



Screen Treatment

Cyberwars

— David Knight Goes To Moscow

by Avraham Shama

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Genre: Fiction (reality-inspired), Spy Thriller, Cross-culture Romance.

Logline: *Jason Bourne* (movie series, 2002-2016, Matt Damon) meets *The Courier* (2021, Benedict Cumberbatch)

Cyberwars: David Knight Goes to Moscow is the story of a New York University Professor who breaks down when his university and his wife fire him in 1999. He moves to the Southwest to find himself, but instead, he falls in love with a young Latina and is hired by the CIA to spy on Russia's economy. In Moscow, he accidentally discovers that Russia is planning a cyberattack on his beloved country. He won't let that happen. David saves his country and, in the process, connects with himself.

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Reviewer Comments:

“A thriller reminiscent of Cold War Novels.”

— Don Morgan

“This novel has everything: espionage, double agents, romance, and the great Southwest. Shama knows the story he is telling. He's lived it.”

— Rob Spiegel

“An excellent character study. Highly recommended.”

— Kathy Grassel

“An extraordinary transformation of David Knight from failed economist to superspy.”

— Jane MacNeil

“David Knight is a new kind of intelligence agent. Who knew an economist could be a hero!”

— Greg Lauer

Protagonists:

David Knight: A young, brilliant NYU economics professor, David plays by the rules but has zero experience in espionage. He is about to be promoted, when NYU and his wife fire him, resulting in his nervous breakdown. David moves to Albuquerque to rebuild himself, but instead, falls in love, and the CIA hires him to spy on Russia’s economy. In Moscow, he is constantly under surveillance and his translator, Alexa Abratova, seduces him. He doesn’t know how to handle these situations and is interrogated by the Russian Security Service (FSB) at the Lubyanka Prison. Nevertheless, David obtains critical information about Russia’s plan to mount a cyberattack on the US. David mobilizes a U.S. counter-effort and, in the process, is transformed from a mild professor to a warrior, who saves his country from the claws of the Russian Bear.

Toni Chavez: Toni is a young Latina. She grows up in the small, Hispanic community of Antonito, north of Santa Fe. As a child, she makes a painful transition from her Spanish heritage to a novel Anglo culture that paves her future. Toni has just taken her first job at UNM, where she meets David Knight and falls in love with him. She is an unintended trailblazer: first in her family to go to college, first Latina professor at UNM’s Political Science department. To Alexa, Toni looks like the cheap Chechen women of Moscow; to David she is the real love of his new life in the Southwest.

Laura Johnson: A specialist on Russia at the CIA. A graduate of an all-women-college, she is shy and quiet. Her looks blend in the crowd and no one would ever suspect she is an Agency person. She is married and has one child. Laura recruits and handles David to spy on Russia’s economy.

Richard Baker: Richard is the Deputy Director of the CIA. He has been dedicated to his country ever since joining the Agency upon graduating from MIT. Richard is quiet, impeccably dressed, all business. When David tells him about the Russian threat, Richard initiates a counter-effort: a national Digital Information Program — DIP. David sees Richard as a role model.

Michael McDonald: Mid 40s. Mike has the deceptive appearance of a playboy, but he is smart and good at his craft. We meet him as a Sandia scientist who is invited by David to help with Alexa’s research. He is an antidote to Alexa. We later learn that he works for the Agency and is onto Alexa the spy from the moment she arrives in the US. Mike helps David apprehend Alexa, and turns her into a US spy.

Antagonists:

Alexa Abratova: Alexa is a tall Russian beauty with grey eyes and porcelain skin, recruited to spy on David Knight and his country. She is a New Russian: open, ambitious, and pragmatic. She is married to Sergei, fifteen years her senior but dreams of a life in America. Alexa works at The Academy of the National Economy, hosting David. She is David's translator. She knows men and enters the US through David's pants. After arriving in the US, she breaks into the Albuquerque nuclear lab of Sandia to steal secrets, where David apprehends her. She agrees to spy for the US.

