

# **CALIBRATION**

Episode 5 – "PROMETHEUS"

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## COLD OPEN

**INT. FORT DETRICK – BUILDING 568 – OBSERVATION ROOM – NIGHT**

A sterile room. White walls, recessed lighting, the hum of climate control. A window – not glass but reinforced polycarbonate – looks down into a laboratory below. The laboratory contains twelve artificial wombs: transparent cylindrical tanks, each connected to a matrix of tubing, monitors, and fluid circulation systems. The tanks glow faintly blue. Eight of them are dark – empty, powered down, failed. Four still glow.

SUPER: FORT DETRICK, FREDERICK, MARYLAND – APRIL 2024

DR. MARTIN KEYES (57, white coat, reading glasses on a lanyard, the haggard focus of a man who has been sleeping in his office for weeks) stands at the window. He holds a tablet. On the screen: biomarker data from the four surviving embryos. The numbers are wrong. He knows they're wrong. He's been watching them trend wrong for six weeks.

CATHERINE LYLE stands beside him. She looks at the tanks with an expression that is not scientific curiosity. It is investment – the gaze of a woman who has staked \$183 million and her career on what floats in those tanks.

### KEYES

The cascade is degrading. Targets seven through ten are expressing at forty percent of the Danner baseline. The connective tissue modifications aren't holding. Without them, the enhanced musculature is –

### LYLE

Tearing itself apart. I read the report.

### KEYES

It's not a replication problem. The individual edits are clean. Each target integrates. Each target

expresses. The problem is the cascade  
– making all fourteen work  
simultaneously, in sequence, with the  
timing precision that –

**LYLE**

That Abednego Danner achieved in a  
garage.

**KEYES**

Yes.

Lyle looks at the four surviving embryos. Sixteen weeks of  
development. Tiny forms suspended in amniotic fluid,  
connected to monitors that track a deterioration no one  
can stop.

**LYLE**

What's the difference between your  
work and his?

**KEYES**

The same difference as between a  
musicologist and Mozart. I can  
describe every note. I can sequence  
them. I can execute them individually  
with precision. But the art – the  
intuitive understanding of how  
fourteen modifications interact, how  
the timing of each edit affects every  
other edit, how the cascade sustains  
itself across developmental milestones  
– that's not science. That's genius.  
And I am not a genius.

**LYLE**

Neither was Danner. He was obsessive  
and lucky.

**KEYES**

He was obsessive and right. There's a  
difference.

Lyle turns from the window. Her face reveals nothing. But  
her next sentence reveals everything.

**LYLE**

We need the complete protocols. The four missing targets. The timing sequence. The vector design.

**KEYES**

Danner's journals are incomplete. He left gaps deliberately.

**LYLE**

I know. Which is why we need the data from the only complete implementation.

**KEYES**

From Hugo.

**LYLE**

From his blood, his tissue samples, his stress responses, his medical data under operational conditions. Everything Dr. Patel has been collecting.

Keyes absorbs this. He looks at the dying embryos. He looks at Lyle. He understands what she is telling him: the medical monitoring program – the one presented to Hugo as routine operational health management – has been a data pipeline to this room from the beginning.

**KEYES**

Does he know?

**LYLE**

He knows he's being monitored. He doesn't know why.

**KEYES**

What happens when he finds out?

Lyle does not answer this question. She turns and walks out of the observation room. The door closes with the pneumatic seal of a BSL-4 facility. Keyes stands alone at the window, watching four embryos that are slowly dying because a man in a garage knew something no laboratory on Earth can replicate.

> TITLE CARD: CALIBRATION

## ACT ONE

INT. DIA FACILITY — MEDICAL WING — DAY

SUPER: DIA FACILITY, VIRGINIA — MAY 2024

A clinical examination room. Not a standard military medical suite — this one has additional equipment: a force plate, an EMG array, a custom-built dynamometer designed to measure pressures that would destroy standard equipment.

DR. RAYA PATEL (31, Indian-American, compact, dark hair tied back, glasses, lab coat, the quick movements of a mind always working) reviews a chart. The door opens. Hugo enters.

He fills the doorway. Raya looks up at him and the scale of what she's examining — not a patient, not a soldier, but the only successful fourteen-gene modification in human history — registers on her face as professional fascination barely containing personal awe.

**RAYA**

Hugo Danner. I'm Dr. Patel. I'll be your medical monitor going forward.

**HUGO**

What happened to Dr. Kirkland?

**RAYA**

Reassigned. I'm a geneticist — my background is more relevant to your ongoing assessment.

