



The Brainrush Series

Brainrush is a story about second chances, and embracing every day of your life as though it's your last. Called "a terrifically entertaining thriller" by Publishers Weekly, Book-1 of the series was named *The Wall Street Journal* #1 Bestselling Action/Adventure in their *Guide to Self-Published Big Sellers*, while Book-2 was on the Top-10 Amazon Mystery/Thriller Top Rated list for 53-straight weeks. This set the stage for the blockbuster release of the third book in the series, which was heralded by *Suspense Magazine* as "part science fiction, part thriller, part suspense,

part love story, and part mystery. It's got it all and that's what makes this novel one of the best." The characters live on in the final three books of the series. Books 4 & 5 were released in 2014, and were met with rave reviews. Book-5 was named "one of the best books of the year" by IndieReader.com. *No Refuge*, the final book of the series, is scheduled for release in 2017.

Back Cover Text

Smoke & Mirrors

(Brainrush 5)

In Amsterdam, a visionary scientist is laying the groundwork for a cybernetic life-extension project that will transfer individual consciousness to a personalized avatar. Halfway around the world, his brilliant grandson is secretly planning to use the same technology to infiltrate the world's most secure networks. But the scientific advances necessary to perfect the brain-to-computer interface are slow in coming, too slow for the aging founder of the Everlast foundation—who may die before realizing his dream of immortality—and too slow for his ruthless grandson, who will stop at nothing to attain the recognition that is his birthright.

Caught in the middle are Jake Bronson and his seven-year-old son, Alex, whose combined mental gifts might provide the key to leapfrogging the impasse.

When Jake's family and closest friends are simultaneously abducted in a globally coordinated kidnapping scheme, Jake is thrust into a frantic race that takes him from the canals of Amsterdam and the cobbled streets of Rome to the back alleys of Hong Kong and the South China jungles, where he must lever every scrap of his failing abilities to rescue his loved ones and crush a madman's plans to bring the world to its knees.

Smoke & Mirrors was formerly entitled *Ephemeral, a Brainrush Thriller*

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Dedication

For my daughter, Danielle, whose heartfelt words inspire me more than she'll ever know.

She wrote:

I'm so proud to call you my dad. You inspire me every day to be the best I can be, and there is not a day that goes by that I don't think about you or what you would do in a situation.

I love you!

Danielle

Smoke & Mirrors

Brainrush 5

Richard Bard

PART 1

“The flame that burns twice as bright burns half as long.”

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

Chapter 1

Hong Kong

10:00 a.m.

JIAOLONG RIPPED OFF his headset and glared at the man displayed on the central wall screen in the control room. Lin was beside him, gripping his arm. Sister Min stood directly in front of the screen, eyes fixed on the image, fists clenched at her sides.

“Enhancing,” lead engineer Pak said, manipulating the image from his panel. Sister Zhin hovered behind Pak, hands on her hips. Everyone else in the busy room had quieted. The enhancement software washed away extraneous pixels and new ones were interpolated into place. The image clarified, Pak rotated the figure and zoomed in on the face. There was no mistake. It was Jake Bronson. At the Hong Kong International airport.

A flash of conflicting emotions arose within Jiaolong. On the one hand, he was determined to bring pain to the man who’d murdered his parents and crushed his dreams of a new world. But on the other hand, he needed to keep the man safe until his unique abilities could be used to save his grandfather.

“What’s the time stamp?” Jiaolong asked.

“Fifteen minutes ago.”

“Dispatch teams to the airport immediately.”

“Already done,” Min said, storming between the rows of consoles to join Jiaolong and Lin.

“Listen to me!” Jiaolong said. Keyboards quieted and every person in the room looked his way. “This is priority one. We need to find him fast. I want eyes from every camera in and around the airport for a radius of five miles. We found him once, we’ll do so again. Also, tap into every system at the airport. Pierce every security level. I want to know where he flew in from, when he landed, who he traveled with, what bathrooms he used—everything! The order is simple. Locate and apprehend. Now!”

The team jumped into action faster than a cleaved beehive. Keyboards sang, orders were issued, and search programs streamed thousands of images across screens. The sight was like a salve for Jiaolong’s nerves.

“How did he know to come to Hong Kong?” Lin asked.

“He’s smart, remember?” Zhin said. “When his attempt to plant a tracker in Min’s purse didn’t work, he found another way.”

