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«I am never done!»¹

Homeland: Is Carrie Mathison a Convincing Example of Political Sustainability and Political Efficiency?

This essay is dedicated to the screenwriters of Hatufim and the screenwriters of Homeland

Introduction

This essay is an inquiry into the very successful US TV series Homeland, further referred to as HL.² I thus deal with fictitious characters and plots. My analysis is interdisciplinary: I combine plot presentation and analysis with aspects of political theory.

We look at Carrie Mathison and her boss Saul Berenson’s characters as examples of Machiavellian thinking and agency. Since they are CIA, the principal task of Saul, the director, and Carrie, his best analyst and case officer, is to protect the US from foreign and domestic threats. They cannot afford ethical considerations or moral musings about human and civil rights. They must act to prevent threats and gather information about hostile activities, while running their agents on enemy territory, which involves the coercion, blackmail and sometimes also the sacrifice of an asset to secure an operation

¹ HL, Series 1: Episode 3, 14:49. Netflix’s counting ends at 0:00, thus backwards. Position 14:49 indicates that there are 14 minutes and 49 seconds to watch until the episode’s end.

that is more important than one human life, because it will save thousands of lives.

Note that to be capable of making these crucial decisions, HL agents use words that de-emotionalize the context, for example «an operation». Saul and Carrie speak of their agent as «our asset», and «our target», the hostile individual they must «eliminate», i.e., kill. Thus, if you are CIA and conducting an operation, you act according to plan and finish the job.

Naturally, my assumptions and speculations about how a secret service works, are unprofessional. Why? Because I have no idea how a secret service works – the word «secret» gives it away.

The US Homeland Security was founded in the aftermath of 9/11. The series HL was inspired by the Israeli series Hatufim, Prisoners of War, which ran for two seasons, most probably due to a much smaller budget. Hatufim is a superbly written series that addresses a new theme: how do former prisoners of war deal with their lives once they are back home? How do their families cope with a father or a mother who has been in enemy captivity for a longer period? How do war veterans come to terms with their post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD, nightmares, and survivor’s guilt?

Analysis of threats and terrorist conspiracies is never a simple task, thus best accomplished with rational and pragmatic thought, following the father of political realism Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), the Florentine statesman.  

6 Sir Isaiah Berlin’s analysis of Machiavelli’s political thought is the most convincing study to me: The Originality of Machiavelli, in: The Proper Study of Mankind. An Anthology of Essays, London 1998, 269–325. An excellent collection of essays, presenting analysis of such diverse topics
All states, all powers, that have held and hold rule over men have been and are either republics or principalities [sono o repubbliche o principati]. Principalities are either hereditary, in which the family has been long established; or they are new. […] Such dominions thus acquired are either accustomed to live under a prince, or to live in freedom [o consueti a vivere sotto un principe, o usi a essere liberi]; and are acquired either by the arms of the prince himself, or of others, or else by fortune or by ability [o per fortuna o per virtù].

At the beginning of his Prince, Machiavelli clearly distinguishes republics from principalities, addressing political freedom, that is liberty, and its opposite, a prince who is ruling in absolute fashion. His thoughts, dedicated to Lorenzo di Piero de’ Medici, also referred to as Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449–1492), focus on the absolute rule of a sovereign and what the prince should do and avoid doing to keep his strength over the ruled and the state safe and prospering. Furthermore, he distinguishes domestic affairs and international, or back then on the Italian peninsula in the 16th century, inter-state, or inter-principality relations. Machiavelli identifies dangers to the state in a twofold fashion: they can have their origins at home, hence literally under the prince’s nose, or they can loom from the outside, from other states.

as, for example, Machiavelli’s influence on Renaissance theatre and a comparison of his Prince with Sun Tse’s The Art of War, is John M. Najemy (ed.): Machiavelli, Cambridge 2010.


Note that I use Hannah Arendt’s (1906–1975) definitions of power for a democratically elected government, and strength for a non-democratically elected government or sovereign; therefore, the US government is in power, while Russia’s government is in a position of strength over its citizens and believing Christians of both states respect the authority of their respective national church. Arendt’s definitions of power, strength, and authority in: On Violence, Harvest 1970, 44–46.

N. Machiavelli: The Prince, chapter XIX, 52.
Furthermore, Machiavelli does not deal much with republics in his *Prince*, since citizens who enjoy political freedom elect their ruler and are hence as much accountable and responsible for the fate of their republic as the elected ruler. Machiavelli does not say that republics can also be subject to *fortuna*, the fickle moods of the Roman goddess of chance, or that the citizens in a republic can spectacularly fail, for example, by electing a ruler who neglects his tasks, but he does think about the conditions of a republic, ruled by a senate or a *concilium* of nobles, and how it faces political adversity.\(^{11}\)

Machiavelli concentrates on the absolute power of the prince because he witnessed what had happened to states led by weak sovereigns when confronted with stronger enemies. His political thought addresses the strength of an absolute sovereign, while in HL, Saul and Carrie are protecting a republic, a completely different form of government than Florence and the Italian city states in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Yet, is the protection of the state in HL not similar to the suggestions Machiavelli formulated for his Tuscan prince, because the threats are roughly the same, such as threats to the government, the survival and functioning of the state and lastly the protection of the people? Do Carrie and Saul, protecting the American republic, not use secret plans, analysis of the threat situation and positive PR, the very tools Machiavelli suggests to his *Prince*?

Our comparison addresses, first, the issue of quantity: with Machiavelli’s *Prince*, we have one sovereign. With the US government, we have a democratically elected president with his government as the executive, checked and balanced by both houses as the legislative, and the constitutional court as the judiciary. The American people are the sovereign. About the quality of both forms of government: the sovereignty of the Tuscan prince is absolute, while the power of the US government *per se* cannot be absolute since the goal of the American Revolution of 1776 was to get rid of the absolutism of the British sovereign ruling his overseas colonies. The wise fathers of

\(^{11}\) Ibid., chapter IX, 24–26.
the US constitution anticipated threats from the outside and inside, and HL reflects these threats in superb fashion.

I scrutinize HL series 1 to 3, which portrays an external threat exercised by marine sniper Nicholas Brody, an American citizen, thus an insider. Series 8 deals with an internal and an external threat, too: Carrie, an insider, turns into an external threat to the US and the CIA because of her defection to the Russian Federation.

The series begins in 2011, ten years after 9/11. On that dreadful day, at roughly 6 a.m. Western Pacific time, I was drinking my tea on the balcony of my beautiful Seattle flat, looking at Lake Union. The sun was shining, the sky was light blue. It was so quiet, so peaceful. In September 2001, I was a visiting scholar from Switzerland; the University of Washington had made me the best offer, so I had moved from Zurich to Seattle in mid-August 2001 with a generous three-year stipend from the Swiss National Science Foundation. On TV, I heard about an attack on the Twin Towers in New York, and I thought: Oh, a new Bruce Willis movie! As the reporter’s voice was shouting hysterically, I watched what was happening on TV live. It was no new Bruce Willis movie – this was real. I saw how the Twin Towers collapsed, and later, on the evening news, how the planes had crashed into the Pentagon. On that day, America, the most generous and democratic nation in the world, a melting pot and new home for all who leave their countries because of political persecution, oppression, and dysfunctional economies, changed for good.

Now, does Machiavellian thought apply to HL? Is Saul, impersonated by Mandy Patinkin (*1952), the master and commander, and Carrie, played by Claire Danes (*1979), his loyal employee and reliable case officer? Or is it the other way round?

