns to the lumber and picks it up. And --

BOOOM! A white flash and a SHOWER of shrapnel and

Hugh stands there for a moment -- the whole front of his body SHREDDED. His arm missing. His face missing. He makes eye contact with FITZ, still staring out the big plate-glass window in Heidi's place. Hugh's mouth moves, trying to say something. Then he falls -- we hear Heidi's SCREAM -- as the blood pumps out onto the pavement. And then,

BACK IN JUNE 1995

Fitz crouches over the spot where Scrutton was killed. Where the Unabomber placed his bomb. He runs his fingers over the pavement, still scarred by shrapnel. Realizing:

GENELLI

He was coming back to the scene of
his first kill. Re-living it.
Savoring it.

FITZ

Like he never got to do in 1985.
Because of the eyewitness.

As Cole gets word on the car radio, SHOUTS:

COLE

Meeks is ready! Let's get over
there!

INT. SACRAMENTO COUNTY LOCKUP - OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Cole, Genelli, Fitz and Tabby gather behind the two-way glass as guards bring in MEEKS (40s). A hardscrabble man in an orange jumpsuit.

Cole points -- Meeks has a big tattoo on his forearm. It reads: "PURE WOOD." Cole chortles.

COLE

Read 'em and weep, Fitzie. We're looking at the Unabomber!

Fitz can't argue with that. But then, Meeks shifts in his seat. Revealing ANOTHER TATTOO: a knife drawing blood that spells "THICKER THEN WATER."

FITZ

T-H-E-N? It's not him.

COLE

It's a spelling mistake. So what. You get drunk, you get a tattoo--

FITZ

I don't remember a single spelling mistake in all those letters. Besides, does this guy look like the author of a 56-page Manifesto entitled "Industrial Society and Its Future"?

Genelli holds up a copy of the famous UNABOMBER SKETCH. Meeks is a DEAD RINGER for the sketch. It's uncanny.

GENELLI

He sure does to me.

INT. SACRAMENTO COUNTY LOCKUP - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Cole and Genelli sit across from Meeks. The others stand in the back. A show of force. Genelli nods to Meeks.

GENELLI

Pure Wood.

MEEKS

Pure Wood. One hundred percent. Who you guys?

GENELLI

"Frederick Benjamin Isaac Wood?" That's us.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GENELLI (CONT'D)

We came all the way here to get
your side of the story. Stopped at
Rentech along the way.

Meeks blinks. None of this is registering.

MEEKS

Uh.... Frederick Benjamin who?

GENELLI

Here's the thing. I don't think
you meant to kill anyone. You
wanted to send a message, scare
them, and it got a little out of
hand. You didn't know the power of
your own creations. You didn't
think it all the way through.

MEEKS

(starting to PANIC:)

I definitely didn't mean to kill
anybody. That's for damn sure!

GENELLI

I believe you. But these guys,
they don't. They're hard-asses.
So tell me how to stop LAX. Help
me help you.

MEEKS

What's LAX?

GENELLI

You're gonna make this hard for me?
I can make your life living hell--

MEEKS

I never meant to kill anyone! And
I can't take back what I did. But
I paid my debt to society.

GENELLI

Wait. Excuse me?

MEEKS

Eight years, Iowa State Pen. I
learned my lesson. Never drove
drunk again. I swear.

Genelli goes pale. Searching through his printouts.

GENELLI

And uh, which eight years was that?

OUT IN THE HALLWAY

Genelli pages through the files on Meeks. Furious.

GENELLI

Meeks was in jail for half the time
the Unabomer was active! How was
this not in his file?!

COLE

We pulled everything we could.
Cali, Federal. Don't you have Iowa
B.O.P. Records in your MPP?

GENELLI

They're programmed in COBOL!
Nobody's learned that in fifteen
years... It'll be months before we
can compile... Ahhh Jeeesus.

Genelli flips through his printouts. Losing his mind.

GENELLI

Look at all this. How could this
all be a big coincidence?!

BACK IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

Fitz and Tabby stand there awkwardly. They can hear Genelli
and Cole's raised voices in the hall. Fitz, making
conversation:

FITZ

What's "Pure Wood"?

MEEKS

Pure Aryan peckerwood. No nigger
blood in these veins.

FITZ

Thicker than wudder, huh?

MEEKS

Thicker than WHAT?

FITZ

(off the other arm)
Thicker than wudder.

MEEKS

"Wudder"?! Where the hell you
from, bruh? Y'all hear that?
"Wudder." Who talks like that?!

(CONTINUED)

Meeks guffaws. Making fun of Fitz's Philly accent. Fitz shakes his head. Christ.