Yevgeny Turgov: Yevgeny is an old-school communist. He is the assistant to the Academy Rector, but everyone knows he is a leading member of the Communist Party, keeping tabs on everything. Yevgeny is charming, well-dressed, but his eyes are those of a trained killer, his muscular build ready to pounce. Yevgeny is unhappy with the widespread poverty brought by the economic restructuring. He expects the new Prime Minister, **Vladimir Putin, to make Russia great again.** Yevgeny fumes with anger upon learning that David had access to Sasha, the nuclear scientist. He and his assistants take him to Lubyanka prison.

Igor and Oleg: They are Yevgeny's young assistants. They force Alexa to give them information about David's moves. Later, they introduce her to Tolya Ivanov from the Russian Security Service (FSB), who recruits Alexa to spy for Russia.

Tolya: Smooth, persuasive, and young. He is a high-ranking officer in the FSB. He recruits Alexa to spy for him in the US and instructs her movements from Moscow.

Dmitry: He interrogates David at the Lubyanka prison because Yevgeny believes David had gotten secret information from Sasha Pachenko. Dmitry has a complete dossier on David, including David's past indiscretions, sex with Alexa, and his travel to meetings in Washington D.C. He does not press charges when David tells him his grandmother is Russian. Dmitry tells David: "You're one of us; You have the Russian blood of your grandmother. Later, Dmitry calls upon David in the US to help Mother Russia.

Other Individuals in the Story:

Sasha Pachenko: A washed-out Russian scientist with a Ph.D. in nuclear physics, who works in the secret city of Chelyabinsk. He is now taking management courses at the Academy in Moscow, Sasha is developing the use of big data that could destroy Russia's enemies, including the US. He seeks David's help to move to America in return for helping the US against the Russian cyberthreat.

Dr. and Mrs. Michael Knight: David's parents. Michael is an MD, his wife Lena is a homemaker. David is their only child. They invest heavily in David's private education to secure him a good career. They feel disappointed when David gets fired by NYU and divorced by his wife and leave him alone. But when David publishes his work on the Russian economy, they fly to visit him in New Mexico and meet his Latina girlfriend, Toni.

Robert Geller: Bob is David's colleague and biggest supporter. He is Shrewd, practical, and direct. Bob comes from a working Jewish background in the Bronx, not far from where David is fed with a silver spoon. When the NYU president fires David, Bob advises David to

“sue that prick.” A year later, he works hard to help NYU rehire David and bring him back to New York City.

Dr. Harry Browns: He is the new NYU president and a specialist on Russia in the last job of his career. His firing of David triggers David’s nervous breakdown. When David publishes his work and presents it at NYU a year later, Browns asks to meet him. He realizes he made a mistake and wants to rehire David. It turns out that years earlier Browns too spied on the Russian economy for the US.

Gertrud Badyava: She is the Rector of The Academy of The National Economy hosting David’s visit. Pleasant, cheerful, and supportive, she convinces David to begin a faculty exchange program between the Academy and his university. The program becomes a reality. Alexa is one of two visitors to UNM in spring, 2000.

Sergei Abratov: He is Alexa’s husband and works as an economist at a public institute. He is old Russia: set in his ways and prefers the predictability of socialism. When David first meets him, he thinks Sergei is Alexa’s father. The two men drink frozen vodka and compare life in Russia and America. Sergei says: “Socialism is social, capitalism is capital.”

Larissa: Mid-60s. An ordinary Russian who turns her tiny apartment into a Bed and Breakfast to make ends meet. David is her first guest. She does not speak English. When Larissa opens the door, he asks her “Is this a hotel?” she says “Da, Hilton!” Larissa calls a teenage neighbor to translate. She tells him she was widowed several years earlier. The childless couple collected oil paintings bartering with painters. Larissa regards the paintings as her children. She tells David: “I don’t care if I am hungry; so long as I have my paintings I am happy.” Larissa then shows him her one-bedroom apartment with only one bed in it!