In the first chapter, I present two definitions that will serve as points of orientation for the reader: first, I define «political sustainability», and second, «political efficiency». These definitions will help us better understand the details of the plot and the reasons why Carrie and Saul act and make decisions the way they do. In the following, I present three selected principles of Machiavellian
thought, concentrating on the specific instructions for the behaviour of the prince. These principles can be applied to the following personae in series 1 to 3 and 8, since they all are at the top level of decision-making with regard to the political survival of their states: Saul, Carrie and Yevgeni Gromov, then Abu Nazir, US President Elizabeth Keane, played by Elizabeth Marvel (*1969), and GRU\textsuperscript{12} boss Colonel Sergei Mirov, portrayed by Merab Ninidze (*1965).

In the second chapter, I present a summary of HL series 1, 2 and 3, followed by a summary of series 8; I thus present the story of Carrie and Brody, portrayed by Damian Lewis (*1971) as the beginning of the series, and the end, Carrie living with GRU colonel Yevgeni Gromov in Moscow. Gromov is portrayed by Costa Ronin (*1979), who starred in the successful TV series The Americans.\textsuperscript{13} Note that owing to constraints of space I cannot present a summary of all the subplots, characters, and side plots; such an endeavour would mean writing a book in its own right.

In the conclusion, I shall answer the following research questions: First, who leads, guides and influences whom – does Saul influence Carrie or the other way round? Is it Carrie who explores operative possibilities Saul does not see? Who recognizes a terrorist threat to the US first: Carrie or Saul? Second, is Carrie a convincing example of political sustainability and political efficiency?


\textsuperscript{13} \url{https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Americans}; accessed 4 February 2022.
Definitions and three selected principles of Machiavellian advice

The *Oxford English Dictionary* online defines «sustainability» as first, «the quality of being sustainable by argument; the capacity to be upheld or defended as valid, correct or true; second, the quality of being sustainable at a certain rate or level; and third, the property of being environmentally sustainable».\(^{14}\)

The *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary defines «efficiency» as «the ability to do something or produce something without wasting materials, time, or energy: the quality or degree of being efficient».\(^{15}\)

For this paper, I have added the dimension of political decision-making and political activity, both domestic and international. Here are my definitions of «political sustainability» and «political efficiency»:

Political sustainability is the quality of an individual or a group that keeps their decisions politically sustainable, that is, as valid and correct guidance and consistent continuity in the realm of domestic and international politics in order to protect the state and its government.

Political efficiency is a characteristic trait of an individual or a group, who make(s) political decisions and act(s) according to the principle of not wasting time, money, personal involvement and individual assets, i.e., personnel or human resources.

Apart from the rather banal statement that the essence of Machiavellianism is to sustain and protect the state with a dispassionate hence rational mind, thus stay in power or hold a position of strength at all levels of decision-making, I find three principles of Machiavellian thought, quoted below, particularly apt to explain the details of the HL plots. Readers should keep these in the back of their minds, as they are quite self-explanatory when applied to the decisions of our HL heroes and villains. Machiavellian thought is *not* rocket science.


Principle 1: Prudence and humanity — or embodying kindness and stability

[...] I say that every prince ought to desire to be considered clement and not cruel. [...] Therefore, a prince, so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal, ought not to mind the reproach of cruelty [...] Nevertheless, he [the new prince, add. JB] ought to be slow to believe and to act, nor should he himself show fear, but proceed in a temperate manner with prudence and humanity, so that too much confidence may not make him incautious and too much distrust render him intolerable.16

Principle 2: The necessity of appearing to have good qualities — or good PR

If men were entirely good this precept would not hold, but because they are bad, and will not keep faith with you, you too are not bound to observe it with them. [...] Therefore, it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful; to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright, and to be so, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite.17

Principle 3: The avoidance of being hated — or know thy subjects

[...] under this generality, that the prince must consider, [...] how to avoid those things which will make him hated or contemptible. It makes him hated above all things, [...] to be rapacious, and to be a violator of the property and women of his subjects, from both of which he must abstain. [...] It makes him contemptible to be considered fickle, frivolous, effeminate, mean-spirited, irresolute [...] and he should endeavour to show in his actions greatness, courage, gravity, and fortitude. [...] And one of the most efficacious remedies that a prince can have against conspiracies [domestic and foreign conspiracies, add. JB] is not to be hated and despised by the people, for he who conspires against a prince always expects to please them by his removal; but when the conspirator can only look forward to offending them, he will not have the courage to take such a course, for the difficulties that confront a conspirator are infinite.18

16 N. Machiavelli: The Prince, chapter XVII, 45.
17 Ibid., chapter XVIII, 48, 49.
18 Ibid., chapter XIX, 52.
Summaries of HL series 1 to 3, and series 8

The story of Carrie Mathison and Nicholas Brody, series 1 to 3

The pilot S1:E1 begins with the US Delta Force finding a marine held captive in an underground compound in Iraq. At the same time, Carrie Mathison talks to an informant in Bagdad prison, who will be executed shortly. Hoping to evade the execution, he tells her about an American prisoner of war whom al-Qaeda\(^\text{19}\) has turned for Abu Nazir.

Ten months later in Washington, D.C.: Carrie is back home from a night with some stranger, cat washes and arrives late for an analyst meeting at the CIA Headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Marine sergeant Nicholas Brody, a sniper, has been debriefed at Ramstein air base in Germany and meets wife Jessica, son Chris and daughter Dana after eight years of captivity. The family thought him dead long ago, and Jessica has begun a relationship with Brody’s best friend Mike Faber, whom the children are very fond of. Carrie suspects Brody to be the turned prisoner of war and has her friend Virgil and his brother Max, both technology experts, install listening devices and cameras in the Brody family home. This is illegal, but she is sure that she is right, and the Piotrowski brothers trust her.

When Brody appears at the CIA Headquarters, Saul tasks Carrie with his interrogation. What happened to his sniper team colleague, Tom Walker? Brody replies that a guard told him that al-Qaeda members had beaten Walker to death. Unable to sleep, Carrie dresses up and goes to a bar to pick up a man for sex, which is her understanding of intimacy, because she has never been in love. At the bar, she flirts with a man, and it is quite clear that they will engage in sex later. Yet, as Carrie sees how the fingers of a guitarist player on the bar’s TV screen move to the rhythm of the music, she remembers Brody moving his fingers in a certain rhythm while

being interviewed by several national TV channels. She is certain that the American hero moves his fingers to signal to his handlers that he is ready. She dumps the admirer and rushes to Saul’s home, explaining that Brody’s fingers display a pattern whenever he is on camera. She convinces Saul that Brody is the turned prisoner of war.

Brody has flashbacks, remembering how Abu Nazir forced him to beat Walker to death and then bury him in a shallow desert grave. Saul meets a federal judge whom he blackmails into issuing a warrant to have the Brody house monitored for four weeks. This is a nice little Machiavellian move of Saul’s: the judge should not have let himself be captured on camera with a prostitute. Your weakness is my hold over you.

After the four weeks have expired, Carrie’s team has to clear Brody’s house of the devices, but Carrie is certain that they have missed something. She decides to get close to Brody and walks into him when he is about to join a veteran support group at his local church. They flirt; he is quite into her, but it is not clear if Carrie is attracted to him too or just pretending.

When the Pakistani secret service abducts terrorist Afsal Hamid from his family home in Islamabad and hands him over to the Americans, CIA director David Estes orders Saul to interrogate Hamid. Carrie suggests to Saul asking Brody about Hamid, he might know him. Brody recognizes Hamid on a video tape; he had guarded him in the compound in Iraq, and once pissed on him. Brody convinces director Estes to let him meet his former torturer, and minutes into their meeting, he physically attacks Hamid. Later, Carrie and Saul learn that Hamid has committed suicide in his cell. Who slipped him the razor blade?