“Someone must be helping him,” Min said.

“Perhaps,” Jiaolong said.

“But who?” Lin asked. “And do you think he knows about this specific location?”

Jiaolong considered it. “It doesn’t matter. Our course is set, in any case. We simply have to move up the timetable.”

“You mean...” Lin’s voice trailed.

Zhin drew her lips into a thin line. “You’re right, of course.”

“Finally,” Min said.

“With luck, he’ll be in hand soon. So let’s arrange a little welcome for him.”

All three sisters nodded in unison.

“And set the charges,” he added. “We’ll leave after tonight’s tournament. It will be our final chance to get the information we need from TurboHacker the easy way. If it works, he’ll no longer be a threat and will suffer the same fate as the greens. Otherwise, we’ll take him with us and allow sister Min to squeeze it out of him.”

Min smiled at the prospect.

“One way or another,” he said, “TurboHacker’s secrets will be ours.”

Chapter 2

Hong Kong International Airport

JAKE WAS AMAZED at Lacey's transformation. It wasn't just the bun wig, glasses, and sagging synthetic skin added to her face. It was the way she held herself, with her shoulders slumped as if carrying a hidden burden. Padding under her slacks and sweater completed the image. The beautiful actress who turned heads had been replaced by a retired schoolteacher, who sat across from him in a shadowed alcove of a restaurant at the Hong Kong International Airport, sipping a cup of tea.

Between weather delays, missing their connecting flight, and making the arrangements to get everything organized here in Hong Kong, it had taken them over a day to get here. But everything was set and all they could do now was sit and wait.

"How'd you do it?" he asked. "It looked so real on the video. Your entire face was on fire."

"I was scared to death," Lacey said. "Pete's crew modified the stunt car so that the passenger seat flipped back on a spring hinge. There was an escape hole cut in the floorboard beneath it. The trick was making sure that the car stopped directly over the manhole cover. Fortunately, I wasn't actually driving. Pete's guys handled it with remote controls."

"It looked like the car was hauling butt when it hit the wall."

"Yeah, the impact was the worst part. But the specialized air bags did the trick." She rubbed her sternum. "For the most part, anyway. After that, it was all about scrambling through the escape hole into the sewer while Skylar climbed up to take my place. The car was filled with smoke to hide our movements. One of Pete's guys was waiting to help me down the ladder and replace the manhole cover. In the meantime, Skylar set herself on fire and tumbled out the driver's seat."

"It looked so damn real," he said. The edge of his false mustache itched. Jake was wearing the same facial disguise he'd used before, over cargo slacks and linen sport coat.

"Like Pete said, smoke 'n' mirrors. I owe him and Sky my life."

The four of them had cleared customs forty-five minutes ago. Pete and Skylar had taken off to hook up with their local contacts who were waiting at the arrivals curbs, while Jake and Lacey

had headed for the concourse restaurant where they were now seated. Since they'd all traveled separately on the plane, this was the first time he and Lacey had a moment together alone.

"We're lucky to have them," Jake said, casually scanning the restaurant entrance for any sign of the teams that he knew would be searching for him after the performance he'd staged shortly after they landed.

She nodded, exhaling a slow breath. Her gaze turned out the window toward the pressing metropolis stretching into the distance, the surrounding ring of mist-covered mountains forcing the harbor city to grow upward rather than outward, reminding Jake that Hong Kong was one of the most densely populated cities in the world, with twenty-five percent more skyscrapers than New York City.

"Do you really think he's out there?" she asked.

The question hung for a moment, fueling his own doubts, and he wondered if he'd led them halfway around the world for nothing. He was still crafting his reply when he spotted two young Asian men rush into the restaurant, both wearing all-too-familiar glasses. They moved past the protesting hostess, splitting up like wolves on the prowl as they wound their way around either side of the room, scanning the guests.

Jake fought the urge to turn away, instead stuffing a French fry into his mouth as he eased the tension from his face.

They're looking for Jake Bronson, not a bespectacled older man with a bulky nose, mustache, glasses, and baseball cap.

"Stay cool," he said as he chewed. "We've got company."

Lacey shifted into her role as if a director had shouted, "Action!"

"It's so wonderful to be here," she said, beaming. "It's one thing to read about it, but to finally get a chance to experience the excitement firsthand..."

