

The Langley Files: CIA's Podcast
FILE 015
Spies Supercharged: Talking AI and Digital Innovation at CIA

(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're 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.

(music continues)

Juliane: We know that our adversaries are investing in artificial intelligence, and we know that in order for us to seize competitive advantage in the intelligence domain, in the digital landscape, we need to master this technology and use it in ways that are consistent with our ethics and our values.

(music ends)

Walter: Welcome back to The Langley Files. I'm Walter.

Dee: And I'm Dee.

Walter: If you all tuned into last season, in File 007...

Dee: ...Or double-o 7...

Walter: We sat down with the Agency's first Chief Technology Officer, Nand Mulchandani, who spoke about bringing the best of Silicon Valley to the spy world. Now, today, as part of our on-going focus on tech at CIA, Dee and I are sitting down with CIA's Deputy Director for Digital Innovation, Juliane Gallina, and CIA's Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer, Lakshmi Raman, to talk about the ones and zeros of spycraft in the 21st century, and how CIA is applying the latest in digital technology to help protect America from threats around the world.

Dee: It's great to have you both in the studio at the same time. We've been looking forward to this conversation for quite some time. So thank you both for joining us today.

Lakshmi: Thanks for having us.

Juliane: Yea. Thanks for having us.

Dee: Absolutely.

Walter: So, Juliane, if we could start with you here. You are CIA's Deputy Director for Digital Innovation, head of CIA's Directorate of Digital Innovation. What does that role entail? And what does digital innovation look like here at CIA?

Juliane: Ok, well, I should start by explaining a little bit about the Directorate. We were established in 2015, so we're the youngest of the Directorates so far. It was created, really to seize the best of technology and integrate it into human intelligence and all source analysis, which is another mission of ours. So, the DDI includes functions like data, data science, cyber, all kinds of cyber - cyber operations, cyber intelligence, cyber defense, as well as IT and application development or software development and on and on, Open-Source Intelligence as well.

Walter: And actually one quick follow up question. For the intelligence wonks out there, you mentioned cyber operations. Would that be CCI?

Juliane: That's exactly right. The Cyber Center for Intelligence. So, people who are listening might wonder what binds all of those things together? And for us, really, it's the people. It's the skills that our people bring to all of those functions. Because if you think about it, you need to have some technical background or an understanding of the digital landscape to succeed in those functions. And we bring that to the rest of the Agency. Now for me, on a daily basis, what it feels like to be the DDI is problem solving. And it's just absolutely brilliant to be with this cadre of officers because they have an appetite for solving really hard problems. They're really good at it. And it's a huge variety.

Dee: And, uh, Lakshmi, one of those cyber efforts that, um, Juliane was gracious enough to kind of explain to us is the Agency's work concerning artificial intelligence. You are CIA's Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer. Can you maybe explain what that job entails?

Lakshmi: Sure. So essentially what my role is is leading the CIA's AI strategy and driving our strategic implementation. So, I lead an office that stood up in January 2021 and the idea was - we need to continue to maintain a competitive advantage with respect to AI against our adversaries. So we put together an AI strategy that the Agency is working against.

Dee: Can you share the pillars of that strategy?

Lakshmi: One is a focus around AI as an intelligence topic. So that's really about the work we do to collect and track and analyze our adversaries plans, use, and intentions, with respect to AI. The second one is AI as a mission enabler. And that's really - how are we using AI capabilities to help us with our own mission and business? And then finally, the last one is around AI governance and evaluation, which is really about accountability and helping us put into place a process to govern the adoption of these tools. So governance and evaluation are done internally. But we also have robust guidance from the administration. So three months ago, we had a landmark executive order that was signed to ensure that America leads the way in seizing the

promise and managing the risks of AI. And so we have a lot of actions out of that and we are working to respond to those requirements as well. In addition, there's been follow-on guidance in the form of an OMB memo and also recognizing that we have a very sensitive role and sensitive applications of AI and national security. There's also a national security memorandum that's forthcoming to deal with governance in the intelligence and defense community. So all of those are things that we are working with and undertaking both with respect to internal governance, but also that role we play within the strategic national conversation.

Walter: You've both had incredible stories that have led you to these roles. Julianne, to start with you, your career has taken you from the military, where you were the first woman to lead the Brigade of Midshipmen while at the Naval Academy, to CIA, to private industry, and now back to CIA. Tell us about that, and how has it prepared you for this role in particular?