Carrie looks at the video and notices that Brody has drawn Hamid away from the space covered by the camera, so that their fight is not on tape. Carrie sees that which everybody else overlooks; she thinks lightning fast, analyses a situation in seconds, has no pre-formed opinion or bias, is always alert and thinks out of the box. A frustrated Brody calls Carrie, who gave him her card after she had interrogated him. The sniper hero is upset because he has just
had a row with marine brother Lauder Wakefield, who had been crippled while serving in Iraq. Lauder has asked Brody about Tom Walker, who was the best sniper in their platoon. How come Walker is dead and Brody alive? Carrie joins Brody in the bar, and they get drunk together; she tells him of Hamid’s suicide, seemingly confiding in him. They kiss and have sex in her car.

On a Friday afternoon, Brody and Carrie meet up again at a bar and play billiards when a white supremacist with the infamous 88 tattooed on his arm\textsuperscript{20} tries to chat Carrie up; she punches him in the face, and she and Brody escape from the armed gang. They spend the weekend at her family’s cabin at the lake, doing what people falling in love do: talk about their teenage years, their dreams, their hardships, cook, drink wine, make love. Brody feels free with Carrie because she understands him, working in a job that is similar to his service in the army, requiring discipline, respect and loyalty. He has nightmares, shouting the name «Issa», which Carrie, who is a light sleeper, memorizes.

The next morning, Carrie lets slip a remark about Brody’s preferred tea, which she noticed while monitoring him weeks ago. Brody is immediately suspicious, and Carrie tells him that she thinks he is an al-Qaeda asset. He denies this, explaining that his moving fingers is a comfort thing he does when under stress. He is a Muslim and has no prayer beads, that’s why he moves his fingers. Saul learns from a young American woman arrested as a terrorist that the contact who instructed her and her Saudi boyfriend is Tom Walker. Brody’s sniper partner is very much alive and in Washington. Elizabeth Gaines, an influential Party member, invites the Brodys to a dinner party, introducing them to Washington’s political elite.

Brody remembers Abu Nazir’s eight-year-old son Issa, whom he had taught English, back in Iraq. Issa and eighty-two other children died in a drone bombing targeting Abu Nazir, which Vice

President William Walden had authorized. Walden’s ethically repugnant argumentation had been that if Abu Nazir hides among children, it is he who kills them, not the US. The drone bomb hit a school, and Abu Nazir and Brody, by then a member of the Nazir family’s household, buried Issa together.

Vice President Walden suggests to Brody that he run for congress, aiming to use the American hero for his own political ends, and Brody is flattered by these new and financially beneficial prospects. Carrie’s sister Maggie, a physician who has been illegally providing Carrie for years with the medication she needs to keep her CIA employment, reveals Carrie’s secret to Saul: «She is bipolar.»

The Brody family take a trip to Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. Brody explains to his children the details of the decisive battle of the American Civil War. His motives for travelling to Gettysburg are, however, not of an educational nature. With an excuse, Brody slips away from family lunch in a diner and visits a tailor’s shop. He puts on a suicide vest and asks the smoking Arab tailor how to operate it.

«On May 19, 2003, Vice President Walden sanctioned the drone bombing of a school in Iraq.» These are Brody’s first words on a video he makes to explain and justify his future actions. He hides the camera’s chip in the stone wall of a park, marking the hiding place with a sign. The night before Walden’s speech in front of the Capitol to announce his intention of running for president, Walker kidnaps an elderly lady, from whose apartment he has a clear shot at the Capitol. Carrie thinks that something is going to happen, that they are missing something; she meets Virgil in front of the Capitol. From the elderly lady’s apartment, Walker shoots Elizabeth Gaines, upon which the Secret Service rushes Walden, Brody, and everybody in front of the Capitol down to the bunker, ignoring security protocols. In the bunker, Brody activates the suicide vest, but it does not explode; one might cynically speak of a «wardrobe

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malfunction. Carrie frantically drives to the Brody’s family home and implores daughter Dana to call her dad. Dana begs Brody to come home, and he obliges.

Series 1 ends with Brody meeting Walker in a tunnel; it is dark, wet, and cold. Walker is marine 2 and Brody marine 1 in Abu Nazir’s revenge plan to kill Walden. With physical and psychological torture, both marines have been turned while in al-Qaeda captivity. Walker reproaches Brody that he has not followed Abu Nazir’s plan. Walker’s task was to just shoot somebody close to Walden, causing the Secret Service to rush the politicians down to the bunker, where Brody would then kill them all by detonating his suicide vest. On Abu Nazir’s command, Walker hands the phone over to Brody, and Abu Nazir understands why Brody did not activate the vest: it is much more efficient to kill an idea, than a man, and with Brody as a future congressman and confidant of Walden, he can change US policy towards al-Qaeda. Brody has thus lied to Abu Nazir, omitting the fact that the vest did not explode. Presenting himself as a resourceful ally, Brody convinces Abu Nazir to keep him on. Abu Nazir issues a command, and Brody shoots Walker; this is one of Abu Nazir’s many Machiavellian decisions, since Walker has done his deed and knows too much. It is simply too dangerous to keep him alive.

Series 2 begins a few months after Israel’s bombing of Iran’s nuclear factories. We see Carrie working as an English teacher in a school for immigrants. Unbeknownst to everybody, save for Carrie who cannot believe that she was wrong, Brody is active for Abu Nazir; his main contact is Palestinian journalist Roya, an attractive brunette who speaks with a posh British accent.

The euphemistic expression «wardrobe malfunction» emerged in the aftermath of the Super Bowl XXXVIII in 2004: it served as an excuse for Justin Timberlake to rip off Janet Jackson’s jacket during their performance, which exposed one of her nipples – a true scandal, since children were watching! Half of the country rolled on the floor laughing at the explanation, while the other half believed it. Details on: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Super_Bowl_XXXVIII_halftime_show_controversy; accessed 30 January 2022.
A woman in Beirut called Fatima contacts Saul, warning him of an imminent attack, but she wants to speak only to Carrie, who has recruited her years ago. Fatima is the wife of a Hezbollah leader, who physically abuses her; she wants to get out of the marriage and move to the US. Saul thus needs Carrie’s help, and after a few days of reflection, she flies to Cyprus and takes on a cover identity.

In Beirut, Carrie enjoys the dangerous game of cat and mouse. Chased by Lebanese security officers, she escapes through a bazaar, and we see her happily grinning. She loves the excitement and the danger. From Fatima, whom she meets in a mosque after the service, Carrie learns that Abu Nazir will meet Fatima’s husband in Beirut in a few days. The CIA sets up an operation to have Abu Nazir and the Hezbollah leader killed by snipers. When Abu Nazir and his heavily armed entourage arrive in Beirut, Brody is in the situation room following the operation with Vice President Walden and top US government and military officials. He sends Abu Nazir a warning text, and the terrorist escapes at the last second. Carrie, Fatima, Saul, and a male CIA operative are about to leave in an SUV, which an angry mob is physically attacking, but Carrie reasons that there must be some source material or documentation belonging to Fatima’s husband in their flat. She rushes up to the apartment and grabs a bag and some papers. Several nerve-racking minutes later, she escapes from a male mob, makes it back down to the SUV, and the team leaves. But the immense risk she has put the team and herself through is worth it: in the bag, Saul finds a USB stick with the video Brody had made before the Capitol shooting, proof of his treason.

After the debriefing at CIA Headquarters, Carrie is in her apartment, lonely and suicidal since the CIA has not reinstated her. So desperate is she that she drinks white wine and swallows a lot of sleeping pills, but her stomach cannot take them. Her doorbell rings: it is Saul, straight from the airport. He shows her Brody’s video, and Carrie is in tears of relief: «I was right!»

