APPENDICES

SUMMARY

Israeli counterintelligence wrote the defensive playbook. They told us what to look for. They used pragmatic observation and psychological insight and came up with a list of behavioral indicators. I learned the list from an Israeli army captain twenty years ago. He swore by it. Therefore I swore by it too, because at the time I was on three weeks’ detached duty mostly about a yard from his shoulder, in Israel itself, in Jerusalem, on the West Bank, in the Lebanon, sometimes in Syria, sometimes in Jordan, on buses, in stores, on crowded sidewalks. I kept my eyes moving and my mind running free down the bullet points. Twenty years later I still know the list. And my eyes still move. Pure habit. The list is twelve points long if you’re looking at a male suspect. Eleven, if you’re looking at a woman. The difference is a fresh shave. Male bombers take off their beards. I was riding the subway, in New York City. The 6 train, the Lexington Avenue local, heading uptown, two o’clock in the morning. I had gotten on at Bleecker Street from the south end of the platform into a car that was empty except for five people. Subway cars feel small and intimate when they’re full. When they’re empty they feel vast and cavernous and lonely. At night their lights feel hotter and brighter, even though they’re the same lights they use in the day. They’re all the lights there are. I was sprawled on a two-person bench north of the end doors on the track side of the car. The other five passengers were all south of me on the long bench seats, in profile, side on, far from each other, staring blankly across the width of the car, three on the left and two on the right.
The car’s number was 7622. I once rode eight stops on the 6 train next to a crazy person who talked about the car we were in with the same kind of enthusiasm that most men reserve for sports or women. Therefore I knew that car number 7622 was an R142A model, the newest on the New York system, built by Kawasaki in Kobe, Japan, shipped over, trucked to the 207th Street yards, craned onto the tracks, towed down to 180th Street and tested. I knew it could run two hundred thousand miles without major attention. I knew its automated announcement system gave instructions in a man’s voice and information in a woman’s, which was claimed to be a coincidence but was really because the transportation chiefs believed such a division of labor was psychologically compelling. I knew the voices came from Bloomberg TV, but years before Mike became mayor. I knew there were six hundred R142As on the tracks and that each one was a fraction over 51 feet long and a little more than eight feet wide. I knew that the no-cab unit like we had been in then and I was in now had been designed to carry a maximum of forty people seated and up to 148 standing. The crazy person had been clear on all that data. I could see for myself that the car’s seats were blue plastic, the same shade as a late summer sky or a British Air Force uniform. I could see that its wall panels were molded from graffiti-resistant fiberglass. I could see its twin strips of advertisements running away from me where the wall panels met the roof. I could see a police notice advising me: If you see something, say something.
Next up was a man on the other side, maybe four feet further down the car he was all alone on his own eight-person bench. He could have been from the Balkans, or the Black Sea. Dark hair, lined skin. He was sinewy, worn down by work and weather. He had his feet planted and he was leaning forward with his elbows on his knees. Not asleep, but close to it. Suspended animation, marking time, rocking with the movements of the train. He was about fifty, dressed in clothes far too young for him. Baggy jeans that reached only his calves, and an oversized NBA shirt with a player’s name on it that I didn’t recognize.

Third up was a woman who might have been West African. She was on the left, south of the center doors. Tired, inert, her black skin made dusty and gray by fatigue and the lights. She was wearing a colorful batik dress with a matching square of cloth tied over her hair. Her eyes were closed. I know New York reasonably well. I call myself a citizen of the world and New York the capital of the world, so I can make sense of the city the same way a Brit knows London or a Frenchman knows Paris. I’m familiar but not intimate with its habits. But it was an easy guess that any three people like these already seated on a late-night northbound 6 train south of Bleecker were office cleaners heading home from evening shifts around City Hall, or restaurant service workers from Chinatown or Little Italy. They were probably set for Hunts Point in the Bronx, or maybe all the way up to Pelham Bay, ready for short fitful sleeps before more long days. The fifth was a man. He was maybe my age, wedged at forty-five degrees on the two-person bench diagonally opposite me, all the way across and down the length of the car. He was dressed casually but not cheaply. Chinos, and a golf shirt. He
was awake. His eyes were fixed somewhere in front of him. Their focus changed and narrowed constantly, like he was alert and speculating. They reminded me of a ballplayer’s eyes. They had a certain canny, calculating shrewdness in them.

She was seated on the right side of the car, all alone on the farther eight-person bench, across from and about halfway between the exhausted West African woman and the guy with the ballplayer’s eyes. She was white and probably in her forties. She was plain. She had black hair, neatly but unstylishly cut and too uniformly dark to be natural. She was dressed all in black. I could see her fairly well.

According to Israeli counterintelligence I was looking at a suicide bomber.

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