Juliane: I like to joke that, uh, I'm CIA on the outside, but if you cut me I, I bleed blue and gold because there's quite a bit of Navy roots there. I, I took the oath, uh, to support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. Uh, and I go on, I've had that have that memorized. Um, but I took it for the first time when I was 17, and I, uh, was showing up at the Naval Academy for college, and I feel like I was raised in in a sort of a service-oriented family, of course, but but also the Navy had trained me. And so, like, culturally, I definitely have this aspiration to be a servant leader that comes from those roots in service. And then the Navy specialized me in satellite systems and Signals Intelligence and assigned me to the National Reconnaissance Office. From there, I moved into the CIA and became a Directorate of Science and Technology Officer because my specialization was so cool. I loved it. I was working on the design, development, and deployment of spacecraft for reconnaissance purposes. And I had this great CIA boss who recruited me and said, you know, you can keep doing this forever and ever. You know, it just sounded so great because, uh boy, that mission was just absolutely remarkable.

From there, I moved into US industry, a small company that was then acquired by a very large company. So yeah, I've had a lot of diversity in my background and to the outsider's perspective, maybe that sounds a little bit like a dog's breakfast of a career, but I feel like it's been very consistent in some ways. There are really strong through lines for me. I mentioned this idea of leadership. In every place I went, I was privileged to be given opportunities to lead people and work with great leaders. That's been very meaningful to me. And, of course, is a nod also to, my time at the Naval Academy, which has a mission to develop leaders for both military and civilian roles for the United States. The other through line for me is adapting emerging technology for national security purposes. Everywhere I went, I would say even though the technologies underneath changed, the application of that technology was different in every context. Fundamentally, that's what I was doing. And it's what I love to do, and it gets back to that idea of problem solving. So those two through lines, I think come together very strong for me in this current role in the DDI and, uh, I think it has been my secret sauce.

Dee: Can I ask just what drew you back to CIA after you ventured out for a bit?

Juliane: That is a great question. It's the mission. I always tell people that I think there are three ingredients to the perfect job. Great technology, amazing people, and an important mission - a motivating mission. And I found that in all of those places - in the Navy, in the Science and Technology Directorate in the CIA, assigned to the NRO, again, later in industry. Really, I found

mission in industry as well, but the CIA has this unique way of combining all of those things. There's a bias for action. There's this aptitude. There's also, um, a humility and confidence together which might sound like they contradict one another. But what I mean by that is, the humility comes from this idea of growth mindset that we may not have everything we need to solve a problem initially, but we have confidence in our aptitude and our ability to partner with allies, to partner with US industry, partner with other government agencies to get a job done. And we have enough of a history and foundation in tradecraft that we know we can mobilize our resources, make those partnerships and solve these problems.

Dee: I think many within the Agency look at you as an exemplar of CIA's focus not only on the best of both worlds in terms of private industry and, um, public sector here in the government, in terms of what that means for tech. So I think the acknowledgment of your background speaks highly to the motivation of going forward with that mantra of great people, great mission.

Juliane: Well, thank you, and I, I have to add here that the Directorate of Digital Innovation has the highest proportion compared to other Directorates of officers who are mid-career hires. So we have a bit of an advantage here. We're working with technology, obviously, in our roles and compared to other Directorates, it's fairly easy for us to access talent from the outside who have previous experience because their knowledge of the technology or industry is an advantage for us. And so we consider that a strength in the DDI. It helps keep our workforce really fresh, very current, and it helps us with our innovation. We really welcome people who have some work experience already and they want to do something different, start a different career. Get that feeling of mission. It's an advantage for us.

Dee: That makes absolute sense in that particular occupational field. And Lakshmi, you've been with the Agency for two decades now?

Lakshmi: A little over.

Dee: And you've been in a wide range of different assignments yourself. Would love to hear about your career, and how that led up to where you are right now and what it means in today's world to be leading such an important subject as AI is in terms of global implications and national security landscape.

