The Langley Files: CIA's Podcast
File 007
CIA's First Chief Technology Officer Talks Start-Up Culture vs. Spy Culture

(music begins)

Walter: At CIA, we work around the clock and across the globe to help keep Americans and others around the world safe. Secrecy is often vital to our work.

Dee: But we are committed to sharing what we can when we can. So let us be your guides around the halls of Langley as we open our files and speak with those who have dedicated themselves to this mission.

Walter: These are their stories.

Walter and Dee: This is The Langley files.

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Walter: It's early 2021 and Director William J. Burns is taking the helm here at CIA, setting new priorities for the Agency and undertaking new initiatives. He knows that CIA will maintain its counterterrorism capabilities and its ability to help the United States, and its allies and partners around the world, monitor rogue states and other malign actors. But he also decides that CIA will be building new capabilities to handle two other key issues.

Dee: Like the rest of the US Government, Director Burns adds the (quote) "Long term geopolitical challenge of the People's Republic of China" to CIA's core priorities. He also recognizes the challenges posed by technology and other transnational issues and creates a new mission center dedicated to addressing those challenges. In addition to the new center, Director Burns creates a new position, Chief Technology Officer.

Walter: And for that job, Director Burns makes what some might say is an unusual choice for a senior intelligence official. He picks someone best known for his Silicon Valley startup successes. Nand Mulchandani, the Stanford-Harvard educated tech leader who made his foray into government by helping run the Pentagon's groundbreaking artificial intelligence program.

Dee: Mr. Mulchandani spends the better part of the next year working hard on pulling together an overall tech strategy for CIA.

Walter: And with the tech strategy complete, we're excited to have Nand on the show to give his first interview on the subject of being CTO since becoming CTO, here on The Langley Files. I'm Walter.

Dee: And I'm Dee.

Walter: Welcome back, everyone. The Langley Files has returned from a short break. It's time for Season Two.

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Dee: And we're back. Thank you, everyone for tuning in. Walter, how are ya?

Walter: Doing well, Dee, thanks for asking.

Dee: And Walter and I are very excited to sit down with our Agency's first Chief Technology Officer, Nand Mulchandani. Nand, thank you so much for joining us.

Nand: Thank you for having me. Is this, am I kicking off the next season?

Dee & Walter: You are!

Dee: Welcome to The Langley Files to do that. We appreciate it.

Nand: That's awesome!

Dee: It is awesome.

Nand: It is a lot of pressure.

Walter: Season two; more Langley, more files.

Walter: As Dee said, thank you so much for being with us. Um, and I want to say you obviously cut a bit of an unusual figure here at Langley as the jeans-wearing Silicon Valley-made member of CIA's senior leadership team. Uh, can we kick things off by asking you a bit about your background?

Nand: Yeah, absolutely! And, and before, before we jump into that, I do want to make a very, very important public announcement. Uh, I know David Cohen, our Deputy Director, has been uh, you know, was on one of the previous podcasts, actually, twice. Right?

Dee: He's been on our show once.

Nand: Once? Okay. Okay. Well, I heard that he's been publicly badmouthing the CTO office and, and what he calls, what I think he called the lax dress code at the office. So just for the record, is I am wearing a suit.

Dee: He is wearing a suit. We can attest to this.

Walter: It's very sharp!

Dee: It's a very sharp look, I like it.

Nand: There you go, there you. So, uh, old dogs can learn new tricks. But I also want to state that, you know, I I hit the mark, and he needs to expunge that from my record.

Dee: Duly noted. We will make sure he's aware of that.

Walter: That would be a question when he's next on the podcast.

Dee: Absolutely. Um, so we appreciate you being here. Um, and as Walter said, we'd love to hear, if you're willing to share, what you have in terms of your background.