Hugo sits on the examination table. It groans under his weight. Raya makes a note.

**RAYA**

I'd like to start with a comprehensive baseline. Blood draw, tissue biopsy, cardiac monitoring under load, a full

musculoskeletal workup. It'll take most of the day.

**HUGO**

That's more than a routine physical.

**RAYA**

You're not a routine patient.

She says this with a directness that disarms him. Not clinical flattery – genuine interest. The curiosity of a scientist meeting the most remarkable biological specimen she will ever encounter.

**RAYA (CONT'D)**

How does it feel?

Hugo looks at her.

**RAYA (CONT'D)**

The modification. The capability. How does it feel to be in your body?

No one has ever asked him this. Not Abednego, who understood the science but not the sensation. Not Lyle, who understands the utility but not the experience. Not Marcus, not Elena, not Cadena. No one has ever asked Hugo Danner what it feels like to be Hugo Danner.

**HUGO**

It feels like being a guest.

**RAYA**

A guest?

**HUGO**

In a house that's too strong. Every door handle is glass. Every handshake is a test. Every step is a choice between what my body wants to do and what the world can survive. I'm a guest in a house built for someone else, and I've been learning the house rules for twenty-two years.

Raya writes nothing. She listens. The pen is in her hand but not moving. She is hearing something that no clinical instrument can measure: the psychological cost of biological exceptionalism.

**RAYA**

What does it feel like when you stop being a guest?

**HUGO**

I don't know. I stopped once, when I was ten. I tore a building apart. I stopped once in college. I broke a man's spine.

Beat.

**HUGO (CONT'D)**

The house rules exist for a reason.

Raya nods. She begins the examination. Blood draw first – the needle bends slightly against Hugo's skin before finding the vein. The blood flows into the vial. It looks normal. It is not normal. It is the blood of something that has never existed before.

**INT. DIA FACILITY – MEDICAL WING – EVENING**

Hours later. Hugo sits on the table, shirtless. Electrodes on his chest, his arms, his temples. Raya reviews data on a monitor. The numbers are extraordinary – cardiac output, oxygen efficiency, muscle fiber density – each metric confirming what the modification produced.

**RAYA**

Your resting heart rate is thirty-eight. Your VO2 max is off the chart – literally, the chart doesn't go that high. Your collagen density is four times normal. Your bone mineral content would break the DEXA scanner if I used standard calibration.

**HUGO**

My father would be pleased.

**RAYA**

Are you?

**HUGO**

I didn't choose this. Pleased doesn't apply.

Raya looks at him. Not at the data. At him. The shift is subtle but Hugo notices it – the moment a scientist stops reading the chart and starts reading the person.

**RAYA**

Can I ask you something non-clinical?

**HUGO**

You can ask. I might not answer.

**RAYA**

What do you do when you're alone?

**HUGO**

I go to the mountains. I run. I push boulders. I throw trees. I do everything I can't do around people.

**RAYA**

You need a space where you don't have to calibrate.

**HUGO**

Yes.

**RAYA**

What does it feel like in that space?

**HUGO**

(quiet)

Free.

The word hangs. Raya hears it – the single word that contains twenty-two years of performing normalcy. She makes a note. But the note is not clinical. It is the observation of a woman who has just glimpsed the interior of a man she was assigned to study and is beginning to feel something she was not assigned to feel.

**INT. DIA FACILITY – RAYA'S QUARTERS – NIGHT**

Raya sits at her desk. Laptop open. Two windows: one is Hugo's medical file, the data pipeline to Fort Detrick. The other is an email draft to Dr. Keyes. The email contains Hugo's blood work, tissue analysis, and stress response data – the information PROMETHEUS needs to refine its incomplete cascade.

Raya looks at the email. She looks at the medical file. She looks at the wall where a photograph of her parents – immigrants, both physicians, the kind of people who believed science was morally neutral – stares back at her.

She sends the email. She closes the laptop. She sits in the dark.

The dual role begins here: medical monitor and data conduit. Scientist and spy. The woman who will fall in love with Hugo and the woman who is feeding his biology to the program trying to replicate him. Raya Patel holds both truths, and both truths hold her.

**ACT TWO**

**EXT. DIA FACILITY – WALKING PATH – EVENING**

SUPER: TWO MONTHS LATER

Hugo and Raya walk a gravel path that winds through the woods surrounding the facility. The Blue Ridge Mountains in summer – green, humid, the sound of crickets and distant thunder.

They walk close. Not touching. The proximity is deliberate on both sides – two people negotiating the space between professional boundary and personal gravity.