Lakshmi: I loved hearing Juliane's origin story. My origin story probably starts with my family. I'm a child of immigrants, right. Both of my parents had STEM backgrounds. My dad was a mathematician. He had a PhD in mathematics. My mom had two careers, one in public health and, uh one a second career in, uh, where she got her master's degree in computer science and was in the telecom industry. So when we were growing up, they both instilled a strong work ethic. They told us we could do hard things, right? So they said, be brave, go try new things. And so I saw them, like living what they preach to us, right? Saying hey, you have to go out there. You should serve. You should work hard. And I saw them doing that, and particularly, right, I saw my mother was a successful career woman who was able to go out and work and give back and also give back to our family, and that's what I aspire to be. So guess what I did? I went out and got my master's degree in computer science, and then I started here at the Agency as a software developer, and I did that for a while and eventually, right, I moved into management

and I grew my portfolio, and I started leading larger enterprise IT efforts. I started leading larger data science and analytic efforts, and eventually I ran enterprise data science here at the Agency, which led me to my current role. And how does it feel to be doing something like this? So, you know, overseeing AI for the CIA at this critical time is a privilege, right? And it's an honor. And I know that it's a responsibility that comes with great expectations. This technology touches lives and aspects of all of the people who work here, whether it's inside or outside the building. So I am so grateful for the opportunity to be able to contribute in this critical space.

Dee: Sitting here across from both of you right now, Walter and I are very much aware of the prominence of women leaders here at the Agency, but would love to get your take on what that means to both of you, both of whom are current very prominent leaders here at the Agency. What does that look like for you guys?

Juliane: I want to sort of crib some notes here from Lakshmi. I really appreciate, Lakshmi, what you said about being inspired by your parents, and I'm going to draw on that to answer your question because I have to say, I've always felt a little uncomfortable when asked questions about women in leadership because of my home of origin. I grew up in a single parent household, and my mom, uh, when we lost my father, was just so strong, and and the place where I grew up in New York, it was never a question that I would have a future as a as a working woman, and it was just where I came from. And I was always sort of surprised by the debate when I first arrived in the Navy and then the story continued on and on. But I've been very gratified to say, throughout my career, I've been observing real and material changes for all employees of all different kinds of diversity where people are at the table in ways that they weren't in the past, and and women are often easy to count when you're sitting in a in a conference room. I used to do that when I was a young junior officer and pretty bored, and I would count like how many women are leaders here in the room? And in the early days of my career, in the early nineties, there were very few. And now, it's true, the women are leading in large proportions. And here at this Agency, we've had a woman lead in every directorate, in every senior position, right up through the Director of the CIA. So, I'm very proud to be part of that legacy of diversity and inclusion. It is awesome.

At the same time, here are the people I really want to recognize. I was given that opportunity to be the Brigade Commander in 1991. It was the first time since 1846 that they included women in that position. I didn't get to nominate myself. I was nominated by my peers. So, I want to thank my classmates first, people who were as young as I was, at the time, who saw something in me, and they wanted me to go forward in the process. It was other people who saw that in me. And then the risk that the senior leaders took in appointing me and allowing me to represent that academy at that very precarious time for women in the military, that was a risk that those men and women took, the senior people around me, and to me they're hidden figures. Later, when I was one of the first four women to serve on the USS Long Beach for a deployment, I was not permanently assigned, very similar situation. The captain of the ship allowed me to be in his crew, and it was up to me to serve with distinction. I was such a junior officer. I had no qualifications to do that. I had just a lot of potential. Those men, in that case it was men, saw something in me and gave me a chance. So what does that mean to me now? It means that as a leader, I feel I have an obligation. The way I pay back that honor and privilege is to extend the ladder to other people, to really try and see people and all of their diversity, and all of their

complexity, bring them to the table, give them a chance to serve, give them a chance and an opportunity.

Dee: Well stated.

Walter: Yea. Powerful perspective.

Lakshmi: So I feel incredibly fortunate to be working for Juliane. I'm one of those people who she's extended her ladder to. So to be working for her, to have been selected by her predecessor, Jennifer Ewbank, both very strong leaders themselves, to be the Director of Artificial Intelligence here at the Agency. And so you can see the Agency has this particularly strong history now with women leaders in technology roles. Another example, prior to this assignment, I mentioned that I used to run enterprise data science, which had a responsibility for the entire data science cadre here at the Agency, as well as a responsibility for deploying technology and tools that they need to do their job. Before me, the two leaders were women. And since I've left, the two leaders after me have been women. I think that's very telling. I take my role as a female leader in this organization very seriously. I think what Juliane said about helping bring other people along is incredibly important. I see that as a huge part of my job. I mentor women. I mentor men too, right, to help help them understand what I've been through - what could help them. I'm a senior champion for groups, resource group, all across the Agency, whether it's in this Asian and Pacific Islanders space. I'm also an active participant in our women in data science space, right, which is a much more niche organization. But even just this month, I'm going to be talking to them about the implications of the new executive order. So, I just think this is an ongoing part of our responsibilities to support all of these DEI kind of spaces.