As she continued Jake tuned her out, nodding intermittently as he savored several more fries, dipping each into the circle of ketchup he'd poured on the side of his plate. He glanced up as one of the men approached their table and dismissed Jake as he hurried past. A few moments later, the man and his partner completed the circuit and were gone. Jake heaved a sigh of relief.

"It's happening," Lacey said, unable to hide her excitement.

"I think so," he said, the tiny hairs on the back of his neck bristling. He tapped a quick message into his cell phone.

It took two minutes before his phone finally vibrated with Pete's confirmation that the rest of team was in place. He pocketed the phone then laid several bills on the table. "That's our cue," he said. "You first. I'll follow."

Lacey rose, extended the handle of her roller bag, and made her way out of the restaurant with a shuffle that matched her elderly disguise. He hoisted his backpack and followed from a distance. It was late morning, the airport was packed with travelers, and he took care to maintain a clear sight line. He trailed her down the escalator to the baggage claim area, remaining inside as she strode through the exit and approached the row of cars lining the curb. That's when he spotted them, a pair of men standing outside observing the crowds through stylish eyewear. They had the same look and feel as the two who'd searched the restaurant, and for the first time since they'd landed, Jake felt a spark of hope that their plan might work.

Lacey brushed past the men and they never gave her a second glance. She waved toward the parked vehicles and Pete stepped out of a Honda minivan to greet her with a hug and usher her into the backseat. As Pete popped the rear hatch to stow her bag, Jake caught the casual nod he exchanged with a trio of helmeted motorcyclists parked on the island across the street.

Time to go to work.

Jake turned around and headed for the nearest restroom, his brain cataloging and dissecting the walls and ceilings of the return course he'd be making in the next few minutes. He marked two CCTV cameras at the exit and three more covering the corridor leading to the restroom.

Plenty.

Once inside, he locked himself in the nearest stall and hung his backpack on the wall hook. Like the rest of airport, the bathroom was clean, with modern facilities that included a noisemaking cyclone feature on the toilet, allowing users to create a cone of sound privacy when they did their business. He didn't need privacy now as he removed his cap, peeled off his disguise, and stuffed it all into his pack.

He unrolled a blue windbreaker and slipped it on over his linen jacket, just as he'd done earlier after they cleared customs. That's when he'd first jiggled the bait that he hoped would lure Geppetto's team to the airport. He'd removed his disguise then and made a point of walking past an array of CCTV cameras, hoping like hell his assumptions would hold true: If Geppetto had access to Interpol and counterterrorist agencies in Europe—not to mention triad groups in Los Angeles—then he certainly had access here in Hong Kong. So Jake had exposed his features, feeling naked as he imagined facial recognition software capturing every plane and angle on his face, worrying about being jumped by airport security. But every machine needed

time to warm up, even one with its claws dug into agencies around the globe, so when he'd ducked into a bathroom after ten nerve-wracking minutes to replace his disguise, no one had appeared the wiser.

That is, until a short while ago when the two scouts had shown up in the restaurant. The fact that law enforcement personnel hadn't accompanied them was a good sign. It suggested that Geppetto had his own operators close at hand, which was further confirmation that Jake and his team were on the right track. By now Geppetto's people likely had their eyes glued to the CCTV feeds, desperate to reacquire his position, so it shouldn't take long to set the hook.

He activated an application on his phone and stuffed it into the pocket of his cargo pants. Then he inserted a two-way communication bug in his ear. "How do you read?"

"Five by five," Pete said.

"Ready at the curb?" Jake asked.

"Let 'er rip," Skylar said.

Jake slung the backpack over his shoulders, exited the restroom, and walked tall as he merged with the gaggle of travelers making its way toward the exit.

Smile, you're on Candid Camera.

He was five paces from the street exit when he spotted the two men from the restaurant scrambling down the crowded escalator. One of them pointed in his direction, and for Jake it was like the gunshot at a track meet.

He sprinted out the exit just as the two scouts outside swiveled in his direction, reaching under their jackets. Jake lowered his shoulder and barreled through them, glancing off the larger of the two and sending the other man sprawling backward, his pistol clattering to the pavement. A woman screamed, a man shouted, and a police whistle sounded behind Jake. He barely missed a step as he hot-footed to the curb and dived into the open rear passenger door of a red taxi.

It lurched forward even before Jake slammed the door closed.