Raul and Maria Chavez: They are Toni’s parents and live in a small but cozy home in the small Hispanic village of Antonito, north of Santa Fe. Raul and Maria are proud of their four children and of their Spanish heritage, which they trace back 500 years to Spain. They run a convenience store in the village center. The store is a social center of the village as well as a place of commerce.

Locations/Settings:

Albuquerque (movie Mecca), NM: The University of New Mexico, David’s Adobe home, Toni’s home, Toni’s parents’ home in Antonito, Los Cuates restaurant, the Frontier restaurant, Tijeras, the foothills.

Moscow, Russia: The airport, Ukraine Hotel, Academy of The National Economy (like a university setting), inside Moscow lobby of residential apartment towers and two apartments, the usual tourist sites for background.

New York City, NY: NYU faculty housing (near Washington Square), NYU president’s office, David’s parents’ home in White Plains.

Langley, VA: Inside two CIA conference rooms.

Santa Fe, NM: La Fonda Hotel’s bar, Santa Fe Plaza.

Inside a plane: On Lufthansa flight to Moscow.

Act 1-The Set Up

David Knight Becomes a US spy in Russia.

1.1. On a Lufthansa flight from Munich to Moscow, October 1999: The plane is full of Germans celebrating Oktoberfest. The bratwursts and beer are flowing freely, and the mood sky-high. The man sitting next to David tells him he is going to Moscow to open another dental clinic. “There is a lot of money in bad Russian teeth,” he chuckles. “It’s like a gold mine, the more you drill the more money comes out.” When he asks David about the purpose of his visit, David says “I’m interested in the Russian economy,” and closes his eyes, pretending to sleep.

1.2. Flashbacks.

I. NYC: A Few Months Earlier: A Saturday morning knock on David’s apartment door wakes him. The mailman at the door has a special delivery for him. It is a letter terminating his employment at the NYU because his research on the Russian economy “failed to gain traction.” David’s world is upended. He played by the rules, attended the best private universities, and received a doctorate in economics from the University of Chicago. To make things worse, his wife Elizabeth had recently divorced him. He experiences a nervous breakdown and decides to take a job at the University of New Mexico in the high desert of the Southwest. His NYU colleague and supporter, Robert Geller, tells him to sue, but he doesn’t.

II. In David’s New Office at UNM: David is unpacking his books. An unexpected phone call from a stranger named Laura Johnson invites him to present his work on the Russian economy to her colleagues in Washington D.C. — the same work that got him fired from NYU. He disconnects because he doesn’t want to be reminded of his failed NY life. She calls back, tells him she believes in his work, and convinces him to come to D.C.

III. At a conference room at CIA headquarters in Langley, VA: David is hired as a consultant by a CIA dummy company and signs a Non-Disclosure Agreement. “You Are a university professor doing research on your own. A lone wolf,” Laura says.

1.3. Moscow airport, passport control line, around midnight.

It is cold and the line moves very slowly. David is tired and nervous. He is pulled for questioning because the dates on his visa are incorrect. He begins sweating, his head hurts, and his heart beats as fast as a racing car for a reason: he gained his visa by pretending he is an IBM person coming to attend a computer software conference. Luckily, he is released and runs out to hail a cab to the Ukraine Hotel.

1.4. David wakes up to a cold, grey morning.

He has a list of people to contact, arranged for him before leaving the US. The first name is from The Academy Of The National Economy. Being questioned at the airport the night before still weighs on his nerves.

1.5. Breakfast at the Ukraine Hotel.

David goes downstairs to the hotel’s restaurant. He is told there is no more food left, not even coffee. He offers a handheld calculator to the waiter and gets service. Of course, he still had to pay for breakfast, but no coffee was left. David feels sluggish.

Act 2-The Conflict

David Knight discovers Russia is planning an attack on his country.