Walter: I think we were discussing in a previous episode, there's a point in my own career where all of my key managers up to, and including, the Director were women leaders. And I think that's a very different picture than you might get in a lot of the private sector, maybe especially in the tech space.

Dee: Personally speaking, reflecting on what you both just said, I hope that we get to a point, and I know that that goal of the Agency to get to the point where we don't even have to ask that question anymore - where we are pointing out that women are leading. I hope it continues to evolve to the point where that is just a known factor - that all folks of any diversity and background are capable of leading. So thank you for being part of that trailblazing crew as of right now. But in future iterations, hopefully that question won't have to be asked.

Juliane: I have to share a quick anecdote here. Um, I traveled with a junior employee a few years ago to a tech conference. And it was out in the west. It was a very excellent trip for all the technical learning and opportunity we had there to grow. But this young employee, when we first arrived, she looked at the crowd in the auditorium and she leaned over and she said, where are all the women? And, it actually made me feel proud of us that her context was much more, uh, inclusion and diversity, that it looked odd to her. Um, because to my eyes, I thought, oh, that's that's as you point out, Walter, it's not atypical or unusual in the tech industry, unfortunately.

Walter: Yeah.

Dee: So maybe this would be a good time to turn to the implications of AI for national security. What are some of the major risks and promises right now?

Lakshmi: So a big risk, I think both to the CIA as well as to the public at large, is the risk of disinformation. AI is going to be used to generate very convincing fake news, videos, audio recordings, and that's going to let our adversaries use AI to help spread misinformation and disinformation in order to manipulate public opinion. So the deep fake disinformation space is definitely one that we've got to protect us against. I think another risk we can think about with respect to AI is that it can certainly make cybersecurity harder. We've already seen new stories about how they're being. It's being used to improve the quality of phishing emails or even how hackers are developing finely tuned large language models specifically to create malware. So yet another area that we should be concerned about. But on the flip side, there's promise, you know, promise, peril? You know, it's just two sides of the same coin. So those same LLMs, large language models, that can be used to create malware can also be used to improve cybersecurity. For example, it could help detect cyber attacks by being able to analyze and identify patterns and large amounts of data. So I think it's really about us being able to weigh the risks and the benefits and use it appropriately for ourselves.

Walter: Well, in our last episode, we spoke with CIA's Deputy Director for Operations, and one topic that he spoke of was the impact of the evolution of technology on the overall espionage tradecraft. So you know how autocratic regimes sort of starve off their citizens from access to certain types of technology or certain information, while at the same time developing technologies like facial recognition and artificial intelligence, and the complications that that can pose for CIA's mission around the world. What are your perspectives on the major risks and opportunities that AI poses to intelligence in particular?

Lakshmi: So listen, there's, risks, right? There are risks in implementing AI right here at the Agency. As we continue on our AI journey, we have to be aware of those risks, and we have to continue to mitigate them while we continue to integrate and use them in our own mission. We need to keep fostering innovation. I think that's really important. So we're managing a lot of the risk via our own governance activities that are taking into account data management and security, ethics, legal implications, technical guardrails, right? There are a lot of areas in which we have to be mitigating risks, but through that mitigation we should continue to foster innovation and integration and application of these technologies. Now, with respect to the promises of AI? It's going to help us, and it continues to help us in a lot of ways, right? From automating our business tasks that provide efficiencies, anywhere from, imagine business efficiencies from finance to customer service. It can help us, as I spoke about before, augment cybersecurity. It could also help us reshape how we're processing and accessing information, right? That's our bread and butter. And between the technology that already exists and the breakthroughs that we're seeing every day, the possibilities are endless.

Walter: Now we understand that CIA is already, in fact, using AI to reshape how we're processing information..