"You are one popular guy," Skylar snickered as she raced the car into the traffic lane.

He looked back to see all four of Geppetto's men jump into two separate sedans and start after them. The helmeted motorcyclists he'd seen earlier pulled into traffic behind them.

Hook, line, and sinker.

Chapter 3

Hong Kong

IT HADN'T TAKEN LONG for Jake and Skylar to lose their tails from the airport, especially when Pete's van intervened, "stalling" in the middle of an intersection to snarl traffic behind them. A pre-planned underground parking lot car switch had ensured that traffic cams would be of no use to Geppetto's people. They'd been forced to give up the chase and head back to wherever they'd come from—tracked by Pete's buddies on motorcycles.

So far, the operation had gone down like clockwork.

"I've got to hand it to you," Jake said, tapping his beer mug against Pete's. "You've got skills. Military background?"

"Ten years," Pete said. "The last six in the SFA."

Jake's cognitive abilities had allowed him to learn a number of languages. Irish wasn't one of them.

Noticing his blank expression, Pete added, "Irish Army Ranger Wing. A lot of us in the business started out pounding the ground in one army or another. It ain't easy settling in to a desk job after puttin' time in the field."

Jake nodded. He understood the sentiment all too well.

"So how do ye like our hideaway?" Pete asked.

They were seated at one of several tables in a private room at the back of a basement strip club in Kowloon. The bones of the windowless room resembled an old Western saloon, with a long bar, rustic flooring, and paneled walls illuminated by ornate sconce lights and a wagon-wheel chandelier. Except for the faint trace of spilled beer that lingered in the air, that's where the Western theme ended. Classic rock played on a jukebox, and every wall in the room was adorned with framed photographs of action film scenes featuring locations in and around Hong Kong, each one autographed by one or more of the stunt actors featured in the shot. A modern lounge area dominated one end of the room, with a big-screen TV, leather furnishings, and a black-lacquered pool table that seemed to float atop an arched pedestal.

"I'm impressed," Jake said. "Cops have their own bars. Why not stunt crews?"

“Yep. After all, it amn’t often that one gets a chance to tip a few with folks he died with, right? It’s like a home away from home when a crew’s in town for a shoot, which happens more often these days now that mainland China is getting into the act. The owner of the building has been a huge John Woo fan since the early days. He set up this space in the ’80s when Woo’s Triad films started drawing in teams from Hollywood. We call it the Wreck Room.” His lips curled into a smile. “That’s spelled W-R-E-C-K. The lads can get a tad rowdy in here when they’re twisted. But it’s all in good fun.”

Jake pointed toward the door leading to the strip club. “With all the comforts of home?”

“Oi, sure. A few of the younger lads partake from time to time. That’s just the way of it, eh? But most of us veterans like to get our excitement—and our women—the old-fashioned way. By being the craftiest tough bastards in the valley.” He tipped his mug, took a swig, and smacked his lips. “Like me da used to say, if ye protect and respect a woman, everything else will fall into place.” He nodded toward Skylar, who was sitting on a leather couch helping Lacey remove her disguise. “How else could I have won over a prize like her?”

Despite their age difference, Jake wasn’t surprised the two were more than just coworkers. “She’s a pistol, that’s for sure.”

“More like a double-barrel shotgun,” Pete said with a wink.

They toasted again and Jake embraced the respite. He knew it wouldn’t last long.

“Pete, I appreciate the help you’ve given us, more than you can imagine. And I’m not going to insult you by asking again if you want to stick with it. But things are about to get dicey.” He motioned toward the hardened men in the room, all of them of Asian descent, one changing the song on the jukebox, two more grabbing drinks at the self-serve bar, and another group hanging out around the pool table. They were in their twenties and thirties and wore casual street clothes. Pete had introduced them earlier, all of them part of the stunt game and each eager to help. “It’s more than just you and Skylar placing yourself at risk, and I can’t help but ask why you’re all willing to do it.”

Pete sat back in his chair and appraised Jake. “It’s a fair question,” he finally said. “The short of it is that Lacey is much more than simply someone we’ve worked with over the past several years. When Sky and I met her on her first film, we all became famous friends right then and there. The lass was so damn eager to learn and her enthusiasm was infectious. Other actors couldn’t wait to get back to their posh lifestyles at the end of a day’s shooting, but she’d prefer to hang out with us. Since then, she’s gone out of her way to insist that we’re part of her subsequent films, regardless of the rifts it caused with the bleedin’ directors and producers. That’s loyalty.