Nand: Of course! Of course. So, um, I lived what you would think of as the fairytale Silicon Valley story. My parents, immigrants to the country. My dad was a mechanical and industrial engineer and literally moved to Silicon Valley to work at the seminal company of the Valley, which is Fairchild Semiconductor back in the late sixties, and even as a kid, I remember running around on those days. I guess you could run around on the semiconductor manufacturing floor as a kid. Um, but I grew up in Mountain View, California. I was born there and that's as central, you know, bullseye in Silicon Valley as you can get. And, um, grew up literally thinking about startups and the tech industry and startups is in my blood. I got a computer science degree in undergrad and literally I can remember back in 1991 taking

maybe the first flight out from New York to Mountain View to start at Sun Microsystems back in 1991. So, and then on to, you know, and I still remember having, and I still have it, is my dad's type written, hand drawn business plan for a company called Opto Tech, which was going to do optical character recognition using solid state electronics. And obviously, you know, now, with all this crazy stuff going on with AI, just looking back on it and flipping through it just to see how how things have happened, but tried my hand at a bunch of startups, again, a very Silicon Valley tale of meeting my co-founders in downtown Mountain View. People were having lunch, you know, the tech industry is such a freewheeling very quick meetings, very quick ideas, everybody jumping to stuff, speculate, I call it speculation, speed, and scale. Right? It's just all combined into this crazy mishmash and all of this, by the way, just when the intranet and internet were just hitting. I mean, it was a crazy time to look back.

Fast-forwarding and not to bore the the listeners with too much history, but I ended up basically doing four startups back to back. One company that we started in '96. Uh, Oracle acquired that. My second company that I started in the security space, uh, company called VMWare acquired that. Third company company called Open DNS that I joined as a CEO, and Cisco acquired that one. In my last company after a stint at a venture capital firm called Excel Partners ended up being acquired by Citrix. As a startup CEO and founder all you're thinking of every single day is you're not thinking great power competition, national security, government. These are abstract ideas in Washington, D.C. That's, you know, thousands of miles away. You're focused on can I make payroll next week? Or when am I going to close that big deal? What's the competitive environment looking like? It's, you know, it's national government at a small scale, and so there was no path to CIA. There was no path to national security. I think, in the back of my head, I thought, you know, that would be cool one day to do something else in government. It was very amorphous, but you never think about that. And that's not a thing that we used to think about 20-30 years ago in the Valley, because just the disconnect between, not disconnect, it's the equivalent of me saying, well, wow, it would be great if I was starring in Mission Impossible, right? Like you don't get up in the morning and think wow, you're gonna make such a career change. And so so here we are.

Dee: So I mean, that's a very extensive portfolio. And you said that you never kind of envisioned your path getting here, but, um, we know that I believe you came from DOD prior to CIA, right? So what, at what point did that that, you know, hit you that you're going to join into the foray of what government is?

Nand: Yeah, well, again. All these things just happened. You know, it's, it's hard looking back, thinking that you could have planned this, right? So originally, so here's the theory that I set out for. After my last company got acquired, I was pretty tired having done four companies and at some point in time there is a rinse and repeat aspect to it, in terms of just you know all the problems now, you know the challenges. The exact idea that you're going to do another startup, there's no formulaic thing to it. I at least believe at least my career has been, different spaces, different people, different VCs, different investors, different markets. I like keeping it mixed up a little bit. Keeps me, keeps me nimble and on my toes.

So the thesis was, actually a run for office was actually the original pivot that I was thinking of. And, uh, dragged the family down to graduate school at Stanford for a year. The fulcrum for the pivot was great, let's go to grad school, take some time. I wanted to check that box in my life. Did that. Ended up at the Harvard Kennedy School for a year. As preparation for this, and the run for office that I thought was going to happen, didn't happen. And so here I am, having taken all these national security classes. I had incredible professors at the Kennedy School. Actually, Nick Burns, who is our ambassador to China, was one of my professors. Graham Allison, Eric Rosenbach, Ash Carter. These are, like incredible people you see on TV. And so, I have this degree, and I'm unemployed. And so one thing led to another. Got introduced to this three star Air Force General, Jack Shanahan, who's been one of my mentors and a close friend. He was setting up this thing called the Joint Artificial Intelligence Center, which, in some sense

was the giant pivot that the DoD is trying to make around technology and others. And he needed a CTO and 30 minutes later it was, you know, love at first sight. You know, he needed a CTO, I had never stepped foot in the Pentagon, and so I ended up at the DoD just kind of pure happenstance.

