

INVESTIGATIVE REPORTS

# The Prince And The Spy

Erik Prince, the man behind Blackwater, recently teamed up with an Israeli spy, creating a front company with her to help Israeli defense technology providers exploit loopholes and sell their products to the American military.



BY WHITNEY WEBB · MAY 12, 2023 · 11 MINUTE READ



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For years, Erik Prince – the founder of mercenary firm Blackwater (now Academi) – has been a major source of controversy. Ever since he left Blackwater over a decade ago, Prince has appeared in the news for pushing to privatize several wars, his ties to former President Donald Trump's presidential campaigns, his violation of international arms embargoes and his unusually close ties with Project Veritas, among other notable events and connections.

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However, some of Prince's antics in recent years have not yet made it into the news – namely his decision to team up with an Israeli spy to build a very secretive company that has – until now – evaded scrutiny. That company, Comframe Solutions, appears to operate as an intelligence front and explicitly targets parts of the American military involved in highly sensitive combat operations. As this investigation will show, Prince's partner in Comframe – Lital Leshem – has been tied to a series of apparent, and admitted, Israeli intelligence front companies, several of which have a focus on technology. Yet Prince and his close associate Chris Burgess – Comframe's supposed president – have done everything they can to hide their association with the incredibly secretive company. Why might that be and what exactly is Comframe up to?

## From “Army Brat” to Cyber Spy

Lital Leshem was raised as an “army brat” in Reut, Israel and Pennsylvania, USA. She later enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as she was “truly devoted to safeguarding the State of Israel.” She quickly



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this date through her “reserve duty activities.” According to her LinkedIn, she served in Israeli military intelligence from 2005 to 2011 and, more specifically, served in its signals intelligence unit – Unit 8200. She later attended IDC Herzliya, an Israeli university deeply tied to its military and intelligence apparatus. There, she met Amir Elichai and the two would co-create the company Reporty, which later became [Carbyne911](#) – today known only as Carbyne.

Carbyne was originally founded as Reporty in 2014 by Leshem, Elichai and Alex Dizengof. Leshem and Elichai are Unit 8200 veterans, while Dizengof previously worked for Israel's Prime Minister's Office. Before it was revealed that Jeffrey Epstein had poured at least 1 million dollars into the company at the behest of his close associate Ehud Barak, Carbyne's board of directors – which Barak chaired – included the former commander of Unit 8200, Pinchas Buchris, as well as Epstein associate turned venture capitalist Nicole Junkermann. In the wake of the Epstein scandal, Buchris, Barak and Junkermann, among others, were removed from the board and were largely replaced with veterans and former heads

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of American intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Leshem had left the company in 2017, but has continued to own shares in the company.



Ehud Barak, center, poses with Carbyne co-founders Alex Dizengof, Amir Elichai and Lital Leshem;  
Source: Yossi Seliger

Carbyne is a Next-Generation 9-11 (NG911) platform and the explicit goal of NG911 is for all 911 systems nationwide to become interconnected. It is currently active throughout the United States, its main target market. Its software has been criticized due to “serious privacy concerns” about the amount of information it harvests from smartphones that call a 911 call center running Carbyne’s software. For instance, Carbyne’s smartphone app extracts the following information from the phones on which it is installed:

**“Device location, video live-streamed from the smartphone to the call center, text messages in a two-way chat window, any data from a user’s phone if they have the Carbyne app and ESInet, and any information that comes over a data link, which Carbyne opens in case the caller’s voice link drops out.”**

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The potential for Carbyne as a tool for mass surveillance has been extensively reported by [Narativ](#), [MintPress News](#) and other outlets. In addition, Carbyne stores all data on past calls and events in order to *“enabl[e] decision makers to accurately analyze the past and present behavior of their callers, react accordingly, and in time predict future patterns.”* As a result, Carbyne – along with other Israeli intelligence-connected companies seeking to dominate the American “public safety” market – has the potential to facilitate controversial “predictive policing”, i.e. pre-crime, policies.