Since Saul has Brody’s video to prove that he is a traitor and a terrorist, CIA director Estes gives the green light for a new operation:

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24 HL, S2:E3, 51:02.
keeping Brody under surveillance. Carrie is reinstated, joins the team in the safe house and meets new operative Peter Quinn, portrayed by Rupert Friend (*1981).

The team’s next step is to let Brody know that Carrie is back at the CIA, to lure him into action and make him reveal his contacts. On his way to the Headquarters, Brody spots Carrie walking out of the building; they exchange a few friendly words, and Brody informs Roya that Carrie is back at the CIA. Lonely Brody drinks at a Washington hotel bar; he has left the family home. He calls Carrie, and they have a drink and a chat. She later shows up in front of his hotel room, provoking him with the information about his video. The CIA barges in and arrests Brody. As head of the operation, Quinn plans the interrogation.

Quinn is loyal to Dar Adal, portrayed by F. Murray Abraham (*1939); Adal is a black operations specialist and an old acquaintance of Saul’s. A few minutes into the interrogation, Quinn suddenly drives a knife through Brody’s hand, inflicting physical pain to make him psychologically vulnerable. Immediately, operatives drag Quinn out of the interrogation room – now, it’s Carrie’s moment. She plays the good cop, the friendly and understanding interrogator; this is part two of Quinn’s plan. Appealing to Brody’s sense of honour as a marine and their past relationship, she tells him that deep down she knows he is a good man, a decent and honourable man. Switching off the cameras is a further sign that he can trust her, a clever move by her, designed to soften him up. After just a few minutes, Carrie breaks Brody: if he tells them everything about Abu Nazir now, the CIA won’t press charges. There won’t be a trial, no noisy press occupying the family’s front lawn, and he can walk out today as a free man and a CIA employee, on top of that. Carrie thus makes Brody a rational offer he cannot refuse. This is not a Machiavellian offer, since the Florentine would most probably suggest eliminating Brody, who is a traitor and therefore cannot be trusted. But Carrie sees his potential, recruits him, turning him into one of theirs, thus offering Brody a way out from the hold Abu Nazir has over him. She drives him home, and when wife Jessica asks him to
end the secrecy and lies for good, Brody replies that he is working for the CIA.

Since the CIA knows about the Gettysburg tailor, they send Quinn and a forensic team to the shop, where four men in black uniforms attack them. Then, the attackers break down a wall in the shop and get out some heavy weaponry. Quinn, shot and feigning death, sees them leave with the weapons.

Instructed by Saul and Carrie, Brody tells Roya that he is quitting; this puts Abu Nazir, who has arrived in Washington, under pressure of time. The Iraqi hides in a defunct factory, and once his gang have kidnapped Carrie, he has Brody at his beck and call. Carrie’s life for Walden’s – that is the deal. Abu Nazir tells Brody to get the number of Walden’s pacemaker in exchange for Carrie’s life. Brody finds the number in Walden’s office, frantically texts it to Abu Nazir, and he lets Carrie go. When Walden enters his office, he has heart problems; Abu Nazir’s guys have stopped the pacemaker electronically, and Walden dies. Brody watches him die and tells him about Issa, whom he loved like his own son. This is Brody and Abu Nazir’s revenge for the bombing of the Iraqi school.

Carrie suspects that Abu Nazir is still hiding in the factory compound. Why? After showering Carrie with obscene words, arrogant and stupid Roya tells Carrie in the interrogation room that Abu Nazir would never run. Unlike others, Carrie takes this information verbally and seriously, and on her command, the FBI starts a fresh search of the compound. She is right again: when the police officers find him, Abu Nazir commits suicide by cop.25

Carrie and Brody spend some days at the cabin at the lake and talk about their future together. By now, it is clear that Carrie is as much in love with Brody as he is with her. Top CIA officials and some two hundred of Washington’s political elite gather for Walden’s funeral. It is held at the CIA Headquarters in Langley because he is a former director of the organization. Carrie and Brody leave the commemoration hall and go up to her office to have an amorous

encounter. Looking out of the window, Brody notices that his car has been moved close to the entrance of the building – wham! A huge explosion destroys the lower parts of the building. Brody convinces Carrie that he did not place the bomb, which has killed Cynthia Walden and her teenage son Finn, director Estes and most of the persons attending the funeral. With Carrie’s help, Brody flees to Canada. Abu Nazir’s weapons from the tailor’s shop were a diversion; he had his men place the bomb in Brody’s car because he anticipated Walden’s funeral would be held at Langley. Abu Nazir has killed more than two hundred people and outwitted the CIA, his principal enemy.

Series 3 starts with Saul as the new CIA director. He puts a bounty of USD 10 million on Brody’s head. Carrie is off her medication, and, after having physically attacked Saul and colleagues at a restaurant, making their lunch an unforgettable experience, she is in psychiatric detention. The CIA have sacked her, and her professional reputation is zero since she has helped traitor and terrorist Brody escape. Her bank account is frozen, her car impounded, and nobody trusts her. She is a pariah in Washington. A lawyer called Bennet offers her a job; she accepts. Her people have forsaken her, but to Iran’s secret service, she is an asset. Carrie shows up at Saul’s house at night after making sure she is not followed. They have made contact. The operation is on.

Saul’s plan is to turn Major General Majid Javadi, the head of Iran’s secret service, into a long-term CIA asset, to change Iran’s nuclear policy. Farah, member of an Iranian oppositional family and financial specialist, finds evidence that Javadi has transferred millions of dollars from the Revolutionary Guards’ accounts to his accounts abroad. Carrie is the bait, and Javadi has taken it. Blackmailed into cooperation with the CIA, greedy and ruthless Javadi sticks to Saul’s deal, but hastens to slaughter his ex-wife and daughter-in-law in a brutal attack at their Washington home. I think Javadi killed the women to demonstrate to Saul and himself that he is still an independent operator – which, of course, he is not anymore. Therefore, this is not a Machiavellian move, since not related to the
state, but to Javadi’s personal frustration, mobilizing him to do something to get even with Saul. It is a cruel act of bravado, since he is painfully aware that he has lost out to Saul, an American Jew, hence a twofold arch enemy.

In the meantime, Brody has made it to South America. A band of Columbian drug dealers, blissfully unaware of the price Saul has put on Brody’s head, since they consume their own product, sell the American to a Venezuelan crime gang. The gang holds him captive in a Caracas slum, in a decrepit and unfinished high building referred to as the «Tower of David».

The gay and paedophile physician on the gang’s payroll hooks Brody up on heroin, so that he can’t flee. By the time Saul arrives in the slum to hand over the bounty, Brody is a junkie. Saul’s team bring him back home to the US, and he slowly recovers with medical care and physical training.

If Saul’s plan to turn Javadi into a CIA asset is the first phase of his plan, the second phase is to have Brody eliminate Danesh Akbari, the current leader of the Revolutionary Guards. With Akbari dead, Javadi will become the leader of the Revolutionary Guards, the most powerful man in Iran, and hence under Saul’s control. The logical beauty of this plan is perfect, a Machiavellian plan. Also because of his feelings for Carrie, Brody is eager to prove his loyalty to the CIA and begin the operation; he is back to his former fitness and has a clear mind.

The CIA gets Brody across the Iraq-Iran border at immense human cost, and Javadi brings him to Teheran. When US marine sniper Nicholas Brody, a Muslim, and confidant of the murdered hero Abu Nazir asks Iran for political asylum, condemning the US as a devilish state, he is a star on Iranian national TV. Brody meets Abu Nazir’s widow, who has found refuge in Iran and is close to Akbari. She arranges a meeting. Carrie is in Teheran to organize the extraction of Brody and herself.