Then, the DOOR opens and Genelli yells in:

GENELLI

Let's GO!

EXT. SACRAMENTO COUNTY LOCKUP - PARKING LOT - DAY

Genelli slams out the door and stalks off toward the car, sulking. The others slump out of the prison.

Tabby stares down at the Unabomber sketch. Shaking her head.

TABBY

It's insane. This is like Meeks's identical twin.

COLE

Hold up a sec.

Cole turns to a bush in the parking lot, unzips, and starts pissing mightily.

COLE

Just gotta "WUDDER" this tree here.

Cole guffaws. Fitz and Tabby recoil, move off.

FITZ

(practicing)
Wah-tur. Waah-tur.

TABBY

I like "wudder." It's cool. Part of who you are.

FITZ

Like, great, every time I open my mouth people can peg me as a Philly street kid, out of his depth.

TABBY

"Frooom West Philadelphia, born and raised..."

(when Fitz doesn't laugh)

Wait, you're not serious, are you?

COLE

Hey, Tabster, I got twelve inches of pure wood right here. Help me shake it off?

(CONTINUED)

TABBY

Jesus, Cole, don't make me puke.
Can we get out of here?

As they get into their G-Cars, Fitz catches a glimpse of a passenger plane passing overhead. And for a moment we see what's happening

ON THE LAX RUNWAY

Planes grounded, runway covered in cargo. Workers combing through thousands of bags. Everything shut down. Back to:

FITZ, STARING UP AT THE PLANE.

FITZ

With one little letter...

Shakes his head. In wonder. Then gets into the car with the others.

INT. UTF - FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Fitz comes down to the forensics lab. A NERDY LAB TECH (late 20s, African-American) sees him coming, and before Fitz can ask --

NERDY LAB TECH

It's out. You can read it.

The Nerdy Lab Tech hands him a thick typewritten report. Fitz looks at it.

FITZ

What is this?

NERDY LAB TECH

The forensics report. 300 pages to say "we found nothing."

FITZ

Not the report. The document. His Manifesto.

NERDY LAB TECH

(surprised)

Oh. Right. Nobody else wanted that.

The Lab Tech indicates a stack of photocopies of the Manifesto. Untouched. Fitz fumes.

INT. UTF - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Fitz bursts in, interrupting Genelli, Cole, and T-REX BENSON, and a few others. Fitz DROPS the copies of the Manifesto on the conference room table.

FITZ

For 18 years, the Unabomber's been trying to SAY something with his bombs. He sends them in the mail because he's trying to send a MESSAGE. Struggling to make himself understood. And now he lays it out, everything he's been trying to say for almost 20 years, in plain English. And you don't want to take the time to read it?!

COLE

You write us up a three-page synopsis, clean, no typos, we'll read that. We have a major airport SHUT DOWN.

INT. UTF - ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Ackerman on the phone. An agent comes running in with a TYPEWRITTEN PAGE IN A PLASTIC BAG --

AGENT

Look what just came in! New Unabom letter to the Times, last page--

ACKERMAN

Another letter?!
(grabs it, reads it--)
What the hell...
(into phone:)
Grey, I gotta go.

Ackerman slams the phone down, grabs the letter.

ACKERMAN

Is he jerking us around? Or what?
PATRICIA, get me Janet Reno!

INT. UTF - ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

Ackerman reads the letter to Janet Reno.

(CONTINUED)

ACKERMAN

"Note. Since the public has a short memory we decided to play one last prank to remind them who we are. But no, we haven't tried to plant a bomb on an airliner (recently)."

(listening)

Yes ma'am, "one last prank."...
Yes ma'am, it's authenticated, it's definitely from the Unabomber.
We'll come up with a recommendation.

Ackerman sinks down at his desk. The two letters in front of him. One's a bomb threat, the other says it's all a prank.

Head in his hands. The weight of the world on his shoulders. Doesn't know what to do.

He hears the vague noise of Fitz and Cole arguing in the conference room next door.

INT. UTF - CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

COLE

Personally, I think the whole Manifesto is a red herring. We're dealing with a dummy, an airline mechanic with a G.E.D., max. So he re-types someone else's essay to throw us off the scent, draw us down blind alleys. Distract us from the real leads.

FITZ

That's-- I don't even know how to--

The door bursts open and Ackerman charges in. Fitz pivots--

FITZ

Ackerman, sir, now that the Manifesto has cleared forensics-- I think it's imperative that all our top agents read it, immediately. We need all eyes on this document--

ACKERMAN

Stop. ENOUGH.

The room falls deathly silent. Everyone's sphincters tighten.