And loyalty begets loyalty in our book, no matter the costs.” He paused before adding, “But it’s more than that. Our business is all about trust. Whether it’s trusting that the man standing across from ye in a staged bar fight knows how to hold his punch, or trusting that the team setting the effects explosives aren’t going to accidentally blow ye to kingdom come, we trust one another with our lives. And that level of trust doesn’t disappear when ye clock out at the end of a shoot, any more that it does for soldiers fighting together. It sticks with ye. Like family. And in our world, family comes first. I suspect ye know what I mean.”

Jake nodded, fighting back a swell of emotion as he contemplated the debt he owed this man and his friends.

The din of conversation in the bar quieted when the front door opened and another crew member entered, carrying a motorcycle helmet, a roll of blueprints, and an iPad. He hung the helmet on a wall hook, nodded at Pete, and strode over to the lounge area.

“That’s Feng,” Pete said, pushing back his chair. “Let’s see what we’ve got.” He made his way toward the pool table. Jake and the others in the room gathered around.

“Sorry it took so long,” Feng said with a British accent. He looked to be in his early thirties, with a mopy haircut, piercing black eyes, and a sleeveless T-shirt that did little to hide his ripped build. He had an intensity that reminded Jake of Bruce Lee. “My friend at the planning office was on an extra long lunch break. But it was worth the wait.” He flattened the roll of blueprints on the table and several hands reached in to hold it in place. Then Feng brought up a satellite image of Kowloon on the iPad. He zoomed in on a cluster of tall buildings.

“We followed both cars to a former high-rise factory,” Feng said. “It’s in the Kwun Tong district.”

Though Pete and Skylar nodded, Jake and Lacey didn’t know the reference, so Feng added, “It’s one of the poorest and most densely populated areas of Hong Kong. It was largely industrial until China opened a Special Economic Zone across the river in Shenzhen. Since then, businesses have abandoned the district in droves, eager to take advantage of the trade incentives available within the zone. Most of the vacated facilities will be torn down to make way for more modern structures, but in the meantime many of them have been crudely converted to residential use.” He zoomed tighter on one of the buildings. “Like this one.”

Even from the satellite view, Jake could see that the drab building had seen better days. Skylar leaned in for a closer look. “How many stories is it?” she asked.

“Twenty-five.”

“And these buildings nearby?”

“Thirty to forty.”

Skylar turned to Pete. “*Turbulent City?*”

Pete’s brow furrowed. After a moment he said, “It’s possible, but risky.”

Feng zoomed in tighter on the rooftop of the target building. It was crowded with exterior ducts and equipment. “No way,” he said. A few of the other locals nodded.

Pete took a closer look. “He may be right.”

“Don’t be such wimps,” Skylar said. She pointed to a small structure in the center of the roof. “Plenty of space there.”

“That’s jam on yer egg, lass,” Pete said, studying the tiny space. “Wishful thinking amn’t going to make it so.”

“Oh, gimme a break.”

“Especially with the squirrely winds running twixt those buildings.”

Lacey said, “Uh, I hate to interrupt your little argument here, but do you mind explaining what the hell you’re talking about? Where’s *Turbulent City?*”

“Oh, sorry,” Skylar said. “It’s not a real place. It’s a skyscraper flick we worked on. The producer ran out of money so it never made it into thea—”

“And we never got paid,” Pete interjected.

“Anyway,” Skylar continued, “what we did was...”

A part of Jake’s mind drifted as she explained. He flipped through the pages of blueprints, glancing back and forth from them to the satellite view on the tablet. His brain placed one over the other as he memorized the layout and imagined himself moving from room to room.

Is his family there? Or Marshall?

Feng slid his finger across the iPad and the satellite image was replaced by a series of photographs that checkerboarded the screen. He zoomed on one and then slid from one to the next as he spoke. “We took these when we first arrived at the scene.” They were street-level shots of the area surrounding the building. The structure occupied its own small block, with rows of ground-floor shops and stalls along three sides and an alley in the back. Traffic was heavy and the sidewalks were packed with people.

“We’re going to need a distraction,” Jake said as he blinked at each photograph, storing them in his memory.