This call came out of the blue, and I'll pause here for the dramatic effect. But, you know, nobody expects a call from the CIA.

Walter: So you you were living what most people would consider the Silicon Valley dream and then you were working this job at DoD. What was so compelling about joining the CIA that drew you away from those successes elsewhere?

Nand: I think that's almost a crazy question, because, why would you ever turn down this job? I mean, this is absolutely the coolest tech job in the world. I think so. And, and my kids think so, too, which is even even better. My 15 year old son actually thinks Dad's cool and my 10 year old she's kind of like, whatever…

Dee: What more do you need?

Nand: Yeah what is the CIA? Her biggest question at the swearing in was whether there was gonna be cake. So, so you see priorities. Listen, the thing is this, which is, well, every kid grows up wanting to be here, and, it's all the spy work. It's all cool stuff. It's all this and that, even pointing out say 20 years ago, rewinding back, the intersection of government and technology just didn't exist the way it does today. And there's some historical things right, which is Silicon Valley never really produced consumer tech. That was the realm of consumer electronics companies like Sony or others. Silicon Valley focused on enterprise tech. And then the PC existed. Obviously, Apple was there, but it was an aberration, right? We built chips. We built hardware. We built things. Government used them. But it was, you hand it over and it happens, and yes, we were involved. But the evolution of the tech industries both out here in D.C., versus or, you know, for government, and in Silicon Valley, were parallel. Government was hard tech, right? It's tanks. It's aircraft. It's hard things that one built that we didn't build in the Valley. But I think now that the Valley itself has dramatically changed over time. In some sense, we don't produce chips or operating, you know we do, but it's highly commoditized. It's it's that that tech is now very, very mature. And so what happened is Silicon Valley strayed into consumer tech, and all of a sudden it started impacting people's lives. Phones. The Valley did not produce phones. We didn't—the social media thing. We were never in the advertising market. The Valley reinvents itself a lot, and it has reinvented itself to the point where we're now impacting the general population. It is surprising even to people in the Valley how much of an impact it's having on the broader world. Most founders don't think that when they start companies in the Valley that we'll have that level of impact.

So, this intersection between tech and national security is a new one. And all of a sudden, now we have the ability, like at a place like this, every founder or other when we start a company thinks that they're going to change the world, but your horizon for changing the world is the product that you build or the market segment that you're operating in, right? There's a horizon and you feel like you're a frog in a pond and it's a pretty big pond. This is the biggest pond in the world. This is the whole world. So this idea that you know, if somebody gets an opportunity to come work here in any capacity, you're behind the curtain. You're in an elite part of the world that you see and do things that nobody else gets to see and do. And, the scale, it's a global scale. And so not to overplay it, but at this stage in my life and career, or at any stage, the ability to actually have that level of impact on the world is something that you just can't pass up. So this was a super easy decision for me. But it's also been, you know, incredibly challenging. But that's part of the job, right? Which Director Burns, the senior leadership team here, we're all together in is,

things have to change. The world is changing around us. And as an organization, we have to pivot, just like a small little tech start up out in the Valley, we're pivoting, based on kind of how things are going.

Actually the funny part is how the job offer came through, was I just met Director Burns. I'd never been to the Agency before. It was incredible, you know, the Seal, stars, and everything, and all of a sudden you get ushered up and there he is, Director Burns. Like, it's just not even conceivable to be, you know, completely on the outside. And then, um, I ended up in the parking lot, obviously, my phone was in my car, and there was this thing of, like, go back to your car and a phone call is going to come in a couple of minutes. And it was Director Burns and, talked about how he enjoyed the discussion. And it was a job offer, literally 10 minutes after we had met. And I thought, wow I was… And he's like, "Go, take your time, think about it," et cetera. I'm like, "No! Yeah. Where do I sign?"