Lakshmi: So we're already incorporating large language models in generative AI to help in our open source mission. And the generative aspects are already helping us gain deep insights into what is a very, very expansive data set, when we think about what's available in open source. Also with generative AI, we're continuing to think about how it can help our officers, right, whether it's helping them search and discover information, helping with ideation and critical thinking. Another thing we're doing, you know, as we're experimenting and deploying and integrating these technologies is thinking about the workforce who are creating these solutions. We have a cadre of data scientists, analytic methodologies, AI practitioners, and engineers who are helping us make sure our data is AI ready, that we can train and run an AI model, and that we're incorporating AI into the applications we are using every day. Um, and I I would be remiss if I didn't mention how key the partnership is between technology and our mission partners that are, you know, that we really need in order to achieve this.

Walter: Mission partners being the Directorate of Operations, Directorate of Analysis, and the other components of CIA whose mission you're working to apply the benefits of AI to.

Lakshmi: Absolutely.

Walter: Is it possible that someday an analyst might be able to use AI to connect the dots on a counterterrorism threat or a counterintelligence threat that a human alone might not be able to catch?

Lakshmi: I think what we like to say is that, you know, AI plus a human is going to really help us outpace where we are currently, right? We think it's the human-machine teaming that is going to get us where we need to go. So we need, the benefits and the computational ability that a model can provide to our already incredibly experienced analysts who have really strong tradecraft to help them move kind of further down the field.

Walter: Spies supercharged.

Dee: Yea, right? And I think that leads into the next topic that we wanted to talk to you, Julianne, about - the concept of the North Star. We understand this is the term you use to describe all of the things that DDI is focused on right now. So, we're just curious, first off, did that phrase come from you or did you hear it from somewhere else? And can you just expand on what that term means?

Juliane: I wish I could claim ownership of that expression, but it was suggested to me, and it really felt apt because from my own background, I know the North Star has been used for ages as the unmovable fixed point in the sky from which, uh, people can navigate to the next place. And I think that's really appropriate because for us in the implementation of our strategies, of course it's very easy to become myopic and begin to think about tactical things or the urgent needs of the day. And we, in the DDI, as I mentioned before, have a very broad mission to support the rest of the Agency. So we do need a long-term fixed point to be focused on to help organize and align our portfolio so that we're investing in the right technologies for us. It is absolutely clear to us that artificial intelligence is that fixed point, and it's not artificial intelligence for the sake of AI. It is, as Lakshmi was saying, this idea of human-machine teaming or human-AI teaming

because we know from other research work and other accomplishments in the field that even in examples where industry has fielded AI against humans in chess, for example, that AI can win. But it turns out that when you team AI with a human, that beats both the other human competitor and also the AI.

We know that our adversaries are investing in artificial intelligence, and we know that in order for us to seize competitive advantage in the intelligence domain, in the digital landscape, we need to master this technology and use it in ways that are consistent with our ethics and our values. Lakshmi was extremely eloquent, explaining many of the risks and opportunities of the technology, and she mentioned it, but I want to double click on it. What we build, we firmly believe needs to be a manifestation of our values. One of the things that we value here at the Agency is objectivity in our analytic tradecraft. And in order to protect that for just by way of example, we have always, our colleagues and the Directorate of Analysis, and I'm sure Linda Weissgold spoke about this in a previous episode. I listened to it. I know she did. Is this idea that objectivity is important, so part of the tradecraft is to always provide source material to explain where we got our logic and conclusions from. And we have to really pair people with AI tools that are going to do the same thing. So a broad challenge now with large language models that are generative in creating new text that hasn't been written before, is to really be able to trace back to source material to support our intelligence recommendations. That's an example of how we have to be adapting this new technology in a way that's consistent with our values and consistent with the good professional work that we've been doing for 75 years.

Dee: You've talked a lot about the ethical need to find boundaries of where we can go with this technology. Can we talk about the legal implications as well? You know, we hear that our adversaries might have an advantage over us because they don't have the same kind of restrictions and constraints that we have in terms of privacy around their own citizens. Does that place us at a disadvantage?

Lakshmi: Right. So I would posit that we have our own advantages right? I would like to think that our adherence to our democratic norms and values and our focus on ethics and privacy and civil liberties is an advantage for us. All of these concerns are really important and particularly the strong emphasis we place on ethical development that Julianne mentioned before. We need to ensure that it's being used responsibly. If we do that, it's going to benefit society as a whole, and also, it's actually going to work as we intended to work. Ensuring that we are training models without bias, make sure that our output is sound. So I think that that's actually a superpower that we have. I also think that our diverse and innovative tech ecosystem and the strong partnerships we have between the public and private sector is another strength of ours. We have a diverse range of companies, research institutions, and startups that contribute to AI research and development here. And this ecosystem gives us a wide variety of perspectives. And it gives us a wide variety of ideas that can be brought to the table, and that really gives us innovation and collaboration. And I think the innovation we bring to the table is really hugely advantageous. And the partnerships help us share knowledge and resources and expertise. And that advances AI technologies as well. So this heavy investment made by private industry allows the US to stay at the forefront of AI advancements and maintain that competitive edge.