Brody meets Akbari in his office and tells him how grateful he is for the political asylum. Then, he asks Akbari about Abu Nazir. It all started here in this office, Akbari replies. In that moment,

26 HL, S2:E3.
something in Brody’s mind snaps and he kills Akbari with an ashtray, hides the body behind the desk and walks out of the heavily guarded building. After he has rid himself of the syringe with poison, which was the original plan, Carrie picks him up, and they drive to a farm, waiting for the marines to extract them. In the quiet of the night, Carrie tells Brody that she is expecting his child, and they are happy, looking forward to a future together at home. When the Revolutionary Guards raid the building and arrest Brody, Carrie immediately knows that somebody in the US has betrayed them. Who?

Andrew Lockhart, an ambitious senator shortlisted to become the next CIA director, and Dar Adal have betrayed the extraction plan to Javadi, who is now the leader of the Revolutionary Guards. If their betrayal of Brody is a Machiavellian decision, they pursue two goals: first, to damage Saul’s reputation, hence prevent him ever being reappointed CIA director, and second, to eliminate the traitor Brody, whom Saul has hired as an agent. Back in her hotel, Carrie meets Javadi, who tells her that a military tribunal has sentenced Brody to death. The public hanging is scheduled for 4 am. Carrie calls Brody in prison; he is at peace, accepts his fate and wants to die. Carrie and Farah’s uncle, her contact in Teheran, attend the execution. In a heart-breaking scene, Carrie, visibly pregnant, watches Akbari’s widow put the noose around Brody’s neck and spit into his face. A huge crane lifts him up, and Carrie’s face is the last thing dying Brody sees.

My friend Jabbar Moradi, an Iranian citizen of Kurdish extraction, explains the particularity of hanging by crane: «The choice of a crane for execution sounds to me an unfortunate coincidence of technology and a barbaric action still in practice, and nothing more. I would say the fact that the regime wants to make a show out of the execution (they perform some public ones; and the non-public ones are so hidden that often the news comes out only days after the execution) is not unique or new, nor is the practice limited to this country. There is a culture surrounding public executions. A lot of people gather to watch, some even take their kids and grab a snack or two! The government often announces the date of the execution and who the condemned criminal is. Mostly, they claim the culprit is a serial killer or rapist or something similar to trigger more interest in
The story of Carrie and Brody ends at the CIA headquarters four months later: Lockhart is the new CIA director. He vehemently refuses Carrie’s demand to honour Brody with a star on the wall of fallen CIA heroes. With Javadi in power, Iran’s nuclear policy has changed: international experts now have access to Iran’s nuclear factories, which is proof that Saul’s plan is working, that Javadi is politically sustainable and efficient. After a commemoration for fallen CIA heroes, the ceremonial hall is dark, and everybody has left. With a felt-tip pen, lonely Carrie draws a star for Brody on the wall, honouring his sacrifice.

Carrie’s defection, series 8

Is Carrie a traitor? Why did she defect to Russia? At the beginning of the final season, series 8, we see Carrie recovering. After the GRU has exchanged her for two Russian agents the CIA had captured, she is in a Washington psychiatric ward, healing slowly and getting physically fit.

After her capture in Moscow at the end of series 7, Yevgeni Gromov had stopped her medication because she had refused to make an official statement that Russia was not involved in the murder of general Jamie McClendon, whom GRU captain Simone Martin, the on-and-off girlfriend of White House chief of staff David Wellington, had had poisoned in prison to make US President Elizabeth Keane the main suspect. Paranoid Keane had hundreds of Washington’s administrative personnel and politicians in all institutions arrested after she barely escaped an attempt at her life.

seeing justice done. I can imagine since more people are around, a higher more visible spot can be provided by the crane rather than a normal execution stand.» E-mail conversation with Moradi on 21 December 2021.

Israeli spy Eli Cohen (1924–1965), who had infiltrated the highest echelons of Syria’s government, was also executed by public hanging, though not from a crane, as shown in the Netflix film *The Spy*: [https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eli-Cohen](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Eli-Cohen); accessed 21 December 2021.
Her enemies had referred to her presidency as fascist, and she had been further dividing the country, trying to oppress any criticism of her decisions. The GRU’s plot was to use the growing hatred of Keane to Russia’s advantage: an unpopular US president having issued the order to have a very popular US general killed in prison would prompt further civil unrest, thus further weaken the US from within. This Russian plan is a superb example of applied Machiavellianism, beautiful in its perfectly rounded logic. Your democracy is weak because of your First Amendment, which allows me to manipulate public opinion against your president.

The GRU’s plan almost succeeds, but Yevgeni underestimates Simone Martin’s emotional hurt on learning that his feelings for her are fake, just a show to recruit her for the GRU and have her kill General McLendon. Here, we see what British author Graham Greene (1904–1991) so aptly called The Human Factor: Simone Martin’s disappointed love for Yevgeni. Love is a human factor, since feelings make actions unpredictable. If I am driven by hatred, love, envy or contempt, my actions will prompt different results or outcomes, and it is impossible for other individuals to predict how I will act and what I will decide.

It was Carrie, who used Yevgeni’s devious move with perfect logic, telling Martin that she was in a relationship with Yevgeni. Carrie’s little Machiavellian lie, that Yevgeni was just using Martin for his own goals, prompted Martin’s defection from the GRU to the CIA. Carrie sacrificed herself when she had the Russian authorities arrest her so that Saul and the team with Martin could fly out of Moscow. Her loyalty, quick thinking and steely willingness to see an operation through have no limits.

US President Keane, blinded by her arrogance, lack of humility and paranoia, has brought the US to the brink of civil war, posing an internal threat to the US constitution. Yet, as unpopular and even hated by some citizens as she is, she eventually does have the grace, patriotism and insight to step down and help the country heal with

a new president. Her Vice President Ralph Warner from the other party follows her into office.

Carrie has flashbacks and nightmares, incapable of telling reality apart from delusions. As she has been in Russian detention for 213 days without her medication, the CIA naturally mistrust her; the Russians might have turned her. She fails the polygraph test. In the meantime, Saul oversees the peace negotiations of the Afghan government with the Taliban in Doha, Qatar. Max is with a platoon at the Afghan-Pakistan border to install a listening device, and Saul needs Carrie in Kabul because of her contacts and expertise.

When Carrie waits in front of Afghan Vice-President Abdul Qadir G’ulom’s office, she sees Yevgeni and his GRU chums walking out. Back at the Kabul CIA station, she receives an anonymous note with the name of Samira Noori on it. G’ulom had had Samira’s husband, a journalist, killed because he had criticized G’ulom’s regime. Carrie and her team go through Samira’s apartment, and she wonders: why is there a burka hanging in Samira’s wardrobe? Samira is a modern educated Afghan woman; why would she have a burka, a symbol of the Taliban’s stone-age ideology?

Again, Carrie’s out-of-the-box thinking and talent for psychological assessment are spot on; she sees what nobody else sees. She finds a USB stick sewn into the burka. The stick has evidence of G’ulom’s corruption racket: he has billed the US millions of dollars for the building of an army base in Afghanistan and a modern Afghan army, both of which exist only on paper. The CIA now has leverage on G’ulom to make him support the peace talks, Saul’s Doha Framework.

Saul is in Pakistan to meet Haissam Haqqani, leader of the Taliban. He senses that Haqqani wants peace too and offers him a meeting to talk. Too much blood has been shed on both sides. Haqqani’s son Jalal, envious of his father’s power, works for the Pakistani secret service, headed by Tasneem Qureishi, who is as beautiful and ruthless as she is ambitious and patriotic. Envious son Jalal betrays Saul and Haqqani’s meeting to Tasmeen, and Haqqani barely survives a Pakistani bomb attack on his convoy when on his way to meet
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Saul. Haqqani’s Taliban kidnap Saul. Haqqani listens in on his son’s mobile and learns about his betrayal to the Pakistanis. When Jalal shows up, his father throws him out into the streets like a dog. Tasneem and her men pick him up, and Haqqani releases Saul. He trusts him.