Dee: I don't even have to leave the grounds.

Nand: Yeah, exactly. I'll just start right now. Just point me the direction, turn around, walk back in, get badged and get ready.

Dee: Um, so that is indeed a tale. I think that you, as explaining kind of the relationship between the tech industry and the Agency in terms of global impact, was there anything that you yourself were surprised at once you came on board here with the CIA? And is there anything beyond that unique partnership that we have with private industry that you wish Silicon Valley or the bigger, broader tech industry might know about CIA?

Nand: Yeah, that's a great question. I'll start by saying, um, people have no idea how bad the parking situation is here.

Walter: Oh, we know.

Dee: We do.

Nand: Yeah, that was, that was a shock. I think that that dynamic that I talked about right is these organizations growing up in kind of different coasts, different businesses, et cetera, it's almost like species evolving, you know, in different parts of the world, sort of meeting in the middle. The Agency does tech, just at incredible scale, in depth and breath. So, you know, the joke that I think Jennifer Ewbank or somebody told me is, you know, anywhere from lipstick to satellites.

Walter: Jennifer Ewbank being head of our...

Nand: Our head of DDI, one of our tech leaders…

Walter: Directorate of Digital Innovation…

Nand: Yeah, DDI, head of digital innovation. And, um, you know, that's, that's her phrase. And mine is shoe phones to Internet scale software and everything in between. But you can take your two contrasts, and that's the range of tech. And it's so unique because in the Valley or a tech company itself, or even any other organization or business out there, tends to specialize from a tech perspective in a certain set of areas to support their product lines. Here at the Agency, because we literally have an open-ended charter for the US Government to jump on any problem at anytime, anywhere in the world, to fix any problem, we have to have the entire toolkit of everything, and we can't be amateurs at it. We have to do this at scale and depth. So I get to see and do and engage with experts in every set of tech and, all the way from hard tech to, you know, I mean, you name it; space, batteries, power, bio, quantum, high performance computing, digital tech, et cetera.

You meet all these incredible people who could actually, by the way, just go out and start companies and put other people out of business in the tech world. Um, who work here, you know, because this is such a unique place. You get to do stuff that you can't do anywhere else. So that's one big, not surprise, but it was, it's something that people should know, is: we do tech at scale. And the CTO coming in and, you know, all this new tech pivot that we're doing is not a point that we weren't doing tech before and now we need to do tech. It's that tech itself has evolved, tech has changed. Our engagement and focus on the tech world has also changed. And that extension or pivot or whatever you want to call it from doing tech at scale and range, which is really for supporting operations, supporting our own business. And now it's about engaging with the outside world, having a better understanding of where tech's going, because we also support policymakers, right, in a very, very significant way. With the changing environment that we're in, in terms of UTS and our ability to operate as an agency in the world…

Walter: That's Ubiquitous Technical Surveillance…

Nand: Ubiquitous Technical Surveillance, which is great, I know the term now… uh, and then also, thinking about how we can actually turn the tables on tech, right, to some extent. Which is, there's tech sort of changing, forcing us to change our business model. And then there's the using tech as an accelerant, right? How do we actually take all these innovations and other things—which by the way, is a challenge for any organization—and turning around and using it.

Walter: I think we want to ask a lot more about that last point and, ubiquitous technical surveillance, just, you know, for those tuning in now, this idea that our officers can be watched, um..

Nand: That's right…

Walter: …really near constantly, right?

Nand: Yeah. I mean it's no surprise to anyone, again, video cameras everywhere, biometrics, things like cell phones, which literally is the single most amazing yet evil device, if you may, that, you know, we need to deal with, just all the stuff going on. The digital dust that we throw off as, as humans is incredible when you step back and look at it. Here we are playing an incredibly important role in the intelligence and national security landscape, and so the really, really interesting question is: how do we take the best of what we do here—the tradecraft, the intellectual property that we built in doing the work that we do over 75 years—and merge and meld it with the best of digital tech and try to build out scale and leverage, which are the Valley concepts, applied to this incredibly deep and incredibly hard and incredibly important mission. So to me, that's just, like, fascinating.