Dee: Can we maybe expand that topic in terms of the partnership we have with public and private industries and how that impacts DDI writ large?

Juliane: Yeah. I'm glad you asked. I'm really passionate about this subject, having been in and out of the private sector. And we know that the American private sector is an engine of innovation for our country. It's an engine for growth, and it's an opportunity, that space, is an opportunity for us to find excellent partners who want to help us solve these mission challenges. And we're really serious about it. The Directorate has invested in an organization called Digital Futures. It's a relatively small team, but it was designed to open the door to new and nontraditional vendors who'd never worked with us before because we realized it can be hard to know how to work with our Agency. And sometimes, we were told, small companies or new companies to the space might find it hard to navigate or compete with some of the big and traditional vendors. So Digital Futures is a new team that does that. Um, they have a broad area announcement that has welcomed hundreds of new vendors to our space, and we're really excited about their accomplishments. That's just one example.

Our colleagues and the Directorate of Science and Technology started an organization called CIA Labs. There's also a 25-year-old partnership with a venture capital firm called In-Q-Tel, which is a partnership between In-Q-Tel and the intelligence community, that has given us great access to the venture world. We try many different mechanisms to access the very best in the private sector, and we're continuing to do that with real and meaningful partnerships. I also hope that just a podcast like this one and other methods of outreach is opening the door and helping people understand a little bit about how we think about our craft and it entices people to come to us with solutions and new technologies. And we're signaling that that we're open for them to come to us and explain what they have. We have a curiosity about technology. We can't get everything in in our portfolio. We do have limits on what we can do, but we do want to have that conversation with industry.

Walter: And it sounds like, ma'am, from the range of things you laid out, whether you are a large established company, or a small niche start up, or even maybe an academic institution, if you have an interest in working with the Agency and serving the greater good, there are ways to get in touch with CIA.

Juliane: Absolutely.

Walter: CIA.gov/tech

Dee: He really likes to plug the website. Is there anything else you want to expand on in terms of your background in the private sector and how it currently influences your role here?

Juliane: I would love to, because I touched on it earlier that we have a lot of mid-career hires in our Directorate. I'm one of them. In fact, I've done it twice now because I came from the Navy into the Agency and then I left and I came back. You know, I've done it twice. I like doing it so much. Um, I will also say my experience in industry taught me that leadership is not exclusive to government or the military, that I was delighted to find that people in industry were just remarkable, gifted leaders who knew how to care for people in adversity and through tough

times, and I I think that, um that also makes for a great partnership. That that those leaders are out there and they want to lead their people to help the US government. I hope that these messages we're sharing today help invite US industry to partner with us. Because these messages about ethics, for example, and the fact that we want to produce solutions that are consistent with American values and ethics, I hope that will resonate with some people who may have been apprehensive in the past about building technology solutions for the CIA.

Dee: So when you head home at the end of the day, how do you unwind from this environment? I mean we are surrounded innovation and technology wherever we go, what do you do to unplug?

Juliane: I almost run home to my family. I really, really love being with my family, and, um, it that always brings me all kinds of things to do. Some are super fun, some are not. One of my, one of my family members said my superpower was not technology, but it was actually cleaning. So believe it or not, that might be what I do on weekends. But I also say, um, we have a big emphasis on wellness here at the Agency now. I really admire Director Burns for investing in wellness programs here, and it's been a real gift because it's made me feel more open about sharing that I made a commitment to myself years ago to exercise almost every day. And I didn't start doing that for fitness reasons. I did it for mental health reasons because I felt like it was the only way to really clear my head from some of the, um, stress from work. And I think that's really important to get that message out, whether it's exercise or it's just, I don't know, meditation or musical instrument, whatever it is. I, I really think that's been important for our workforce and certainly for me. I had this boss once, though, he was a Directorate of Science and Technology boss, and he used to do calculus for fun. So, if that's your thing, we have a spot for you too.