2.1. In the Ukraine Hotel, after breakfast.

Alexa Abratova, David's translator, comes to pick him up with the Academy limousine. She is a Russian beauty with a plan of her own. When he sees the waiting limo with a chauffeur, David is sure there is a mistake. With all that has happened at the airport the night before, he feels as if he is in a James Bond movie.

2.2. Coffee in the Rector's office at the Academy.

The thick, black Russian coffee wakes David up. He is treated as a VIP by the Academy's Rector, Gertrude Badyava. She welcomes him, offers Alexa and the limo for all his research meetings, tells him he is welcome to stay at the Academy hotel, and proposes a faculty exchange program with his university, UNM. He is baffled by the proposal as he has no authority on such issues, but he accepts and is off to his first real meeting.

2.3. Comrade Yevgeny Turgov.

Yevgeny is the Academy's deputy to the Rector, but everyone knows he is the Communist Party representative spying on them. He has the eyes of a killer and the body of a ruthless animal. Yevgeny thinks foreigners like David are not Russia's friends. He is charming and forceful like a mafioso and is disgusted with Russia's market economy.

"Are you a spy for Bill Clinton?" Yevgeny asks David during the interview. David laughs nervously. "You must be joking," he retorts, but deep down he regrets becoming a spy. *I'm not cut out for this kind of work*, he thinks. He is sure Yevgeny will be following him.

2.4. Vodka is cheaper than water.

David's interviews continue. In one of them, outside the Academy, the business manager demands a bottle of vodka for the interview, because "Everything is better with vodka." When the limo stops at the market for David to buy a bottle, he discovers that vodka is much cheaper than water. *No wonder many Russians drink vodka more than water*, he thinks.

2.4. Dinner and more with Alexa and Sergei.

A day later Alexa invites David for dinner to meet her husband, Sergei, an economist at a state institute, in their small apartment. He almost passes out breathing the sharp scent of urine and vodka cocktail in the lobby of Alexa's building. Over frozen vodka in the living room, Sergei tells David that "Socialism is social and Capitalism is capital," and that is why he likes the old Russia. David tells Sergei he likes the civil liberties that come with capitalism.

After dinner, Alexa accompanies David to his metro ride to the Ukraine Hotel. She invites herself to his room and seduces him. He suspects she is the honeypot of the Russian security services and decides never to let this happen again. A few days later, it did: She gives him a blow job amid the Russian perfume of urine and vodka in the lobby of an apartment tower in her neighborhood. David knows that in return she wants an invitation to visit his university as part of the faculty exchange program. David feels guilty about those encounters; they make him think of his girlfriend, Toni, back in Albuquerque.

2.5. Flashback.

David and Toni have dinner before he leaves for Moscow. David is new to Albuquerque. He teaches his classes and goes back to his oven-hot, rented small adobe house. He wants to repair his life from his failures in New York, but he is bored, the heat is driving him crazy, and he craves company, someone to talk to. He picks up the phone and invites Toni for dinner. They decide on Los Cuates. He picks her up. As she enters his car, he realizes he may have made a mistake because she is dressed for a date — a low-cut neckline, hair newly cut and streaked, expensive perfume. During dinner, they hit it off. David gets initiated to hot and spicy New Mexican food, washed down with several salty margaritas, which she enjoys as well. They end up in her bed savoring each other. A secret romance starts between the two and they fall in love, despite their age and ethnic differences, and David's determination not to get involved.

2.6. David returns to the U.S

Having completed his scheduled interviews a few days later, David returns to the New Mexico. Toni brings pizza to David's house where they discuss his trip and hers to see friends in her hometown. After David falls asleep Toni reflects on their first meeting at the beginning of the semester. David spends the next few days hiking in the foothills and writing his report for the Agency. A few days later Laura contacts him about his trip and he mails her the report. Two weeks later Laura calls again, having read his report, asking that he go to Moscow again to collect information on the defense sector.