(CONTINUED)

ACKERMAN

The Unabomber has threatened to blow an airliner out of the sky. I got four senators and Janet Reno on my call sheet asking me whether to believe THIS LETTER where he says he's going to kill a few hundred innocent people, or THIS one where he says his bomb threat is a *prank*.

He holds up the two bagged letters. In front of Fitz.

ACKERMAN

So I'm not reading anything else. I'm reading THIS and THIS and trying to decide if LAX can stand down. And if I make the wrong call 200 people could be blown out of the sky. So if you have some light to shed on this, by all means, enlighten me, Fitz. If not? That's a stack of paper, and these are HUMAN LIVES.

Fitz stares at the letters. Silent, his cheeks burning. Because -- Ackerman's right.

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - FITZ'S DESK - DAY

Fitz returns to his desk. Chastened. Ashamed.

Tabby looks up from her copy of the Manifesto.

TABBY

Have you read this? Listen, "In modern society all that's required of you is OBEDIENCE." Isn't that exactly what--

Fitz holds up his hand to stop her.

FITZ

The Manifesto can wait.
Priorities.

Tabby, taken aback. Fitz holds up photocopies of the two letters -- the BOMB THREAT and the "PRANK."

FITZ

Bomb threat. Prank. Which one's the truth?

Tabby takes the letters. Looks at them. Shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

TABBY

...How could we possibly know that?

Fitz, at his desk. Staring down at the letters in front of him. He shakes his head. *No idea.*

END ACT THREE

James Fitzgerald

ACT FOUR**INT. UTF - DOWNSTAIRS OFFICE - LATE NIGHT**

Fitz flicks on the lights. The POSTAL STREAM ANALYSIS on the whiteboards. It's huge, brilliant, sophisticated.

Fitz takes it in. Feeling his own inadequacy.

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - FITZ'S DESK

Fitz, back at his desk. Alone in the bullpen.

Up above, the big bosses are in their offices, burning the midnight oil.

Fitz stands over his desk. The two letters in the center, the stacks of papers and documents on every side.

The TVs play CNN coverage of LAX.

Fitz, dwarfed by the ENORMITY of the task.

On one Unabom letter, he notices several X-OUTS -- the Unabomber, covering over his typos.

FITZ

"Clean, no typos..." Cole wouldn't be happy with this, FC.

Fitz grabs his mug, goes for more coffee. Then doubles back. Runs his finger along the X-outs. An intense garble of letters. Not just x-ing out mistakes. Obliterating them.

And Fitz remembers something. He flips through the binder from Rentech. Until he finds the forensics report.

Fitz runs his finger down until he finds it:

FITZ

"Excessive soldering"...

And something clicks.

INT. UTF - FORENSICS LAB - DOCUMENTS ARCHIVES

Fitz and the Nerdy Lab Tech from before look through all the originals of the Unabomber's correspondence. They're wearing gloves now. The only ones left in the lab.

(CONTINUED)

Fitz finds the Gelernter Letter, holds it up to the light. The X-outs are so intense that they've pounded right through the paper. Fitz smiles. He's on to something.

FITZ

Lemme ask you something. Rentech.
The notes said "excessive solder."
You know anything about that?

INT. UTF - FORENSICS LAB - EXPLOSIVE DEVICE ROOM

Fitz stares down into an archival box containing fragments of a bomb switch -- among them, some thick chunks of solder.

FITZ

Profilers talk about "signatures" versus "M.O." M.O. is everything necessary to complete the crime. Signatures are the extras, things he chose to do but didn't have to. Meaning they reveal psychology, character.

NERDY LAB TECH

(catching on, excited--)
Damn, like correcting the hell out of that letter.

FITZ

Yeah. Right. So, all this solder--

NERDY LAB TECH

Signature. Definitely.

FITZ

How do you know?

With a craftsman's pride, the Nerdy Lab Tech plunks a MOCK-UP OF THE RENTECH BOMB onto the table. Fitz startles -- it looks exactly like the real thing. Two planks glued together, studded with nails. Fitz whistles. Impressed.

NERDY LAB TECH

Just a mock-up. But it's an exact copy of what that bomb looked like before it blew.

The Nerdy Lab Tech opens the mock-bomb. Inside, the trigger mechanism, pipe, everything. Fitz, drawn to it. The disturbing, magnetic presence of what looks like a real bomb.

"FC" scribed on the pipe. Fitz traces the letters with his finger. Impressed.

(CONTINUED)

FITZ

His signature... You built this?

NERDY LAB TECH

Made a few others too. Bosses thought it was a waste of time, but I learned a lot doing it. Like the excess solder. He just flooded all the connections, like he was trying to hide them. And there's tons of extra epoxy too, at all the joints, that nobody ever reported. Totally unnecessary, he just slathered it on. Signatures, not M.O.