Walter: And that's a great segue, actually talking about applying Silicon Valley concepts to our national security work here… How have your experiences in that private sector tech world prepared you for this role here at CIA? What, what have you drawn from, from your own past?

Nand: Yeah, I think that it gets down to those concepts, right, is, when you go to founder school or—just joking, that doesn't exist—you know, when, when you're becoming a founder or a CEO or even doing something, building a product, business model manners, how you operate and build your products, or how do you generate revenue, how do you go to market. All of these core business concepts that seem to be, you know, those are business concepts, they don't apply to government, et cetera. I actually disagree with folks who, you know, it's, it's the old adage, right, it's "government is not business, we don't operate as a business, we can't." But you can bring those core principles into operating an organization like this, and a lot of it is cultural. It's a mindset issue. It's a business model question, as to what does one do? It's, I mean, the business we're in is unlike, I mean, it's, literally they don't teach you this in business school on

how to actually operate a spy agency at scale. Yeah, yeah, there's no spy school to go to. There's no spy app store to go buy a bunch of these applications and systems.

Dee: Are you writing this stuff down?

Nand: Yeah, so all of these things. So I think the basic, what my job is, right... So this is like, as a management team here at the Agency, is we have to operate like a great team, right? This is a team sport. Everybody has to play their position on the field. My job here is really to focus on, how do we actually bring many of these concepts. Because see, in some sense, culturally, so this is an interesting thing that was observed, as the traditional spy model for even technology or operations is, it's about small scale, small signatures, very directed and targeted things that one does, to obviously hide and to do this in subtle ways. The operations of a company, and especially in the Valley, it's about scale, scale, scale, scale, scale. These are two very, very different concepts. Now the problem is, is that all of the tech, all of the operating models, all of the stuff that builds success, is about scale. And so how do we apply that to the operations of an agency that are so unique? And melding those two concepts together just even culturally or technologically, is a huge challenge. And that's the one that I think at least I'm really focused on is how do you bring those best concepts, the best thinking, the best operating models, yet at the same time, like I pointed out, is retaining and keeping the best of what we do, which is differentiated against our competition, right? It's what makes the Agency so incredibly effective out there against our competition, against the missions that we need to go do. So how do we keep the best of that, yet wrap it, or evolve it, into something that looks more agile, more scaled, more leveraged, more digital and so it's, it's fascinating. And let's, let's see how we can pull this off.

Dee: Sure, and I know that you just got done explaining a little bit about tech here at CIA and just curious if there is anything else about your role as the first Chief Technology Officer for the Agency that you wanted to share, or is there anything about the partnerships that we have with private industry that you want the world to be aware of?

Nand: There's a revolution—in the tech industry we always talk about, like every day, there's a revolution going on, and sometimes it's really not. But sometimes there is an incredible aspect of revolution going on. So when you look at the emerging tech space, right, so let's go one by one through this right, you've got biology, right? It's turning into software. You take something so physical and you turn it into software. You look at the space industry, used to be a government monopoly. Now you've got private industry shooting up rockets. All the changes in material science, in battery tech, and 3D printing. All of that stuff has come to bear on that. You look at quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum timing. 20-30 years ago, it was a research paper. Now you have actual startups that are an incredibly vibrant startup community doing this work. You look at battery technology, you look at AI, which, I mean at some point in time, you know, probably have a robot CTO for the Agency that can do this…

Walter: We'll interview them, too.