## C-RECORDS

Our c-Records system is a key component of the Carbyne platform, which enables deep diving into the entire status of each event recorded through the systems. By navigating between tickets, viewing past events and examining the profile of each of the records. The c-Records enables decision makers to accurately analyze the past and present behavior of their callers, react accordingly, and in time predict future patterns. This tool is essential in optimizing planning and strategy.

Screengrab from Carbyne’s website describing its c-Records feature, which has since been deleted; Source: Carbyne ([archived](#))

In addition to Carbyne, Leshem also worked for Black Cube, which has since been removed from her LinkedIn. There, she had been the firm’s Director of Marketing. Black Cube was specifically outed as an Israeli intelligence front organization in a [2019 article](#) published by *Calcalist Tech*. That same article also contains [the stunning revelation](#) that many Israeli companies, including Black Cube, have been founded as fronts for intelligence operations since 2012. It states that “since 2012, cy- related and intelligence projects that were previously carried out in the Israeli military and Israel’s main intelligence arms are transferred to [Member Login](#)

companies that in some cases were built for this exact purpose.” The article also adds that:

**“In some cases, managers of development projects in the Israeli military and intelligence arms were encouraged to form their own companies which then took over the [military and/or intelligence] project.”**

With Leshem having worked for one company already known to be a product of this deliberate policy, it is worth scrutinizing Carbyne as being one such front, especially considering the common tie of Ehud Barak to both companies. In addition, Leshem has also worked for another company tied to Barak that has been described as worse than the NSO Group, which produced the notorious Pegasus software. Called Toka, its top executives – like Carbyne – are largely veterans of Israeli’s Unit 8200, where Leshem also served, or former commanders of Israeli military cyber operations.

Toka, which Ehud Barak founded in 2018, is very, very likely to be one of the front organizations produced as a result of the aforementioned 2012 Israeli intelligence policy. The company is directly partnered with Israel’s Ministry of Defense and other Israeli intelligence and security agencies since its founding and the company only sells its products to countries that are considered allies of Israel. It purports to be able to hack, not just smartphones, but any device with internet connectivity, such as doorbell cameras and other “smart” devices. As will be noted later in this article, Leshem herself has noted that Toka has a relationship with the CIA.

After being involved with a series of Israeli intelligence fronts and her enduring ties to Israeli military intelligence through her “reserve duty activities”, Leshem was courted by a surprising figure – Erik Prince, war profiteer and founder of the controversial mercenary outfit Blackwater.

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# Partnering with Prince

Leshem says that she met Prince after she “randomly stumbled across his path and joined his team.” There, per her website, she “managed his business portfolio and his global investments.” Her LinkedIn lists her as serving as the executive director of global business development of Frontier Resource Group (FRG) from 2018 to 2021. Frontier Resource Group was founded by Prince and is “*an Africa-dedicated investment firm partnered with major Chinese enterprises, including at least one state-owned resource giant that is keen to pour money into the resource-rich continent,*” according to the *South China Post*. It not only operates in Africa, but also other countries due to its contracts to support China’s One Belt One Road initiative, which were signed in 2019.



Erik Prince and Lital Leshem in an undated photo; Source: [Ynet](#)

FRG is a subsidiary of Frontier Services Group (FSG), which Prince also founded. In 2013, he sold a majority share of FSG to the China International Trust Investment Corporation (CITIC), a state-owned Chinese investment company that is among the largest of the country’s state-run conglomerates. CITIC, during the mid-1990s, was chaired by Wang Jun, who doubled as China’s chief arms dealer and was a [Member Login](#) in the “Chinagate” scandal of the Clinton White House. As detail \_\_\_\_\_