“Both coming and going,” Pete agreed, scratching his chin.

Feng and his local crew exchanged smiles. “That won’t be a problem,” he said.

The conversation continued, and before long a plan began to take shape.

After a while, Jake asked, “Where are we going to get all the equipment?”

“Follow me,” Feng said. He led Jake and Pete toward a door at the back of the room, entered a code on a keypad, and the lock clicked open. Stepping inside, he flicked on the lights and spread his hands like a magician revealing a surprise. “Walla!” The storage space was as large as the bar, with rows of pallet racks stacked with props and equipment. “After thirty years of films, our little club has collected a few things.”

As they walked down the rows, Jake saw air bags, air rams, mini tramps, tumbling mats, and all sorts of protective gear and rugged apparel designed for use by crews in various physical stunts. There was climbing gear, skydiving equipment, and much more, even a variety of costumes, including military and civilian uniforms. One section contained all manner of martial arts costumes and weapons. Jake inspected a Japanese katana, pulling the blade partway out of its scabbard. “Anything more modern than this?”

Pete and Feng exchanged a smile. “Oh, yeah,” Feng said. He rounded the end of a rack and unlocked a corner room. The secure space smelled of gun oil and powder. A workbench on the back wall supported two reloaders and some other equipment that Jake guessed had something to do with making explosive devices. The variety of well-kept weapons that hung from the surrounding pegboard walls ranged from pistols to light machine guns.

Jake nodded appreciatively. “You guys don’t mess around.”

Pete winked. “The job wouldn’t be half as much fun otherwise.”

As they exited the gun room, Jake asked, “What about the gear Skylar’s going to need?”

“It’s by the rear roll-up door,” Feng said.

“Then we’re set?” Jake asked.

“Set enough to get inside,” Pete said as the three of them started back toward the bar. “That’ll be the easy part. Finding yer friends and family will be another matter.”

Jake couldn’t argue with that. Each floor of the building had at least fifty thousand square feet of space. Excluding the ground-floor shops, that made over 1.3 million square feet. Couple that with the fact that the old factory was now subdivided into tiny apartments and they faced a daunting task. In his mind, he scrolled one by one through the sixteen exterior photos he’d memorized, noting the crusty exterior of the building, the hodgepodge of aging window fans, the maze of exterior pipes, and even the laundry hanging from open windows. He searched for any clues that might help narrow down their focus.

He was flipping to the ninth picture when his mind went blank.

He shook his head, trying to clear it, but it was no use. The image wouldn't clarify in his consciousness, nor would any of the other photos, including those he'd pulled up a few seconds earlier. It was as if the folder containing the images had just been deleted. He tried to recall the page he'd memorized from the blueprint but the results were the same. A spark of panic ignited; the sensation was all too familiar. It had first happened two years ago, a few days after he'd buried the mini in a lead-lined box in his backyard.

He'd been in the open cockpit of the Pitts, flying at five thousand feet with a student in the back. They'd been halfway through an acrobatic maneuver when his brain had faltered and he'd lost control of the aircraft. He'd recovered before the slipup had turned into a disaster, but he'd taken the next week off while he tried to figure out what was wrong. He'd grown fatigued and anxious, his memory had blanked several times—more often with each passing day—and a part of him had worried his cancer had returned.

Until he'd dug up the mini.

The instant he'd opened the case, he'd felt rejuvenated. His mind had cleared, his senses had come alive, and his muscles had flowed with energy. It had been an instant high, accompanied by euphoria. The intensity had reminded him of what had happened to him years before when he carried it on his person day after day.

It had killed him.

It had been Timmy's idea to create a semi-permeable housing for the mini, one that would allow a measured amount of its energy to pass through. And it had worked. The trickle charge Jake had received each night while he slept had kept him in balance. But it wasn't available to him now and—like an addict going into withdrawal—that reality filled him with despair. It wouldn't be long until he couldn't function at all.

Pete's voice broke through his thoughts. "Jake, did ye hear me? Are ye okay?" He and Feng shared curious looks. The three of them were still in the equipment room.

"Uh, sorry. Yeah, I'm fine. What did you say?"

"I was saying that with a day of recon, Feng and his boys should be able to infiltrate the building and narrow down the target location."

"No way," Jake said, glancing at his watch. "We go tonight."

"But—"

"There's no time to waste."

##