FITZ

He didn't want anyone to see the cracks.

The Lab Tech nods. His expression says-- "Finally someone gets it." A kindred spirit.

FITZ

What's your name?

NERDY LAB TECH

Ernie Esposito.

FITZ

I'm Fitz. I'm gonna buy you a coffee sometime, Ernie!

And Fitz is out the door -- a man on a mission --

INT. UTF - ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - FIRST THING IN THE MORNING

Fitz walks into Ackerman's office, bearing a thick, typed report. Hands it to Ackerman, Genelli, and Cole. Atonement.

FITZ

My analysis on the LAX bomb threat. Clean, no typos, lots of big words. Janet Reno can read it and she'll be impressed with you.

COLE

You're learning, grasshopper.

ACKERMAN

Bottom line?

(CONTINUED)

FITZ

In my opinion? It's a prank.
There's no bomb at LAX. FC cares
about his credibility. His
reputation. He's ashamed of his
mistakes, and tries to obliterate
them. He tries to hide all the
joints in his bombs, so we can't
see the work. He's obsessed with
presenting a perfect public image.

Ackerman accepts aspirin and coffee from his secretary.
Chugs them. Indicates for Fitz to continue.

FITZ

He wants to be seen as intelligent,
as logical, as superior. But it's
a fragile self-image. He's really
afraid that people will see his
flaws.

(beat)

The bomb threat services his need
for power. He enjoys making us
squirm. But his reputation is the
most important thing he has. He
would never give us the ammunition
to go to the press and hold up
something he wrote and say, "this
guy's untrustworthy, a liar, a
bloodthirsty lunatic lacking all
credibility who will say anything
to kill people."

(off the report)

This is all just my opinion. But
there's a lot to back it up,
including physical evidence, and I
stand by it.

A moment of heavy, serious silence. As Cole, Genelli, and
Ackerman flip through Fitz's report. Nodding.

COLE

Thing about Fitz, he's not a
b.s.'er. For better or for worse.

ACKERMAN

Thanks for this. We'll read it
now, pass it up the chain.

Cole claps Fitz on the back. Walks him out.

IN THE HALLWAY

COLE

See, you do what I tell you, you
get a gold star. A little
obedience is all it takes.

FITZ

I think FC says that in the
Manifesto, too.

Cole chuckles, heads back into Ackerman's office.

COLE

Put that in your three-page
summary! 'Leadership Tips from the
Unabomber.'

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - FITZ'S DESK - DAY

Fitz PLUNKS a copy of the Manifesto down onto the desk in
front of Tabby. Plunks a copy down in front of himself.
They hit the desktop with a BANG.

FITZ

Okay. Now we dig in.

ON THE COVER PAGE:

INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY AND ITS FUTURE
By FC

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. UTF - BREAK ROOM - THE NEXT DAY**

Fitz gets a cup of coffee without looking up from the Manifesto in his hands. Utterly absorbed in it.

Walks back to his desk, blind and deaf to everything else but the Manifesto.

INT. UTF - BULLPEN - FITZ'S DESK - DAY

Fitz finds Tabby, ASLEEP over the open Manifesto. He shakes her awake. Plunks a coffee down in front of her.

FITZ

NOBODY else is going to read this.
It's on you and on me.

TABBY

I know. I'm trying. But dude, I'm barely hacking it at the University of Phoenix. There are like ENDNOTES in this sucker.

FITZ

For now, big picture. He's been trying to say something with his bombs. To send a message. So-- what's the message?

Tabby stares helplessly down at the pages in front of her. Then rises to the challenge. Starts in:

TABBY

Okay. Uh, technology sucks. And we are basically screwed. Opening line: "The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race." It was supposed to set us free, but it doesn't.

TABBY

Like the car thing! Cars are invented, seems like we'll all suddenly be free to go wherever we want. But then basically it becomes MANDATORY to have a car.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TABBY (CONT'D)

And then every city and all of society is pretty much rearranged around cars, until you can't even buy food without driving somewhere. They're forced on us. We're no longer free to NOT have a car -- we aren't even free to drive fast when we're in a rush or slowly when we want to chill out.

FITZ

Exactly. So instead of becoming more free, we become more limited, more constrained. TV seemed harmless -- and then they flipped it around, put CCTV cameras everywhere, and turned it into a tool for watching everyone, all the time. Computers will do the same thing soon. Pagers, cell phones even. Every one of them, it's forced on us, and WE have to do what's best for IT. We started in charge, but now we're slaves of our own technology.