*Nation Under Blackmail*, that scandal involved the illicit transfer of American military technology to China and the illicit transfer of Chinese weapons, whose sale in the US was banned during this time, into the United States. Mark Middleton, a White House aide, and Jeffrey Epstein are some of the names apparently involved with those activities. “Chinagate” appears to have been a joint venture between factions of the CIA and Israeli intelligence and has never been properly investigated by federal authorities. It seems that Prince, who was (and may still be) a CIA asset, and Leshem have engaged in similar activities via FRG/FSG. For example, *TRTWorld* reported that Leshem is “speculated” to have transferred Carbyne’s technology to China via her role at FRG and her connection to Prince. China launched an app that was nearly analogous to Carbyne, but more explicitly focused on surveillance, at the same time that Carbyne launched its first 911 call system in the United States.



Erik Prince, left, chairman of Frontier Services Group, looks at a map of Africa with Deputy Chairman Johnson Ko. FSG, which is backed by Chinese state-owned entities, is based in Hong Kong; Source: HKEG

In addition, *TRTWorld* notes, the company DarkMatter, a UAE surveillance and intelligence group that employs former US intelligence operatives, attracted the attention of Chinese officials at a smart cities conference in 2015. DarkMatter, which was launched to modernize Emirati intelligence and military operations, signed a Global Strategic Memorandum of Understanding with Huawei, the Chinese tech giant. The middle man in this sale was none other than Erik Prince. Leshem and another Prince associate, Dorian Barak, also have business ties to the UAE via their prominent roles at the UAE-Israel Business Council.

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As TRTWorld concluded:

**“With similar technology being used, and the same mercenary middle-man between Carbyne and China who brought together UAE’s DarkMatter surveillance technology with China, indications point to a likely transfer of surveillance technology from Epstein’s Israeli company [Carbyne] to China.”**

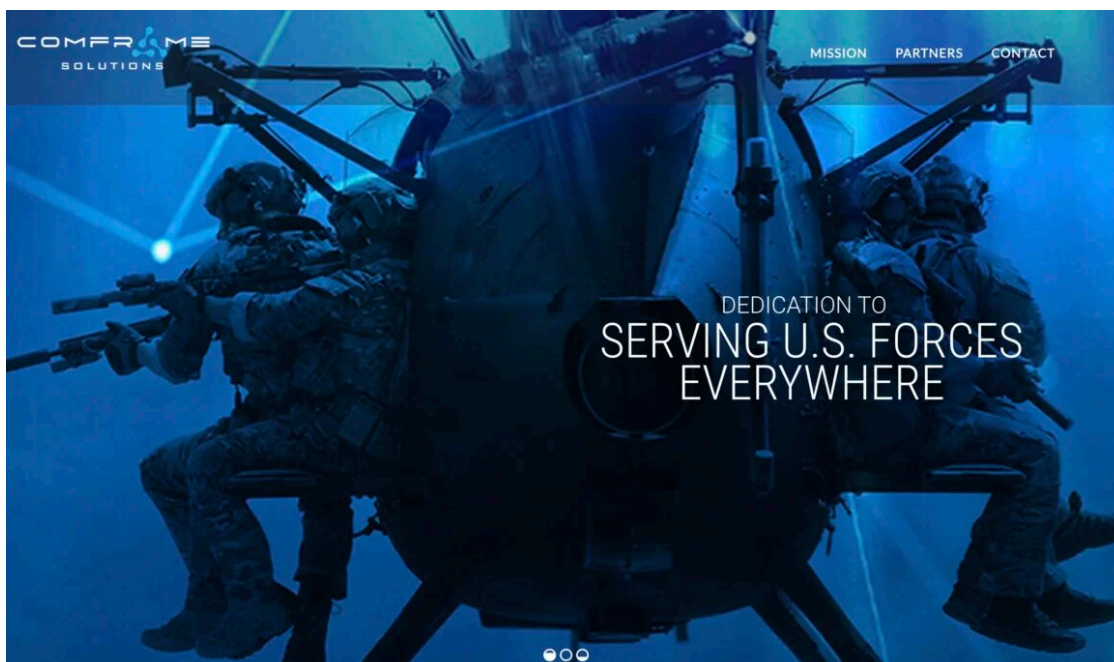
## **Comframe – Secretive Company or Intelligence Front?**