Nand: Yeah, right exactly, and it goes on and on, right? You basically take something physical, something hard, and you digitize it. The minute software gets involved, it's the, why software is eating the world model, right? You take that physical thing, you digitize it. It goes on the software commoditization curve and the unit volume curve, which are the two most potent curves in tech, and so there's this revolution going on outside. We're the Central Intelligence Agency, right? The word intelligence, and technology as this new battlefield. We have to be as good and as on top of it, on tech, the emerging trends, where the stuff is going, the competitive environment out in the world, where industry is going, how we can actually harness it, how do we track it, how do we understand it? That is the core of the

relationship and so we are in this technological realm. We are nothing without the private industry. And every single time we talk to Director Burns or the senior leadership team, he just cannot overemphasize partnerships, partnerships, partnerships. It's not only with the tech industry, it's with our allies and partners in terms of around the world, because there's tech going on everywhere, right, not only in our competitive environments but with our allies. And so, that network of people and companies and information is, is super important to us.

Dee: I think one of the things I want to do is just pivot slightly for a second. You're talking about melding of cultures, right, between where you came from where you are right now. You know, Walter and I have been to your office space. So aside from the jean-wearing um, persona that we've come to know you for, we also recognize that your office space here is a little unique for most government spaces that Walter and I are used to. Can you maybe speak to how that came to be?

Nand: So there was a space that had, like, 400 rooms in it, small little rooms in it, with safes and paper everywhere, and you just couldn't see anything. And I tell you, my heart melted. I was like, what is this? This is terrible. So, I looked at the facilities person, our, our team, and she could see my face was like, just like, like what's wrong? And I said, you know… she's like, what do you want to do with this? I was like, well, is just clear cutting the whole thing an option? And facilities, I mean, our team, real estate team, has been amazing to work with, because they got an opportunity to something super cool. We clear cut the whole thing, just a couple of offices here and there. And it opened up the window line. And what's been amazing is, first, is all of our employees are out in the open, which is, I think weirds people out.

Dee: Very unique…

Walter: Very unusual for CIA…

Nand: And then we also do a lot of meetings out in the open. Yeah, which is, uh… We've had meetings where, and you know, part of it is, and getting to your point about jeans and this and that, again, we're going through this gigantic pivot around, obviously China and technology as the two pillars. But at the heart of it is, the Director also wants to drive a culture change, which is, engaging with the outside world, more openness. Our function as a CTO function, it's an all Agency technology play, and pulling people together as a community, right? So people from one directorate versus another mission centers, et cetera, all of us coming together to do this. And so what we've been doing is using the space as sort of a host for community building and sort of a salon style, like bring speakers in, flow them through, invite people, everyone come sit around, in the open. And it freaks some people out, but at the same time, everybody who gets that experience, I feel, walks away thinking, "Wow, we can do this differently. We have the ability to change, we have the ability to think different." And it's been phenomenal. I see it, you know, again, as a former founder and CEO, you realize how much culture matters in driving the work that we do. And so if you live it, and you demonstrate it by doing, I think, slowly, but—I mean, this is a large organization, and there are only so many people we can flow through—but we've got to do this one piece at a time. We got to start somewhere. And so the office to me is a manifestation of the culture and the culture change that we want to do, as well as the costumes that we wear and other things. So every time I walk into the office with a suit, that's an exception.

Dee: They're probably thinking, "what's wrong?"

Walter: Like right now…

Nand: Exactly!

Walter: Um, well, we have to ask, what is the one question that you, as somebody who's spent a lot of time on the outside—most of your career on the outside—get asked most now, maybe by your old peers in the Silicon Valley world, or, or others you're reaching out to. What is the question that you get asked most about CIA? And what do you tell them?

Nand: Aliens.

Walter: Aliens? Wow.

Nand: And of course, we know, all of us here at the Agency, so we don't tell anyone else is, they're real. And they're actually in Director Burns' mini fridge, right behind the Coke cans.

Dee: Oh my gosh, the secret is out!

Nand: The secret is out. That's it. I've made the announcement. It's done. Let's, let's just… for the record...

Walter: It's real off putting when you're reaching that mini fridge for, uh, sparkling water…

Nand: And something squishy in the back…

Dee: We are going to have to alert our media team, we are going to get some calls about that one.