TABBY

You know what? It's kinda true.

He searches in the Manifesto until he finds the quote:

FITZ

"Human beings are being permanently reduced to engineered products and mere cogs in the social machine. Deprived of dignity, autonomy, and freedom." The only option available to us is OBEDIENCE.

TABBY

Jesus. It's like he knows what it's like to work in the UTF.

She's joking but she's serious. Fitz flips through until he finds the paragraph.

FITZ

We're being turned into CAGED RATS--

And as we hear them talking, working it out, we CUT TO:

INT. FCI DUBLIN (APRIL 1997)

Fitz descends into the depths of the maximum-security federal prison.

Fitz winds his way through the endless, degrading rituals to get inside. Wanded. Scanned. Patted down. Buzzed through airlocks. Searched again. ID'd, registered into a computer. Photographed. Badged. Watched and recorded on a hundred video screens.

FITZ (V.O. FROM 1995)
*Distracted from the maze by the
meaningless cheese we're running
after -- status, promotion, money,
nicer cars, bigger houses, more
TVs... Blasted with entertainment,
adjusted with therapy and Prozac...
Until you don't even WANT to be
free anymore. Or, if you can't be
adjusted? If you refuse to be
reduced to a cog?*

Fitz descending into the very heart of the prison.

FITZ (V.O. FROM 1995)
The psych ward. Or -- prison.

Doors SLAM closed behind him.

INT. FCI DUBLIN - PRISON MEETING ROOM (1997)

Repurposed as the FBI's and the prosecution's staging area. Packed with FBI agents and with document boxes. Some old faces are there -- Ackerman, Cole, Genelli, PRENTISS.

Fitz pushes open the door and steps in. A stunned silence falls. They all stare at Fitz like he's a leper, or ghost.

FITZ (V.O. FROM 1995)
*And the only alternative, the only
hope for us? The only way to break
free? Is to blow the whole thing
up.*

Prentiss and Fitz share a look. Prentiss nods. He knew Fitz would come. That he couldn't stay away. And we CUT TO:

A SQUARE OF LUCID BLUE SKY. (1997)

A tiny black bird perched on a swaying pine branch. Pecking at a tiny pine cone. And then,

(CONTINUED)

TED KACZYNSKI

Watching the bird with gentle delight. Feeling the morning sun on his face, the cool breeze. He makes little "pee-wit" noises. The bird cocks his head, responds.

Then, we start zooming out -- revealing that the tiny square of sky is hemmed in on all sides by razor wire, chickenwire, electric fences... And by brick walls, cement pillars...

And finally, the BARS on the window because we're in

INT. FCI DUBLIN - TED'S JAIL CELL - MORNING

The place looks like a library -- papers stacked high, table covered in correspondence. Ted, the gentle librarian despite his orange jumpsuit. Whistling bird calls.

Maybe we were expecting Hannibal Lector, or a raving mad scientist. But Ted has a pleasant Midwestern accent and the manner of a genial small-town math teacher. Ted turns to see

JUDY CLARKE (40s) coming down the hall. Ted's defense attorney. Jeans, floppy hair, an androgynous schoolmarm vibe. Carrying an armload of case files.

Ted's whistling changes to HAPPY BIRTHDAY. He proudly holds up a BIRTHDAY CARD featuring a cartoon BIG-EYED PUPPY.

Judy smiles, embarrassed, as a GUARD lets her in Ted's cell.

JUDY CLARKE

How'd you know?! Where'd you even find a card like this?

TED

Oh, I have my ways. I'm a pretty resourceful guy.

A twinkle in his eye. Judy Clarke smiles, shakes her head. Hiding a twinge of discomfort as she opens the card to see the long, handwritten note inside. Then, to business:

JUDY CLARKE

Ted. As your lawyer and your friend, I'm advising you. You should not go into that room, on camera, with an FBI agent. Especially without me.

TED

Agent Fitzgerald and I are talking about *personal* things. That's all.

(CONTINUED)

The guard approaches. Ted stands. Judy assents. Resigned.

JUDY CLARKE

Just be careful. Okay, Ted? And don't be afraid to ask for me, if you need me. I'm here for you.

Her hand on his arm. For a fraction of a second Ted FREEZES, a 14-year-old boy being touched by his crush. Then he smiles, turns to the cell door as it BUZZES open.

INT. FCI DUBLIN - PRISON OBSERVATION ROOM (1997)

Monitors show the live video feed of the interrogation room.

The other agents hang back in silence. Fitz steps to the monitors. Staring at the live video feed as Ted is led in, sat at the table, uncuffed.

Ted looks up at the video camera. Fitz stares back.