**RAYA**

Your cortisol levels spike during deployments. But not during combat.

**HUGO**

When do they spike?

**RAYA**

After. When you're alone. Processing.

**HUGO**

You can measure that?

**RAYA**

I can measure everything your body does. Cortisol, adrenaline, testosterone, growth factors. Your body tells me everything.

**HUGO**

And what does it tell you?

**RAYA**

That you're carrying more than your capability. You're carrying the weight of everyone you've hurt.

Hugo stops walking. He looks at her.

**HUGO**

You read that from bloodwork?

**RAYA**

I read it from watching you. The bloodwork just confirms it.

The moment stretches. Two people on a gravel path in the Virginia mountains, the facility behind them, the institution around them, and between them: the beginning of something that neither of them should allow and both of them want.

**HUGO**

This is a bad idea.

**RAYA**

Probably.

**HUGO**

I break things.

**RAYA**

I know.

**HUGO**

I don't mean figuratively.

**RAYA**

I know what you mean. I've read every data point your body has produced in the last year. I know exactly what you're capable of.

She reaches for his hand. Hugo watches her hand approach his – small, precise, the hand of a woman who holds pipettes and pens and nothing heavier than a laptop. His hand could crush every bone in hers without conscious effort.

She takes his hand. He lets her. The grip is calibrated – the same pressure his father taught him at five, the handshake baseline, the constant calculation of how much of himself is safe to deploy.

**RAYA (CONT'D)**

Trust me.

**HUGO**

I want to.

**RAYA**

Then do.

**INT. RAYA'S QUARTERS – NIGHT**

The scene is intimate without being graphic. What matters is not the physical act but the calibration it requires.

Hugo lies beside Raya. Every point of contact is a conscious decision. His hand on her waist – five percent. His arm beneath her – three percent. His mouth on hers – calibrated pressure, the same attention he gives to glass jars and egg shells applied to the most vulnerable act of his life.

**RAYA**

(whispered)

You're thinking too much.

**HUGO**

I have to think. If I stop thinking  
for one second –

**RAYA**

I trust you.

**HUGO**

I don't trust myself.

She puts her hand on his face. Small fingers on the jaw  
that could bite through steel cable.

**RAYA**

Then trust that I understand what you  
are. Trust that I know the risk. Trust  
that I'm here because I want to be  
here, not because I'm afraid of what  
happens if I'm not.

Hugo closes his eyes. For a moment – the briefest lapse in  
the vigilance that has defined his entire life – he is not  
calculating. He is simply present. A man with a woman, in  
a bed, in the dark.

The camera pulls away. The door. The hallway. The  
facility. The mountains. Two people, one of whom can  
destroy the other with a careless touch, sharing the most  
human experience available – and the calibration that  
makes it possible is the same calibration that makes  
everything in Hugo's life both possible and exhausting.

**EXT. NORTHERN SYRIA – CONVOY ROUTE – NIGHT**

SUPER: NORTHERN SYRIA – SEPTEMBER 2024

A SOF team in two vehicles – up-armored Humvees – moving  
along a mountain road. Hugo rides in the lead vehicle.  
Cadena rides in the second.

The ambush comes without warning.

An IED detonates beneath the second vehicle. The Humvee  
lifts off the road, rolls, lands on its side. Gunfire  
erupts from three positions – elevated, enfilading,  
pre-registered. This is a professional ambush. Someone

knew the route.

Hugo exits the lead vehicle. He does not think. He acts.

He is at 100% for the first time in an operational setting. Not 30%, not 60% – everything. The full output of a fourteen-gene modification, unleashed.

He moves at speed. He crosses the kill zone in under two seconds. He reaches the first ambush position – a stone wall with four fighters behind it – and goes through the wall. Not around it. Through it. Stone and mortar explode outward as Hugo's body punches a hole in a structure that has stood for a hundred years.

The fighters behind the wall have no time to process what they've seen. Hugo disarms them. The rifle barrels bend like wire. The fighters are thrown – not killed, but incapacitated with the brutal efficiency of a force that has no human equivalent.

He moves to the second position. Same result. The third. Same.

The firefight lasts forty seconds. Hugo has neutralized twelve fighters, destroyed three fortified positions, and absorbed approximately two hundred rounds of small-arms fire. His shirt is shredded. His skin beneath is unmarked except for red welts that are already fading.

He runs to the overturned Humvee. He lifts it – four tons of armored vehicle – and sets it upright. Inside: Cadena, bleeding from a head wound, his left leg bent wrong. Conscious but compromised.