Dee: Nand, thank you very much. We want to be cognizant of your time today, we know that you're a very busy guy, a lot's going on. So, um, we just wanted to say thank you very much for coming on the show. Um it's been great talking to you, the first Chief Technology Officer of the Agency. So we appreciate your time. Hopefully, we'll see you or another team member back um, in a future episode. Thank you Nand!

Nand: Thank you so much. This has been amazing. I'm so excited. And I hope you'll have me back.

Dee: We will definitely do that.

Walter: We look forward to it.

Dee: Thanks Nand!

Dee: Lot of insightful information right there. And I'm really glad we had the opportunity to talk to Nand today. You know, Walter, it's actually really good to just be back in the studio with you.

Walter: Oh right back at you! It feels like it's been forever, and at the same time, like it was just yesterday.

Dee: Very true and I am sure that you feel the same way, but I'm actually really excited about the new lineup of guests and interesting topics that we're going to address this season.

Walter: Well, yeah, we already started off with a bang talking tech and disclosing the whole alien thing with CTO here at the Agency, and we have several other senior officers we'll be speaking with throughout the course of the season.

Dee: And, you know we've talked about this several times, but we also will have some junior everyday officers that will come in and chat with us, as well as some helpful tips and insights that we're looking to provide to our listeners that might prove helpful in their regular lives.

Walter: News you can use.

Dee: You bet.

Walter: And as for this episode, I think it's that time again. Time for some trivia. Let's go ahead and give everyone the answer to that cliffhanger trivia question that we ended the last episode of the last season with.

Dee: And for folks who have yet to take a listen to the last episode we are talking about episode six, which ended season one with us talking with Deputy Director David Cohen about the differences between spy fact and fiction.

Walter: A great episode you should definitely check out if you haven't already.

Dee: And we ended that episode asking you a question about a little movie called Argo, starring Ben Affleck. The true story behind CIA's operation to rescue a group of American hostages being held in Iran had a true-life tie in to a very well-known artist. The artist created the artwork for a fake film project in order to provide cover for the real CIA rescue operation being worked behind the scenes. The question is, who is the artist?

Walter: If folks remember our previous episode in which we chatted with Rob and Janelle from the CIA's museum they might have caught the answer to this, uh, Janelle actually already provided it. It was Jack Kirby. The famously influential comic book artist, writer, and editor, created the artwork that was used by the fictional production company Studio Six Productions. And this artwork, accompanied by a story treatment and shooting locations, helped sell the ruse that this rescue mission was actually a Middle Eastern sci-fi themed movie production.

Dee: And now it's time for the next trivia question.

(music plays)

Walter: This is a two part question. This product, first established in 1961 in response to President Kennedy's request for a manageable summary of the day's important intelligence matters, was initially known by an acronym with a very unique pronunciation. As the deliverable evolved under President Johnson, it was eventually renamed to its more recognizable contemporary title and acronym. So the questions are: "What was the original acronym and pronunciation for this product and two, what is the current day name and better known current acronym?"

Dee: I feel like that might be a teaser for an upcoming episode…

Walter: It might be, but we'll keep it redacted for now.

Dee: Fair enough. So stay tuned for the next episode to hear the answer. And that does it for this episode of The Langley Files. We're glad to have you all back with us.

Walter: Thanks, as always, everyone for listening in, and from all of us here at Langley…

Dee: We'll be seeing you.

(music plays)

Walter: Have we actually seen what's inside Director Burns' mini fridge?

Dee: I haven't, but now I don't want to.

(music ends)

Dee: Hey everyone, Dee here, from The Langley Files.

Walter: And Walter here, also from The Langley Files.

Dee: You might have heard Nand make a joke in this episode about Director Burns keeping aliens in his mini-fridge.

Walter: Dee and I have since investigated, and we can confirm—there are no aliens in Director Burns' mini-fridge.

Dee: Nand was just joking.

Walter: Please don't try to contact us about this.