Wherever Carrie goes, Yevgeni does not seem to be far away. In an underground expat bar, where she is having a drink with her CIA colleagues, he tells her that it was he who gave her the contact to Samira Noori. A few days later, they meet up on a square, heavily monitored by CIA station chief Mike Dunn and Jenna, a field agent. Carrie doesn’t know that her own people are observing her every move. When Yevgeni shows up, they can’t hear a thing because the Muezzin has just begun his prayer on the loudspeakers above the square. The GRU is meticulous when planning a simple meeting. Yevgeni tells Carrie that he had saved her life back in Moscow; she had hanged herself in her cell, and he had stormed in at the last minute. Is Yevgeni trying to recruit Carrie for the GRU or is he in love with her? Probably both.

Carrie suggests to US President Warner, portrayed by Beau Bridges (*1941), to visit Kabul to support the Doha Framework with his authority and power, even more so as the US plans a withdrawal of their troops, once the Doha Framework is in place.

On her way to Bagram airport, Carrie receives a desperate call from Samira: her Taliban brother-in-law and his cronies are about to abduct her to her native village. He will force her into marriage, as, according to the law, a brother has to take care of the widow of his brother. We see again how courageous Carrie is when a human life is at stake. She commands the driver to rush to Samira’s house. When the Taliban frogmarch Samira, whom they have put in a burka, towards their car, Carrie and her team have already sabotaged the car, then threaten them with their superior weapons. Carrie pulls Samira into their SUV, and they leave. Samira is safe.

President Warner lands in Bagram airport, and Carrie welcomes him. He expresses his gratitude because, thanks to her, Simone Martin had spoken out in a hearing, revealing the GRU as the culprits in the
murder of General McLendon. Warner and his bodyguards get on a helicopter, referred to as Chalk 1; Afghan President Daoud flies out in Chalk 2. The presidents meet at a US base in the mountains, and Warner tells the troops that they are going home soon. Everybody is happy. Max is supposed to fly out with the President’s entourage, but he changes his mind at the last minute. Slightly autistic and shy, Max enjoys the camaraderie with the soldiers, having friends.

Both helicopters crash on their way back to Bagram airbase, and everybody is dead. Have the Taliban shot down the choppers to sabotage the Doha Framework? G’ulom and Tasmeen opposed the Doha Framework from the beginning, G’ulom because he once and for all wants to liquidate the Taliban, and Tasmeen because she does not want the US to interfere in Pakistan’s sovereignty. G’ulom, who is President of Afghanistan now, uses the situation to declare martial law, blaming the Taliban for the murder of both presidents. He orders his troops to arrest any Taliban they catch and intern them in Kabul’s football stadium.

In the meantime, Carrie scrutinizes the helicopter flight records at Bagram airbase and finds out that the army regularly switches helicopters; she thinks the choppers have crashed because of mechanical failure. She calls Max and asks him to get the black box of the President’s helicopter, because they need evidence to save the Doha Framework. Max, protected by four marines, finds it, but a platoon of Taliban attacks them; all four soldiers die, and Max is abducted by a Taliban, who later peddles the black box to a bazaar, unaware what it is.

Carrie is desperate; she hasn’t heard from Max since he has confirmed to have found the black box. She asks Yevgeni for help, and the GRU locates the village where Max is held captive. Carrie is supposed to travel to Germany on Saul’s command, and Jenna, who admires her, escorts her to the gate, but Carrie escapes and Yevgeni picks her up.

They drive to the village, where Max is held and pay for his life, but Jalal and his cronies show up. Jalal threatens to shoot Max if his father is executed. Haqqani has turned himself in to G’ulom’s government because Saul has promised that he and Tasmeen have
found a judge who will acknowledge his innocence. But minutes before the trial, the court switches judges, most probably at G’ulom’s behest. In a rushed trial that is a mockery of correct judicial procedure in a rule-of-law state, the court sentences Haqqani to death within minutes of the trial opening. G’ulom’s troops execute him. Jalal shoots Max to avenge his father, which is what his Taliban cronies expect him to do as a respectful son.

When Carrie and Yevgeni finally find the flight recorder, she pays up and has a brief look at its content before Yevgeni drives a needle with a sedative into her neck and sets off with the black box. New US President Benjamin Hayes is a weakling, hesitating to have the site of the crashed helicopters bombed to pre-empt the Taliban parading dead President Warner’s body on social media. Hayes has also hired John Zabel as his foreign policy advisor. Zabel has never served a day in the army but loves to show muscle, especially since a journalist friend has sent him a clip in which Jalal claims at a Taliban meeting that it was he who shot down the choppers. Jalal lies, because he has to strengthen his position as the new leader of the Taliban. While his father wanted to make peace, the Taliban will never give up fighting the Satan USA under Jalal’s leadership. Jalal is a war monger, feeding his malicious ego by sowing hatred and violence. Zabel advises President Hayes to bomb the site of the crashed choppers and then threaten Pakistan with war if they do not hand over Jalal within 48 hours. In this highly sensitive atmosphere in such a volatile region, the world is but days away from a nuclear war.

Carrie, back in Washington, informs Saul that in the few minutes she had to inspect the black box before Yevgeni sedated her, she found evidence that the helicopters crashed because of technical failure. Yevgeni is willing to hand over the black box to the US, if Carrie reveals the identity of a CIA asset at the top level of Russia’s government. Tit for tat.29 Saul denies that such a spy

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29 An explanation of tit for tat can be found on: https://grammarist.com/idiom/tit-for-tat/; accessed 22 February 2022.
exists, but Carrie does not believe him. She is sure that Saul is hiding his deepest secret from her until the moment she needs to know, and she takes over from him – when Saul is dead. The time Yevgeni has given her to identify the spy has run out. Yevgeni instructs Carrie in a video that if she cannot find Saul’s spy, she has to kill him. Tit for tat: Saul’s life for the black box, and no nuclear war.

This GRU plan is perfectly logical and Machiavellianism in practise: the liquidation of a threat to ensure the sustainability of the state. Saul’s death will automatically deactivate his spy in Moscow since a dead Saul can no longer issue instructions and receive information from his asset. Carrie wants the black box to prove that the presidents died in a crash caused by technical failure; the black box is the evidence she needs to convince President Hayes of Haqqani’s innocence, to save the Doha Framework and avoid a nuclear war.

Yet, as long as Russia has the black box, Carrie has either to identify Saul’s spy or kill him or watch helplessly as the US enters into a nuclear war with Pakistan. Machiavellian thought is based on the rational analysis of the facts, logical thinking and focussed on the principal goal: to hold on to political power or a position of strength at all costs, while pre-emptively inflicting the highest damage on the enemy, in the rational expectation and empirical knowledge that the enemy will do exactly the same.

Field agent Jenna, who considers leaving the CIA after she has witnessed Jalal’s bombing of a bus with US Special Forces at the Pakistan-Afghan border, helps Carrie: in the CIA library, Jenna finds an old asset of Saul’s. Young Saul, stationed in East Berlin from 1982 to 1987, had brought GRU officer Andrei Kuznetsov through the East German border minefields to West Berlin in 1987. Carrie visits the Russian in his house in the countryside, presenting herself as a CIA historian, and Kuznetsov shows her a photo of his English teacher and the platoon he fought with. He tells her that Saul used to communicate with him by means of books bound in red leather. Carrie is staying at Saul’s house, and looking at his library, she sees

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30 See footnote 9 for my usage of Arendt’s definitions of power and strength.
a lot of red leather-bound books. Scrutinizing the books, she uncovers all CIA operations Saul’s asset was involved in. She finds out that the Russian spy hides his messages in the books’ bindings and sends the volumes to an antiquarian bookshop in Washington, addressed to a Professor Rabinov.