Cole comes up behind Fitz, whispering urgently --

COLE

We need this guilty plea so badly. He could turn this trial into a media circus-- Just read our psychological assessment so you know what you're getting into here--

FITZ

Psych assessment? Do you have any idea how well I know this man?

PRENTISS (O.S.)

Yeah, but Fitz: He knows you, too.

Fitz turns. His old mentor, sitting there in the shadows. Prentiss waves the others off. Waits until they're alone, then takes Fitz by the shoulders. The old coach, talking to his boxer in the corner.

PRENTISS

Listen, Fitz. I think Ted asked for you because he recognized a kindred spirit. Play into that. Make him feel smart, understood, sympathized with. Build the connection, but stay opaque. Don't give him too much. He's gonna be probing you for weakness the whole time, looking for anything he can use against us.

(CONTINUED)

Fitz nods. His game face on. The guard pokes his head in.

GUARD
Prisoner's ready.

PRENTISS
Get him talking, build connection,
and then start steering around to
the guilty plea. You're trying to
help him, trying to save him from
the electric chair. You're his
only friend. Do it gently, don't
spook him--but get him there. OK?

Prentiss claps Fitz's shoulders, sends him into the ring.

Fitz pushes through the doors. Into

INT. FCI DUBLIN - INTERROGATION ROOM (1997)

Ted looks up. Watching as Fitz steps to the table.

The two men take each other in. Face to face at last.

TED
Agent Fitzgerald? I'm so glad to
make your acquaintance. At last.

Fitz comes to the table. Sits across from Ted.

And off Ted's cryptic smile, we CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**INT. FCI DUBLIN - INTERROGATION ROOM (1997)**

Ted and Fitz, sitting across from each other. A silent beat, the two men just inspecting each other.

Then Fitz indicates the prison they're sitting in. Like -- how did you end up in this shithole?

Ted looks around the dank interrogation room philosophically.

TED

Most people take their cage with them wherever they go. As long as I feel disgusted by this place, I know I'm still alive. Still free. In here.

Ted taps his head. Fitz considers him a moment. Then asks the question that brought him here:

FITZ

Why me?

TED

Why you? You wrote the document that put me in here.

FITZ

The document that put you in here? You wrote yourself.

Ted has a response, but decides to table it. For now.

TED

I'm becoming very familiar with your work. The product of great... imagination. What I really appreciate about you-- most people take language for granted. The cage of our thoughts, they don't even consider it. But you saw it differently. That's the first step toward becoming free. A shift in perspective.

(beat)

"Manifesto." I never liked that moniker, you know. Makes it sound... unconsidered. And you and I understand the power of words better than most.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TED (CONT'D)

"Manifesto" versus "article."
"Insanity" versus "enlightenment."
"Mental breakdown" versus
"temporary leave without pay."

Fitz tries to hide his own surprise -- but that one landed.

TED

You've had a... change of life
circumstances. Since your work on
the Unabom case. Am I wrong?

FITZ

Yeah. I have.

TED

Because of what I allegedly wrote?

FITZ

...Because of what you wrote. Yes.

Ted takes this in. Satisfaction on his face. That's all any
author wants, after all. Ted pulls his chair closer.

TED

Just between us -- what was the
moment that it all clicked?

Fitz glances up at the cameras. Knowing that the people
watching are willing him to say nothing. Ted, sensing this,
offers something first:

TED

For me, it all started when I was
living in Chicago. One day this
mockingbird starts singing in my
back yard. That puffed-up
confidence, just belting out his
song. And I realize -- this
mockingbird is singing the CAR
ALARM. You know the one: *Beep-
beep-beep...neenur-neenur-
neenur... mnnrp-mnnrp-mnnrp...whoop-
whoop...* I sat listening to that
poor stupid bird for an hour
straight. Thinking... how wrong
that was. It stuck with me. I
kept coming back to it. Trying to
figure out where the world went
wrong, that it ended up HERE.

Fitz gets it, on a deep level. He considers Ted for a long
moment. Glances at the mirror. And then -- *Fuck it.*

(CONTINUED)

FITZ

For me? The moment it clicked? It was the part about DRIVING.

Ted smiles. Nods. An author's pride.

FITZ

Every time I got into the car, I thought about it. And the more I drove, the more it started making sense. Then, there was this one night --

As Fitz continues, we SEE the night he's describing:

A STREET OUTSIDE SAN FRANCISCO - LATE AT NIGHT (JUNE 1995)

The streets are completely empty. Fitz, the only car on the road, stopped at an intersection. Staring at the RED LIGHT.

FITZ (V.O.)

