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THE
SCIENTISTS

PARALLEL OPS BOOK 1

From their secret laboratory, scientists work to protect alien artifacts from powerful international terrorists.

Prologue

(Monday, December 9, 2002)

“Linda, are you there?” asked Jim Barnes. “Linda! Please answer me!”

The line had gone dead and someone was ringing the bell at his lab door, so Jim hung up and went to see who was there. It turned out to be a delivery of some supplies he’d ordered from the U.S. weeks ago. Jim thanked the Navy seaman and started to close the door but then called after the man.

“Seaman, have you heard about any telephone problems on base today? Specifically calls to the mainland?”

“No sir,” replied the young man. “Everything seems to be fine over at HQ.”

“Okay, thanks,” replied Jim as he closed and locked the door.

Before their call had been cut off in mid-sentence, Jim had been in the process of warning Linda and her new husband, Javier Reyes, that they might be in serious danger. He had cautioned Linda that her calls might be monitored, but now he wondered if the interruption had been on his end, so he redialed Linda’s Cancun number. He let the phone ring more than a dozen times before finally giving up.

Jim paced the floor of his windowless lab at the U.S. Navy’s AUTECH research facility on Andros Island, The Bahamas. Since his line seemed to be working, he had to assume that something had happened to Linda’s phone. Jim was convinced that their mutual friend and NWIDI team member, Tony Nicoletti, had been abducted by a man named Buzz Edwards a week ago in Cancun. Linda and Javier had been on their

honeymoon in Cabo San Lucas until today, and now Jim feared they might be picked up, too.

“Think, Jim, think,” he said out loud.

Moving to his computer station, he browsed his contacts for an idea. In the three months that Jim had been at AUTEK he’d met a lot of visiting scientists and researchers from all over the free world because the Navy made their facility available to many countries friendly to the United States. It’s location on the east side of Andros Island made AUTEK uniquely qualified for the testing of underwater weaponry and electronics. Since much of this research was classified, AUTEK was the perfect place to conduct his examination of the mysterious triangles he and his NWIDI team members had recovered from the ruins of an underwater city off the northwest tip of Cuba. Jim’s work was highly classified and only a handful of people in the world knew about the alien artifacts he was studying.

As he scrolled through his list, the name Carmen Lopez came into view. Carmen was a librarian Jim had met on his first outing with NWIDI. He and Frank Morton had traveled to Mexico’s Yucatan in search of some unusual spheres and Carmen had provided them access to a private library that helped them greatly. Jim and Carmen had stayed in touch during the past eighteen months, even after Carmen moved to Cancun.

Jim grabbed the phone and dialed the long international number as fast as his fingers would move. In a few short minutes, Carmen was on her way to Linda and Javier’s apartment to check on them and Jim breathed a sigh of relief.

Jim went back to work on his latest triangle theory and an hour later, when his phone rang, it startled him from his deep concentration.

“Hi, Carmen,” he answered, recognizing her number in his caller ID display.
“Were you able to deliver my message to Linda?”

“No, I’m afraid not,” she replied. “There was no answer at their door, but you sounded so concerned about them that I decided to check with the apartment manager. She said she saw them getting into a taxi with four large suitcases but didn’t you say they had just returned from a trip?”

“Yes I did,” smiled Jim, “and I’m glad they took my advice and went on another one. Thank you, Carmen, you’ve been a great help. I have something I need to take care of right now, but I’ll call you in a few days and we can chat.”

As Jim hung up the phone, he couldn’t help wondering where Linda and Javier were headed – or if he’d ever see them again.