

This time, Zita had the drop on him. 855 wouldn't get away, and she'd finally have the confrontation she needed to have with him. Her heart pumped. A wave of goosebumps rippled up her skin as she thought about the man she was stalking. 855. More than just a killer. He was **an 'Artist of Murder.'** For him, it wasn't just about the killing, it was about what the murder scene looked like. The 'message' it sent.

Of course, that little detail was also why Zita didn't necessarily make 855 for these particular killings. A low-yield explosive device in a row-house in the D.C. suburbs didn't exactly scream 'assassin auteur.' It was too chaotic; too random. And yet... 855 had been seen in the D.C. area the night of the murders. And it was part of Zita's job to run down these types of leads. But standing there, ready to pay a social call on one of the most dangerous men in the world, Zita would have been lying if she'd said she wasn't seriously questioning her life choices.

Zita's employer, **Central Omnilytic**, had been engaged to investigate the murders of two major players in the intelligence community: Jay Phillips, Director of the National Intelligence Agency, and Ezekiel Calvin, his predecessor. Now, it is the official stance of the U.S. government that the N.I.A. was shut