Walter: Takes all types.

Dee: That makes my brain hurt.

Lakshmi: Yeah. So, like Juliane, I have a family. You know we have activities, but I have to admit, when I'm looking for a little bit of alone time, I do love to stream my shows. Uh, Hulu, I've got it. Netflix. I've got it. I've got them all. So, that's how I like to wind down.

Dee: Fair enough. Can I ask one more question? We work at a spy Agency. Do you have a favorite movie, spy related or favorite character? Favorite book?

Juliane: Oh, it's The Hunt for Red October.

Lakshmi: Oh, that's a good one.

Juliane: It's the Navy plus spy.

Walter: Oh yea.

Lakshmi: You do bleed blue and gold.

Dee: I lead right into that. Well, those are both great examples.

Walter: DDO said Pink Panther. So, we have the full gamut here.

Dee: It was the full gamut. Um, thank you both for taking the time to come in and chat with us. It was great to see you on the other side of the table answering these very interesting questions about where we are in our national security space when it comes to digital innovation and AI technology. So thank you for that.

Walter: Yeah. It's been fantastic chatting with both of you. Thank you.

Juliane: Thank you for having us.

Lakshmi: Thank you for having us.

Juliane: It's an honor.

Dee: You know, Walter, all this time I don't think I ever asked you, what's your favorite spy character or movie?

Walter: Wow, this is great. You're really putting me on the spot. Uh, you know, ever since I was a kid, my favorite spy character has been Inspector Gadget. You know, on a tech note, Inspector Gadget, I think brings a real commitment to mission.

Dee: Hmm. I like this. He's always prepared.

Walter: He's always prepared. How about you, Dee?

Dee: You know, I'm more in the realm of fun fiction and a lot of energy. So, I'm a Mission Impossible kind-of girl. I like the Mission Impossible series, as fictional as it might be.

Walter: Yea. Well, and if folks are curious between the line between spy fact and fiction, they can check out our episode with Deputy Director David Cohen in our first season.

Dee: Excellent plug.

Walter: Right.

Dee: Here we are again with no transition to trivia, so let's just get straight to it.

Walter: Yea.

(music plays)

Dee: On our last episode we talked about the fact that pride of country runs deep throughout CIA and numerous other facets of the United States government and military. And taking on patriotic acts on behalf of your country can be both fulfilling but also incredibly dangerous. At CIA, we have a wall that's etched with stars, reminding us of that every day. But another reminder of sacrifice to our country sits on the grounds here at CIA headquarters, the statue of a young man stands watch over the compound here; a young man bound at his hands and feet and looking resolute as he prepares to face death, a sentence brought upon him for spying for his country. Our question to you was, who is this young man?

Walter: His name is Nathan Hale. In 1776, this 21-year-old was hanged by the British after they caught him spying for the United States Continental Army behind enemy lines. At the base of this statue you will find an inscription of his last words: "I regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." And as part of CIA tradition, officers who are about to leave for an assignment overseas place either a quarter or 76 cents at the foot of the statue. The lore is that by doing so, the officer and their family will have good luck and safe travels. The 76 cents represents the year of Nathan Hale's execution, while the quarter is an acknowledgement of Hale serving under General George Washington.

Dee: And after some time goes by, those coins are actually collected and contributed to the CIA Officers Memorial Foundation. So Walter, what do we have for the next trivia question?

Walter: So, this month, a cohort of CIA officers descended on the SXSW Creative Industries Expo in Austin, Texas to talk to attendees about the importance of partnerships as well as the need for creative and tech savvy folks to come work with us. Throughout CIA's presence at SXSW, there were two special guests who made their presence known on our social media. These two guests are considered unofficial mascots of the CIA. So our question to you is, do you know who the mascots are, and if you do, can you guess their names?

Dee: Tune in to our next episode to find out the answer or if you have your sleuthing skills handy, go on over to our social media pages and see if you can find out the answers.

(music begins)

Walter: That's it for this episode. Thanks as always to our in-house audio experts Grif and Corey. And thanks to all of you listening out there. Until next time ...

Dee: We'll be seeing you.

(music continues)

Walter: Uh, what are you working on over there, Dee?

Dee: Uh, nothing...

Walter: Oh my god...is that.....calculus?!?....cia.gov/tech

(music ends)