Hugo pulls Cadena from the vehicle. He carries him to cover with the care of a man handling a soap bubble.

**CADENA**  
(dazed)

How many?

**HUGO**  
Twelve.

**CADENA**

Time?

**HUGO**

Forty seconds.

**CADENA**

(half-conscious, almost  
smiling)

Show-off.

Hugo applies pressure to Cadena's head wound. The SOF medic arrives, takes over. Hugo stands. He looks at the destruction he's caused – the shattered wall, the overturned vehicles, the scattered bodies of men who ambushed a convoy containing something they could not have anticipated.

The SOF team stares at him. They've seen the training footage. They've been briefed. But seeing it – the full, unrestrained output of Hugo Danner – is different from being told about it. The awe on their faces is indistinguishable from terror.

Hugo walks past them. He says nothing. He climbs into the remaining vehicle and sits alone in the dark interior.

CLOSE ON HUGO'S HANDS. They're shaking. Not from exertion – from the release. For forty seconds, he used everything he had. No calibration, no management, no conscious modulation. For forty seconds, he was the thing his father made. And it felt –

He will never tell anyone how it felt. Because it felt good. And that terrifies him more than the ambush.

### **ACT THREE**

**INT. DIA FACILITY – MEDICAL WING – DAY**

Hugo sits on the exam table. Raya draws blood. The post-deployment workup – standard procedure, or so Hugo has been told.

**RAYA**

Your cortisol is elevated. Higher than any previous deployment.

**HUGO**

It was different this time.

**RAYA**

How?

**HUGO**

I went to a hundred percent. No calibration. Full output.

Raya pauses the blood draw. She looks at him.

**RAYA**

How did it feel?

The same question. The question only she asks. But this time, the answer is different.

**HUGO**

It felt like the first time I pushed a boulder in the mountains. When I was six. The joy of not pretending.

Beat.

**HUGO (CONT'D)**

That's the problem.

**RAYA**

The joy is the problem?

**HUGO**

Joy at full output means joy at maximum destruction. If I enjoy being what I am, people die.

Raya finishes the blood draw. She labels the vials. Six of them – more than a standard post-deployment panel requires. Hugo watches her label them.

**HUGO (CONT'D)**

That's a lot of blood.

**RAYA**

Comprehensive panel. The full-output data is –

**HUGO**

Valuable?

She hears the word. The question beneath the word. She meets his eyes.

**RAYA**

Clinically informative.

**HUGO**

Who reads these results?

**RAYA**

I do.

**HUGO**

Who else?

Beat. The question hangs. Raya's face holds – professional, composed, the face of a woman who has been trained to hold. But something flickers. Guilt, perhaps. Or the beginning of guilt.

**RAYA**

Standard reporting chain. Your medical file is classified.

**HUGO**

Classified. Not private. There's a difference.

Raya says nothing. Hugo studies her – the way she labeled the sixth vial, the way her hand moved slightly faster when he asked who reads the results, the micro-expression that a man who has spent his life reading faces for threat assessment does not miss.

He does not press further. Not yet. But the seed is planted: the suspicion that the woman he trusts – the woman he has allowed closer than any human being – is connected to something he doesn't fully understand.

**INT. FORT DETRICK — BUILDING 568 — OBSERVATION ROOM — NIGHT**

Lyle stands at the window. Below: the four surviving embryos. The monitors show deteriorating numbers — the incomplete cascade consuming what it created.

Keyes enters.

**KEYES**

The full-output data is extraordinary. The cascade under maximum stress — the timing, the interaction between the fourteen targets — it's the most complete picture we've had.

**LYLE**

Is it enough?

**KEYES**

No. The data tells us what the cascade does under stress. It doesn't tell us how to replicate the timing. We're still missing the four targets.

**LYLE**

Then we need the complete protocols.

**KEYES**

From Danner?

**LYLE**

From his son.

**KEYES**

Hugo doesn't have the protocols. Abednego never shared the complete —

**LYLE**

Hugo's biology IS the protocol. His genome contains the complete cascade. Every modification, every timing signature, every vector integration site. It's all there, written in his DNA. We just need enough samples under enough conditions to reverse-engineer

what Abednego did.

She turns from the window.

**LYLE (CONT'D)**

Get me the complete protocols. From  
his son.

The camera holds on the four embryos. Tiny forms suspended in blue light. Dying slowly because a program with \$183 million and fourteen researchers cannot replicate what one man achieved in a garage.

> SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

> NEXT: "PROTOCOLS"

> END OF EPISODE