2.7. Russian Bed and Breakfast.

David books the B&B to witness Russian life. When he asks to be taken there by the Academy Limo, Alexa's expression sours. Not a good neighborhood, she says. The place is a small, one-bedroom apartment on the 9th floor of a building whose lobby had a rancid odor. The woman who opens the door asks "America?" "Yes," David says, feeling relief he is in the right place. She is tall, dressed in a colorful duster, and has a big smile matched by large glasses. She does not speak English. "Me Larissa, she says, smiling. "Me David," he responds. Larissa calls a neighbor's daughter to translate. Larissa is a radiologist who works at a state hospital. She makes little money and turns her apartment into a B&B to make ends meet. David is shown the tiny apartment where he is supposed to have a bed. He is flabbergasted to see there is only one bed in the apartment. He is invited to have coffee with the two, and dinner with them and the translator's family in Larissa's tiny kitchen. David is impressed by how friendly, open and warm they are. *My grandmother was right, he thinks, Russians are indeed good people.*

2.8. Stress builds up as David's interviews continue.

David meets with the Academy's Rector to discuss progress on the cooperation agreement with UNM. He asks to meet with representatives from the automobile and defense sectors. David is increasingly careful about what he says and where he goes. He examines every word before he lets it out of his mouth. Doesn't take notes during his meetings, but summarizes them afterward in his hotel. He knows he is on Yevgeny's radar.

On the weekend Alexa and Sergei take him to see The Pushkin Museum, Red Square, etc., and they dine at a Georgian restaurant followed by coffee at their apartment. Alexa walks David to the Metro station but on route she gives him a blowjob.

2.9. The interview that changed everything.

David meets Sasha Pachenko, a nuclear scientist from the top-secret Chelyabinsk Institute. The Institute is tucked in the Ural Mountains, the way Los Alamos National Laboratory is hidden in New Mexico. Sasha is at the Academy attending a management development program.

David and Alexa enter a small conference room and meet Sasha. Sasha reminds David of LANL nuclear scientists. He has a long, skinny figure, receding hairline, a distant gaze of one not fully present, and several pens clipped onto his shirt pocket. After brief introductions, Sasha says he does not need a translator and Alexa leaves. David explains that he is looking for different perspectives on the Russian economy, and Sasha agrees to participate on the condition that David keeps everything confidential and does not take notes. "Speaking to you can get me in a lot of trouble," he says. David agrees. As he gets closer to Sasha for a handshake, he detects a faint scent of vodka on Sasha's breath. He starts with simple questions and moves to the sensitive: "How are you and your group at the Institute are dealing with all the changes of the past year?" Sasha tells him that he and his co-workers have not been paid for six months. "Some scientists are selling portable nuclear bombs to other countries to make money for groceries," Sasha tells David he is in Moscow to raise funds for his new project on Big Data from Moscow bureaucrats. "What Is that?" David asks. Sasha explains that it is the processing of vast amounts of information by powerful computers to identify useful trends that are not visible otherwise. "I see. So what?" asks the economist. Sasha is annoyed. He explains that the use of big data gives a country a few extra warning moments before an enemy's nuclear attack, and it can be used in cyberspace to disrupt all aspects of the life of other nations, and even help elect their leaders. David finds this hard to believe. "Do you mean to tell me that Russia can elect the US president using cybertechnology?" David is still trying to digest Sasha's words. "Yes, of course," Sasha says matter-of-factly and adds, "You see, David, in cyberspace computers are tanks, and keystrokes are bombs and bullets." Sasha boasts that the new President Vladimir Putin is investing in dozens of cyberspace technologies.

Now David fully understands that Putin is gearing up for a new war against his country. He is enraged and is determined not to let it happen. *I must save the country from the Russian Bear*, he promises himself.

2.10. Alexa is recruited by the FSB

Alexa receives a visit from two FSB officers who called themselves Igor and Oleg who quiz her on David's activities and she begins to provide them with information. Then one afternoon she the two FSB men visit her in her office along with Tolya, a more senior FSB officer how completes her recruitment as an agent with the promise that he will have her sent to the USA.