Prince’s and Leshem’s joint activities after Leshem left FRG suggest that this pattern of behavior has not only continued, but deepened. According to Leshem’s website, a year and a half after she started working for Prince, she and Prince *“joined forces to found Comframe, a company that takes the best of Israeli defense technology providers, and helps them penetrate the American market by bridging prevalent gaps.”* Leshem also says Comframe was assisted by her *“premier integrator and business development platform for deploying advanced military, special operations, public safety and HLS solutions in the United States, and a wide network of partnership, both government and civilian.”*

In discussing Comframe elsewhere, Leshem writes that the company she co-founded with Prince *“is led and staffed by Special Operations and defense procurement veterans with billions of dollars of successful sales to USG and foreign government to their names.”* She says that Comframe has a *“track-record of success implementing complex procurement and integrations programs from intelligence gathering & analysis, to contracting, program sales and personnel deployment, is excep*

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What Leshem says of the company clashes with Comframe's threadbare public presence. For instance, its website, which is notably short on content, lists the following companies as partners – TomCar, BlueBird Aero Systems, General Robotics, SafeStrike, Ops-Core (now part of Gentex Corp) and Axon. On its partners page, Comframe says that this is *"a small sampling of our current partners we have chosen to work with."* Most of these companies were created by Israeli military/military intelligence veterans.



Comframe Solutions' homepage; Source: <https://comframesolutions.com/>

Aside from the partners page, there is little other information available on the Comframe site. It describes its mission as *"to source cutting-edge, innovative technologies that safely and securely solve articulated U.S. government problems"* and touts its "get it done" commitment and how its employees *"wake up every morning wanting to find solutions that keep the U.S. government safe and more lethal."* It lists the company's president as Chris Burgess. Burgess, a former NAVY Seal who trained with Erik Prince, does not list Comframe on his LinkedIn or in any other site discussing his work history. He is currently the CEO of military contractor Regulus Global. Burgess previously ran a mercenary firm he founded, Greystone Ltd., that was previously affiliated with Prince's Blackwater and was originally intended to be Blackwater's "sister company."

Both Blackwater (now Academi) and Greystone have been accused of sending mercenaries to fight in the current conflict between Ru: [Member Login](#) Ukraine. Both companies deny this. The accusations came after . . . . .

had planned to create a “private army” in Ukraine, something he has attempted to do (and sometimes succeeded) in various conflict zones, such as Afghanistan. Prince has also attempted to offer “lethal services” to Russia’s Wagner group.



Chris Burgess; [Source](#)

Aside from Burgess’ apparent unwillingness to associate himself publicly with Comframe, there is also the fact that the only employee publicly associated with Comframe at all is Lital Leshem. Indeed, even Erik Prince has declined to publicly affiliate himself with the company. Another oddity is the fact that Comframe’s website has an “Industry News” page that contains several blog posts with titles discussing oil markets and geopolitics. However, the content of the posts themselves are all filler generated by WordPress. Was Comframe also intended to work in

commodities markets? The odd and sparse nature of the website seems to clash with Leshem’s characterization of the company.

So, what is Comframe exactly and what is it intended to do? Why are the only people associated with the company two professional mercenaries, one of whom is a known CIA asset, and an Israeli spy? A 2020 article published in the *Jerusalem Post* seems to highlight Comframe’s mysterious inner workings and likely purpose.

That article notes that Comframe acted as a middleman in forging an agreement to create an assembly line in El Paso, TX in order for the Israeli company Tomcar to “*offer its latest models to the US Armed Forces.*” The agreement was made between Tomcar and Prince Manufacturing, a major contract manufacturing company that works with Ford, General Motors and Tesla, among others. Prince Manufacturing was notably founded and run for many years by Edgar Prince, Erik Prince’s father. Notably Tomcar, its founder – Yoram Zarchi – and his son (works for Tomcar) – Ram Zarchi – appear in the Panama Papers as does the former holding company that owned Tomcar from 2004 to 2011.