Saul is in New York; the UN Security Council is desperately trying to negotiate between the parties. Saul knows Carrie: he is certain that it is only a matter of time before she finds out the identity of his asset. He warns his spy, Anna Pomerantsova, the GRU’s chief translator. In 1986, young, attractive and blonde Anna had been an English teacher at the GRU in East Berlin, and after her entire class had been executed following Kuznetsov’s defection, she had turned against her government. Saul had hired her, after Anna had shot two GRU agents who had been about to arrest Saul. She had saved his life, proving that he could trust her.

Carrie has identified Anna from Kuznetsov’s picture, which is again proof of her out-of-the-box thinking: her rational way of combining facts and her ability to understand a context with all its seemingly independent variables. She asks Saul to admit that Anna is his secret asset, but Saul refuses. When Carrie pleads with him to avoid the impending nuclear war, Saul dryly tells her the war is a regional one. The safety of his Moscow asset is more important. Carrie does not tell Yevgeni about Anna; she needs evidence. She promises Yevgeni to kill Saul, but she also tells him that she has a plan B. If Saul does not reveal the identity of his spy, there is a way of finding out. Yevgeni’s men are about to poison Saul, when Carrie aborts the operation, telling them to wait. This is proof of Yevgeni’s trust in her: he lets her command his agents, hence lead the operation, certain that she will deliver. He is patient.

Carrie visits Saul’s sister Dorit, who lives in Gush Etzion on the Israeli West Bank and tells her that Saul has died of a heart attack. That is a Machiavellian lie to achieve what she needs – information. Dorit packs a suitcase to travel to the funeral in Washington and gives Carrie an envelope Saul has left for her. It is a USB stick: in his video, Saul reveals the identity of his most secret asset in Russia.
Carrie shows Yevgeni, who rushes into Dorit’s house, Saul’s video. This is the evidence Yevgeni needs. He informs his boss, GRU colonel Mirov, via text message. Colonel Mirov at the UN in New York is truly shocked: his confidant and employee, who could be his mother and whom he tenderly addresses with Anitchka, is a traitor. After a few seconds, he goes after her with his agents. Warned by Saul, Scott Ryan, a confidant of Saul’s, and Anna flee to the basement, the Russian agents chasing them. They are trapped: the Russians are about to break in the door, and Anna asks Scott to give her his gun. He refuses, but Anna calls Saul, and Scott eventually obeys Saul who orders him to hand Anna his gun. She shoots herself, with Saul witnessing her suicide on the phone. She has been loyal to him until the last second of her life.

Sitting on Dorit’s porch and watching some cute little Israeli boys playing football, Carrie is desperate. Football is a strategic game: lose or win. Yevgeni receives a text from Mirov that Anna has killed herself. He tells Carrie. Thus, Anna is not on the way to the infamous Lubyanka, as desperate Carrie had thought just a few minutes ago. Anna’s suicide changes everything, and in a few seconds, Carrie hatches a plan. She and Yevgeni rush to Ramallah, a Russian controlled airbase on Palestinian territory. Since Israel is CIA territory, due to the alliance between the US and Israel, they must get out quickly to avoid Carrie’s arrest. In the eyes of the CIA, Carrie is now a traitor and defector. If caught, she would have her last meal in a US high security prison.

It is a truly great day for the peace-loving Russian nation, and a field day for the GRU at that. At the press conference set up by the UN delegation of the Russian Federation, Colonel Mirov presents to the global public the analysis of the black box. The presidents died in an accident caused by mechanical failure. He asks US president Hayes to stop the aggression against Pakistan, as the black box proves that Haqqani, his son Jalal and the Taliban are innocent. In

Machiavellian terms, the Russian press conference is a clever, rational, and legitimate move. Why?

Yevgeni’s deal with Carrie was to exchange the black box for the identity of the CIA asset. Once Mirov has learned that Anna is Saul’s asset, the deal would prompt him to hand over the black box to the US. Yet, as Anna has committed suicide, the GRU cannot interrogate her anymore. Therefore, the GRU–CIA deal is null and void, and Russia is no longer obliged to hand over the black box to the US. On the contrary: Russia uses her analysis of the black box for a striking PR stunt.

Colonel Mirov, a convincing actor who displays deep concern for world peace, asks US President Hayes to turn round his jet fighters. Furthermore, at this point in time neither Carrie nor Saul has any leverage over Russia. Moscow is thus completely free to act as she pleases, that is, to realize her own interests in the chess game called global politics.

Chess is an achievement of civilization; it obeys the rules of logical thinking, personal accountability and, at the end of the day, trust. If I play chess, I trust that my adversary sticks to the same rules as I do: we agree on the procedure. Chess is the victory of civilization over the law of the jungle, or the state of nature, a condition Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) so aptly defined as «the war of every man against every man».

Russia is therefore not a rogue actor; she keeps to the rules of chess. Her future actions are predictable, because they follow unimpassioned logic, and, with regard to nuclear power, the logic of the global balance of power. Apart from the fact that the Russian Federation is not a democracy, which to the US government is a major caveat, Russia acts according to the civilizing rules of chess, that is, the strength she has in the UN Security Council and the loyalty and support of her allies.

Colonel Mirov’s press conference makes Russia look peace-loving and everybody else stupid and incompetent, killing three birds with one stone. In front of the global audience, the US appears

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as a war monger, and Mirov is right, considering the facts. You dumb cowboys, don’t you do regular maintenance checks on your helicopters? Don’t you stupid cattle herders keep up a strict regime of servicing your aircraft? Mirov does not say this explicitly, but that is what he insinuates. Furthermore, Russia identifies Afghan President G’ulom and Taliban leader Jalal, again between the lines, as liars, while the Pakistani government, Russia’s ally, looks like an innocent victim, pushed into a nuclear war by the almighty US. Wellington and Saul are relieved, and President Hayes and Zabel have to call back the troops, which is humiliating to the core. In global politics, chess, and football: USA vs. Russian Federation = 0-1.

Two years later: a beautiful summer night in Moscow. We see a splendidly lit Kremlin and the River Moskva from Yevgeni’s gorgeous apartment in Moscow’s city centre. Carrie is putting on mascara, preparing to go out. Yevgeni, the perfect Russian gentleman and visibly in love with her, compliments her on her looks and gives her a beautiful necklace as a gift for her achievement. What is that achievement, one wonders?

Carrie goes to her office and looks at the wall with her notes. She has written a book about CIA operations, using her name and picture on the cover. This book is an act of high treason. She has dedicated it to her daughter Franny, a redhead like her father Nicholas Brody. Franny lives with Carrie’s sister Maggie and her family in Washington, because in series 7, Carrie had accepted the fact that she is incapable of taking care of her child, because of her bi-polar condition and her CIA profession. In psychological and organizational terms, Carrie is not fit to be a mother and she knows it.

She and Yevgeni attend a concert of black US jazz musicians. Carrie excuses herself and goes to the washroom, where a beautiful brunette, who looks like an older Jenna with a lot of make-up, is powdering her nose. The brunette’s handbag looks exactly like Carrie’s. Carrie picks up the brunette’s handbag, and the brunette Carrie’s. How has Carrie, constantly observed by the GRU, managed to make contact with the CIA station in Moscow? We shall never find out.
Saul and sister Dorit are clearing out his house in Washington, when he receives a package, addressed to Professor Rabinov. It is *Tyranny of Secrets* – Carrie’s book. Saul is astonished, but a gut feeling makes him scrutinize the book’s binding – and there, he finds Carrie’s message: «Greetings from Moscow, professor. The Russian defence system ...» Saul grins, happy to learn that Carrie is now his new asset at the almighty core of the GRU. She has replaced Anna, and, once again, outwitted everybody.