2.11 The Threat Reported

Having returned to the US, David sends Laura a report of his visit. She calls and he flies to D.C. for another conference at CIA's Langley HQ. There he reports his observations and concerns to a larger team of CIA staff. David returns to Albuquerque and on Thanksgiving Day travels with Toni to Antonito to meet her family.

David is told that UNM has prepared a proposal for cooperation with the Russian Academy. Soon after he returns to Langley to meet with Deputy Director Richard Baker to discuss his findings and discussions with Sasha Pachenko. David is invited to join a new taskforce to address the cyberthreat.

2.12. D.C. and Moscow at Christmas

With the semester over, David travels to D.C. for the establishment of the Digital Intelligence Program (DIP). As he is due to return to Moscow to finalize the Cooperative program, David offers to try to contact Sasha Pachenko (the Scientist) again.

Having secured the UNM's Provost's signature on the Cooperation program document, flies to a snow-covered Moscow where a guest at the Academy's hotel. He meets with Rector Badyava giving her the agreement to review. He asks that his schedule be clear that afternoon for a second visit to the Pushkin Museum.

2.13. David is followed during his Pushkin Museum visit.

With time to kill, he visits the museum, full of impressionist paintings. Spirit high, he floats in a dance in the empty exhibition room, when he suddenly spots a man's reflection in the window looking at him. He had seen him before at the Academy. David has no idea or training on how to get rid of him. Somehow, he makes it back to his room at the Academy hotel. Upon entering his room, David realizes it had been searched. Now there is no question he is in danger, but he does not know what to do. David is on his own, as Laura had told him. He feels scared, helpless, and unable to fall asleep. He has one more interview to complete the next day and he is home free.

2.14. Sasha opens up and an agreement is signed2.16. David is interrogated and accused of espionage.

That night, David is taken from his room at the Academy hotel by Yevgeny and his assistants for questioning at the infamous Lubyanka prison. The interrogator, Dmitry, accuses David of being an American spy who meets Sasha to get Russian nuclear secrets. David denies the accusation. No matter what tactic Dmitry uses, he is unable to pin anything on David. Dmitry changes tactics.

Dmitry asks David about his impressions of Russians. David responds that Russians are warm and friendly people, just like "my Moscow-born grandmother told me." Dmitry lets David go, but tells him, "You have our Russian blood in you. Remember, Once Russian Always Russian." David leaves Moscow to the U.S. with mixed feelings. His urgent goal is to tell his CIA contacts about the Russian cyberthreat.

2.17. David and Toni go to Kauai

On his return to New Mexico, David asks Toni to go to Kauai for a break. She agrees. While on the relaxing vacation, David thinks he sees a man following him. He thinks he sees the same man board their plane back to Albuquerque.

2.18. David updates Langley.

Back at UNM, David calls Laura and requests a meeting to discuss his meeting with the Scientist. A week later he updates the DIP team on the Russian's funding big data and internet technologies. This is followed by a one-on-one with Richard where he expresses his deeper fears about the situation.

2.19. The Russians arrive.

In early March, Alexa and Vladimir Timoshenko arrive in Albuquerque. It had snowed that day. David collects them from the airport and takes to their accommodation. Next day the snow is gone and David gives them the tour of the UNM campus and arranges their schedules. Alexa wants to meet scientists at the LANL.

Act 3-The Resolution

3.1. Countering the Russian threat.

David receives an email from Sasha Pachenko who is at the Los Alamos Lab in a party of Russian visitors, he wants to meet. David requests an urgent meeting with his CIA handlers — Laura, Richard, and his people. He lays out the scope and the depth of the Russian threat. They are alarmed by it and start a Digital Information Program — DIP, as a counter. Richard and David go to brief Robert Thompson — Richard's college buddy from the National Security Agency — because they feel the counter-effort should include other agencies, a much larger budget, and be a multi-year program. Robert already knew.