I was coming home from work. And there's nobody on the road, I mean NOBODY. And I'm sitting there at a red light. For no reason. And I'm waiting and waiting as all the lights click through and there's no other cars anywhere. But still I sat there. And obeyed.

Another car pulls up across the empty intersection from Fitz. The driver's face blank, obedient. Neither he nor Fitz even considers going. They just sit there. Pointlessly obeying.

FITZ (V.O.)

And that's when I realized: it's not really about technology, about the machines. It's about what they're doing to our hearts. Our hearts are no longer free.

Fitz waits. Waits. The light clicks to green, and he obediently GOES.

BACK IN THE FCI DUBLIN - INTERROGATION ROOM (1997)

TED

You wanted to be free. To have human dignity, autonomy. Everyone wants that. They want it so badly they're dying by the thousands every day, just trying to salvage their humanity.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TED (CONT'D)

Think about this: more people died from suicide in just the time we've been talking here than I allegedly killed in my whole career. More people died from their antidepressants... from plastic surgery! Think about that! So why is the whole world terrified of ME? Why are these people so desperate to prove that I'm crazy?

(gesturing at the CAMERAS)

Because they know I'm RIGHT. And they're terrified that they might wake up, too, and have to turn off their TVs and put away their cell phones and video games and FACE THEMSELVES. The way you and I did.

That hangs out there like an extended hand. Fitz, after a long moment:

FITZ

You and I... Yeah. You and I.

And the way he says it, he means--he and Ted are a TEAM. Ted gives a slight smile. Fitz sees an opportunity and goes in:

FITZ

Ted. I came here because I believe in what you wrote. You asked me here because you need an ally. To help keep you alive, so you can spread your message. So you can change things, really change things. I've gone through all your options. And a guilty plea is--

Ted pushes back from the table. Disappointed. Miffed.

TED

I was enjoying this. I can talk about "my options" with any one of those Barbary Apes watching through the camera. I thought you were better than that.

Ted just shakes his head. And walks to the door.

TED

Next time you might bring some stamps and some writing paper.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TED (CONT'D)

They're so stingy here and I have
so much correspondence, it's really
quite overwhelming.

And then the guards come and Ted's gone.

ON THE GRAINY B&W VIDEO FEED

Fitz, alone in the locked room. And off this, we cut to:

A MOCKINGBIRD

Singing the CAR ALARM from atop a telephone pole.

*Beep-beeep-beeep...neenur-neenur-neenur...mnnrp-mnnrp-
mnnrp...whoop-whoop...*

INT. FITZ'S EFFICIENCY APARTMENT - NIGHT (1995)

Still trashed from 101. Fitz talks with Ellie on the phone.
He's not listening. He's reading THE MANIFESTO as she talks.

ELLIE'S VOICE

When would be a good time for you?
I already talked to Ken about
taking the days, Nancy can cover
for me, Mom will watch the boys.
So just tell me when to buy tickets
and get those bread bowls ready.

FITZ

Um, right. Great. Sorry, what? I
missed something.

ELLIE'S VOICE

...Why don't you call me back.
When I won't be just talking to
myself.

FITZ

No, I'm listening! I am. I just
got... Yeah, your visit--

Ellie HANGS UP. Fitz turns right back to the Manifesto.
Drawn deep into it. And we get the eerie sense that this is
everything he needs...

OUT ON HIS APARTMENT BALCONY - LATER

The whole matrix of roads, lights, traffic signs.

A single car, the only one on the road. Not moving. Stopped
at a red light.

(CONTINUED)

Waiting. Waiting. The longest red light in the world.

Then, finally, the driver gives up. And speeds right through the red light. Off into the night.

Fitz watches. Sees a PLANE overhead. Flashing lights and a dim contrail. Which takes us to --

INT. UTF - ACKERMAN'S OFFICE - EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

Cole grabs Fitz in the hall, pulls him into Ackerman's office. Inside, Ackerman and Genelli are hunched over the SPEAKERPHONE. Cole points to the speaker, mouths "RENO."

JANET RENO (SPEAKERPHONE)
*We've looked at the FAA reports,
LAPD and Airport briefings, and
read the material S.A.C. Ackerman
sent.*

Ackerman points to Fitz -- mouths "YOUR material."

Fitz sits up. Gulps. Oh God. HIS material. They're all looking at him. Waiting on Reno's word from on high.

JANET RENO (SPEAKERPHONE)
*Based on what we've seen, AG's
office is good to sign off on re-
opening LAX. How about you, Bill?*

FAA CHIEF (SPEAKERPHONE)
F.A.A. is good with that.

