

Acceptable Risk  
by  
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INT. A SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

ALEXIS, a CIA agent, argues with MARK, a fellow agent who is on a computer screen.

ALEXIS

I'm calling off the pickup.

MARK

You can't.

ALEXIS

They just took his kid! The moment Assad finds out, he'll want nothing to do with us.

MARK

We can get the kid later. Do a swap for some low-level flunkies.

ALEXIS

How long will that take? A month? Two? And what if they decide to make an example of his child to prevent further defections?

MARK

And if you call off the pickup, what happens when they grab Assad, torture him, and he gives up the names of others like him? People with families. With kids.

(beat)

They won't hurt him because they need him as a bargaining chip. That gives us leverage.

ALEXIS

Are we really talking about using a child as a game piece? A child? Have we fallen so far? Debased ourselves so completely that the possibility of a child being tortured to death is an acceptable risk?

MARK

Give me a better option. Anything.