3.2. Alexa makes her move.

Alexa joins David at the University where she meets Dr. Michael McDonald a Sandia scientist who she is determined to seduce. He seems to be interested in her and after lunch they retire to her apartment where her plan comes to pass. Michael casual drops some information about developments at the lab and agrees to Alexa's request to visit the Grand Canyon. Meanwhile, David is caught in a sand storm whilst jogging and is forced to seek shelter

3.3. David recruits Sasha.

Sasha calls David from LANL and asks to meet. In bar area of Santa Fe's La Fonda hotel, and later at his UNM office, David arranges for Sasha a visiting position at UNM to work on machine learning and assist with DIP to help the US. Sasha welcomes this opportunity. He recently discovered he was Jewish and therefore has little prospect for advancement in Russia. David makes a short notice trip to Langley.

Back in Albuquerque, Toni refuses to see David. Toni has had enough of David's sudden disappearances to attend "research meetings" in D.C. He is incommunicative and secretive. She confronts him and he tells her about his work for the Agency. She is frightened by this, and her love for him grows.

3.4. Alexa is apprehended and becomes an American spy.

David follows on his hunch that Alexa is a Russian spy. He brought her to UNM on the faculty exchange program that he instituted with the Academy. Later Mike McDonald invited her as a member of a Russian delegation to Sandia Lab. During a Sandia reception for the Russian visitors, David follows Alexa as she breaks into the office of the director of the Lab and apprehends her. He and Mike turn her to spy for the US.

3.5. David's research cover on Russia's economy is published.

He becomes an overnight celebrity. NYU, who fired him a year earlier, comes knocking, his parents visit him, and his romance with Toni continues to bloom. He feels vindicated, whole again.

3.6. Mother Russia needs David.

The two Russian thugs who have been following David for the past few months finally approach him. The two make their way to his table at Los Quates, as he is waiting for Toni and dinner to celebrate his lucky breaks. They tell him Dmitry says “Mother Russia needs your help.” They want David to meet someone for the details later in the week. David refuses, then realizes the double possibilities of the situation. David agrees, and the thugs leave. He decides to seek the advice of his mentor, Richard. He then sees Toni, the love of his life, entering the restaurant and is determined to have a nice dinner with her. “*Everything else can wait,*” he whispers to himself.

Epilogue:

At story’s end, David is transformed from a naive, broken professor to a warrior for his country. Even his name changes to Dave. Parts of this transformation include several successes and a few issues left open, possibly to be continued.

Successes:

- Dave saves his country from a Russian cyberinvasion.
- Alexa is apprehended and becomes a double agent for the US.
- Dave recruits Sasha to work on big data and machine learning.
- Dave becomes a celebrity after his work on Russia’s economy is published.
- NYU is to offer Dave a new job, after firing him earlier.
- Dave and Toni’s romance continues to bloom.
- Dave falls in love with the Southwest.

Open Issues:

- Dave agrees to meet someone about the needs of Mother Russia.
- Dave decides to discuss his options with Richard Baker.

About The Author Avraham (Avi) Shama



Avraham Shama's interest in Russia has led him to work on critical projects for The State Department, Sandia National Laboratories, and Los Alamos National Laboratory. He was also employed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, University of New Mexico, and the University of Texas.

Avi is an award-winning author. His writings have appeared in many publications, such as the Santa Fe Literary Review, The Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, and The Jerusalem Post, and were broadcast on the National Public Radio. He is also an Opinion Contributor for The Hill.

He has published five books and numerous articles. His book on Perestroika and his many papers about Russia's economic restructuring have become classics among readers around the globe. A consequence of this

restructuring has been the rise to power of Vladimir V. Putin, whose support of cyberweapons led to Russian cyberattacks on the presidential elections and on thousands of companies and institutions in the US since 2016.

Avi was born in Iraq and grew up in Israel. He lives and works in the US. He and his family reside in New Mexico.

Avi holds a B.A. degree in Economics and Political Science, an M.A. in Political Science, and an M.B.A. He has a Ph.D. degree from the Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University.