**Conclusion**

First, who leads, guides, and influences whom? I think that both Carrie and Saul lead, influence and guide each other, much like family members in an almost symbiotic relationship. They are the perfect team to plan and execute CIA operations.

Saul is responsible for CIA operations such as bringing about by means of blackmail Javadi and Brody’s elimination of Akbari, while Carrie is his best analyst with important contacts in the field. She speaks Arabic, Farsi, French and Russian. She also excels in her out-of-the-box thinking and courage in dangerous situations and sees what everybody else overlooks. Carrie always looks at the tiniest details and acts in line with her analysis of whatever situation she faces.

Although Saul is her boss, Carrie often acts independently, hence against his directives. She is the only one to suspect that al-Qaeda has turned Brody and begins a relationship with him to gather evidence of his betrayal. Back then, everybody else in Washington, even Saul, is smitten with the American hero, but Carrie sees beyond his mask, which Abu Nazir has forced Brody to put on by means of psychological torture. While the team’s SUV is being attacked by a mob of angry men in Beirut, she rushes up to Fatima’s apartment to gather evidence and information. Everybody in their right mind would

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33 HL, S8:E12, 3:01.
have left immediately, but Carrie takes that immense risk and finds material that incriminates Brody, thus providing the CIA with leverage over him.

Carrie needs Saul to watch over her when she doubts herself or suffers from depression, a symptom of her bipolar condition. Saul is her anchor because he accepts her the way she is and appreciates her commitment to CIA operations.

Carrie’s loyalty to Saul has no limits: she lets herself be captured by the GRU to save the secret of Simone Martin’s defection from the GRU to the CIA, paying the high price of her sanity. Her decision is completely rational: if her arrest by the GRU is what it takes to see through Martin’s defection, that’s what she does. She immediately understands that after Anna’s suicide, Saul needs a new asset in Moscow. Therefore, she defects to Moscow, destroys for good her reputation as a CIA operative and makes Yevgeni believe that he has recruited her. Her book revealing past CIA operations is just a smokescreen for her cover as Saul’s new Moscow asset, keeping GRU analysts busy with the analysis of the past, while she is providing Saul top secret information from the GRU headquarters now. At that moment, when she decides to defect, she knows that she can never go back home, never see her sister Maggie or her daughter Frannie, that her life will most probably end in Moscow – but she does it anyway. I think she planned her defection seconds after Yevgeni told her about Anna’s suicide in Gush Etzion, when she was watching the cute little Israeli boys playing football. That’s how quickly she thinks things through.

Who is more of a Machiavellian? I think it is Saul. He reactivates Carrie, whenever he needs her expertise and contacts, completely ignoring her fragile mental health. Saul uses Carrie for his plans because he knows that she will deliver results. Carrie is sometimes ruthless, when she needs to get information, but in a wider perspective the only dictum she follows is the first Machiavellian principle: be kind and provide stability. She always tries to save lives and achieve her operative goals at the same time. She breaks Brody in minutes, using their feelings for one another to make him confess.
In that interrogation, she tells him the truth – and Brody senses it. That is why he confesses. He trusts her. Whom do I trust? I trust the person who tells me the truth, even if the truth does not shed a positive light on my decisions and actions. I trust the person who knows me and still loves me.

She tells Simone Martin about Yevgeni’s fake feelings for her and lies to Dorit to get Saul’s USB stick. Carrie also displays a deep concern for human life in situations she can gain nothing from, thus defying Machiavellian logic for the sake of saving a human life: at great risk for the teams, she saves Samira in Kabul and Fatima in Beirut. A 21st-century Machiavelli would probably have advised her to act the same way in both cases: forget Samira and Fatima, they have done their deed, they are no longer of use to us. On the contrary: trying to save them will limit our operational range now.

The prospect of nuclear war forces Carrie to threaten Saul, but she doesn’t kill him, since she has a way out. She gets Yevgeni the evidence that Anna is Saul’s asset. Too bad for the GRU that Saul was quicker, anticipating the GRU’s arrest of his asset.

Saul shows his Machiavellianism when Carrie pressures him to reveal the identity of his Russian asset. He is not bothered if the US enter a nuclear war with Pakistan, since to his way of thinking, such a war is a regional one that the US is certain to win anyway. His asset is more important since Anna delivers information from the US’s principal enemy, Russia. Considering the political context, Saul is correct, and as a cold-war warrior he has the big picture in mind. Carrie also sees the big picture, but always finds a way out.

Saul could never have pulled off the Javadi operation without Carrie’s loyalty and her willingness to portray herself as a traitor to the CIA, upon which Javadi contacted her. At the high cost to her personal reputation, Carrie thus prepared the grounds for Saul’s Iranian operation.

Second, is Carrie a convincing example of political sustainability and political efficiency? Yes, to both. Carrie is politically sustainable because of her loyalty and intelligence, her willingness to protect her country at her own personal cost. She is a stable factor for the
CIA, always spot on, reliable, and endlessly loyal. Is Carrie politically efficient? Yes. How much more politically efficient do you have to be to have yourself, knowing what awaits you, arrested by the GRU?

Lastly, with regard to the three Machiavellian principles mentioned in the introduction: who fares worst and best in Machiavellian terms? The three principles are: 1, prudence and humanity – or embodying kindness and stability; 2, the necessity of appearing to have good qualities – or good PR; and 3, the avoidance of being hated – or know thy subjects.

US President Elizabeth Keane deserves an Olympic gold medal for being the worst Machiavellian in HL: driven by her ego, she disregards all three principles. So eager is Keane to convince the US citizens of her capabilities as the first female US president that she is neither prudent nor kind, and that is the reason why US citizens do not trust her. Her PR, which she controls, against the advice of her loyal chief of staff Wellington, is so lousy that it portrays her in a negative fashion. The more she shows muscle, the more the citizens hate her; this is evidence that she is completely unaware of how her citizens think. Guided by her paranoia, Keane has lost the ability to understand the citizens’ concerns. She is full of herself, shuts down justified criticism and does not understand that in politics, one’s image is as important as one’s unpopular decisions. Yet, eventually, she does step down, probably because she has begun to understand how wrong she has been during her presidency.

The Olympic gold medal for being the best Machiavellian goes to Yevgeni Gromov and Colonel Mirov, thus to the GRU, fulfilling Machiavellian principles I, II and III. Why? To the Russian citizens, deprived from a free press, the GRU’s press conference at the UN in New York is a smashing success, since it portrays Russia as a prudent and kind global actor. The Russian Federation is factually right, and the GRU’s analysis of the black box proves that the US is a war monger; the Russian PR is very convincing, making their citizens proud of the GRU and the Russian government, thereby avoiding citizens’ hatred. To the mindset of a Russian patriot, the GRU represents an achievement of all three Machiavellian principles: kindness and
humanity, good PR and know thy citizens. Colonel Mirov and Yevgeni are the embodiment of loyalty to the Russian Federation’s political strength.

Again, in Machiavellian thinking, the political regime plays no role; democracy, human rights and a free press are not principal values to the Russian government, which concentrates on keeping its strength on a global scale.

A last word: who and what is Carrie? In the context of our Judaean-Christian culture and Western pop culture, Carrie Mathison is the female saviour of the world. Carrie is Superwoman. Blond, attractive, and young, she is a Christian female icon such as Diana, Princess of Wales, emotionally shattered, psychologically unstable but pursuing the good for mankind while being authentic. The series HL is a product of Western civilization, and CIA agent Carrie Mathison is saving mankind, while promoting the Christian commandments of love. Carrie is not Jesus, but his messenger.