POLICE CHIEF (SPEAKERPHONE)
*LAPD here. We're going to confirm
that from our end. I'll get the
green light to flight control.*

Ackerman reaches out and squeezes Fitz's shoulder.

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
*Flight control. I see the green
light here, good to re-open
runways. First planes should be up
momentarily.*

ACKERMAN
*This is Ackerman, can I stay on
with you, Flight Control?*

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
Affirmative, Ackerman.

Genelli mutes the line, turns to Ackerman.

GENELLI

Unabom device that almost blew up
American flight 444 was triggered
by an altimeter. Set to explode
when the plane hit 20,000 feet.

Ackerman nods. Grim.

Over the speakerphone, lots of indistinct airport chatter as
the planes start to taxi, take off.

Then, we hear FLIGHT CONTROL updating:

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
American Flight 7 is airborne.

The four men are leaning on the desk around the speakerphone.
The tension is unbearable.

Fitz is being crushed under the burden. His hands clenched,
white. Sinking down into a chair, his whole body rigid.
Barely breathing as the other planes get airborne:

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
*United 732, airborne. TWA one
niner niner, airborne. KLM two
zero six.*

BACK IN ACKERMAN'S OFFICE

The men barely breathe as the planes report in, all jumbled
and overlapping:

PILOT 1 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*This is American flight 7,
we're climbing to 15,000
feet.*

PILOT 2 (SPEAKERPHONE)
...climbing to 20,000...

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
Check in, Uniform seven?

PILOT 3 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*...we're approaching
10,000...*

PILOT 4 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*KLM two zero six, we're
climbing now, 18,000 feet...*

PILOT 1 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*American Flight 7, we're at
25,000.... Reaching cruising
altitude now.*

PILOT 2 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*...20,000... Continuing on
our flight path...*

PILOT 1 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*... And we're all clear.
All clear.*

PILOT 3 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*We're at 30,000. Nothing to
report, over.*

(CONTINUED)

PILOT 4 (SPEAKERPHONE)
*20... 22,000... Okay, KLM two zero
six, at cruising altitude. All
clear here. Over.*

LAX FLIGHT CONTROL (SPEAKERPHONE)
*All clear, all clear. You hear
that, Ackerman? We're all clear.*

The agents collapse in somber relief.

ACKERMAN
Loud and clear. Thank God.

Fitz just hides his face in his hands. Catching his breath. The feeling isn't elation. Instead, a horrible nauseating realization that he's gotten in way, way over his head.

Ackerman sits next to Fitz. His hand on the back of Fitz's neck. Paternal. He understands Fitz's feeling.

ACKERMAN
You made the right call.

FITZ
I shouldn't have-- I mean, all those people on those planes-- Based on what? On some letters... Some glue... It was...

ACKERMAN
But it was the right call.

Fitz looks at Ackerman. A silent acknowledgement between them. Newfound respect, in both directions.

ACKERMAN
You really think you can get something good out of the Manifesto? Something worthwhile?

FITZ
Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

ACKERMAN
Okay. I'm giving you an office. A team if you want it.

Fitz leans back. Rubs at his face. Exhales. Still coming down off the emotional roller coaster.

(CONTINUED)

FITZ
Maybe you'll even read the
Manifesto now?

ACKERMAN
(laughing)
I will. We all will. I actually
tried to already.
(as Cole scoffs)
I did! But... I wish he'd just say
what he means. Endnotes, those
dense sentences... It's like, who
writes like this?

And on Fitz's face -- a sudden idea. His mind churning...

ACKERMAN
What?

FITZ
Who writes like this?

ACKERMAN
Yeah, that's what I-- What is it?
Fitz?

The light spreads on Fitz's face. An epiphany.

Fitz leaps up and is out the door. The chiefs all watching
him go in astonishment. And then a moment later --

INT. UTF - AN EMPTY BASEMENT OFFICE

Fitz writes in huge letters on a whiteboard -- *W U D D E R*.

He turns to Tabby, who's in the doorway, carrying file boxes
of her stuff into their new office. Ernie, the nerdy lab
tech, right behind her. On the team now too.

They look at Fitz for an explanation. In response, Fitz
underlines WUDDER.

FITZ
When I say "wudder" you learn
everything about me. Philly, blue
collar, local schools, never left
Pennsylvania. Right? Or when you
say "bruh," you can only be from
San Francisco.
(holds up the Manifesto)
What if there's a "wudder" in here?
Or a "bruh"?

(CONTINUED)

TABBY

I mean.... How would we even start
to look for that?

FITZ

I don't know. Read it again?

TABBY

And then what?

(off his look)

Oh boy. Get some coffee on, bruh.

Fitz grins. And then we CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE

James Fitzgerald