The article notes that Comframe “*is focused on recognizing ne* [Member Login](#) *US defense industry and matching them to possible solutions, usually*

*involving innovative Israeli companies.” However, the article notes, “to meet the demands of American security needs, one must have an American entity.” Leshem is then quoted as saying, “Ram [Zarchi of Tomcar] had been living in Phoenix for 15 years, but he can’t do that [sell to the American military because he is not a US citizen]. We can.”*

In other words, per Leshem, Comframe utilizes Prince and presumably Burgess to sell Israeli defense technology and products to the American military that would otherwise not happen due to national security concerns around buying foreign-made products for sensitive defense and military operations. Leshem goes on to state Comframe sells “to the US Special Forces and other branches of the service [i.e. US military],” noting that Comframe is specifically targeting Special Ops. She also suggests that, aside from the US military, another intended market for the company is NATO – she told the *Jerusalem Post* that the US “controls 70% of NATO’s defense industry.”

The article ends by stating that, for Comframe, when sales are related to national security, one still has to have “boots on the ground,” suggesting why Comframe has such a minimal web and online presence. This is similar to another company Leshem has been working for while at Comframe, Ehud Barak’s Toka. Notably, at the end of this very article, Leshem uses Toka as an example regarding Comframe’s “boots on the ground” sales approach. She states:

***“Hi-tech companies like Toka with clients like the CIA, can’t discuss what they do using Zoom.”***

## **A New Pattern for Prince**

Comframe is a very suspect company – it is highly, highly secretive, targets sensitive American military agencies with foreign technology, and its known employees are apparent spooks and intelligence-linked mercenaries. Not only that, but the history of Israeli espionage in the United States – from Jonathan Pollard and PROMIS to Comvers

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beyond – shows a concerted effort to target the American military and security agencies, often with bugged or “backdoored” technology.

In addition to the above, Prince has also recently engaged in efforts to market a very suspect smartphone to MAGA Republicans as being “unhackable” and “unsurveillable.” That phone was “designed in Israel” and the company that produces it is called Unplugged. According to reports, Unplugged’s “*day-to-day technology operations are run by Eran Karpen, a former employee of CommuniTake, the Israeli start-up that gave rise to the now infamous hacker-for-hire firm NSO Group.*” Karpen, like Leshem, is also a veteran of Unit 8200.

Notably, DarkMatter, the UAE private intelligence company that was mentioned earlier due to its association with Prince, once marketed an “ultrasecure” phone called Katim, only to be later outed for hacking dissidents and journalists. In addition, Prince debuted Unplugged’s phone on Steve Bannon’s “War Room” program. Both Prince and Bannon have controversial relationships with exiled Chinese billionaire Guo Wengui, also known as Miles Guo.

That Prince would help market this phone specifically to MAGA Republicans is disturbing given that his associate Leshem and c [Member Login](#) Israeli intelligence veterans and operatives have played a major role

in developing the infrastructure for the US' "War on Domestic Terror," which is mainly targeted at the political right and has already utilized mass surveillance through smartphones and other technologies to justify arrests, including "pre-crime" arrests. Given the content of this investigation, Prince's ties to foreign governments and intelligence agencies should be heavily scrutinized, especially Comframe – whose secretive activities may be drastically undermining American national security.

- China
- Chinagate
- cia
- CITIC
- erik prince
- intelligence
- israel
- US military



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Whitney Webb has been a professional writer, researcher and journalist since 2016. She has written for several websites and, from 2017 to 2020, was a staff writer and senior investigative reporter for Mint Press News. She is contributing editor of Unlimited Hangout and author of the book *One Nation Under Blackmail*.

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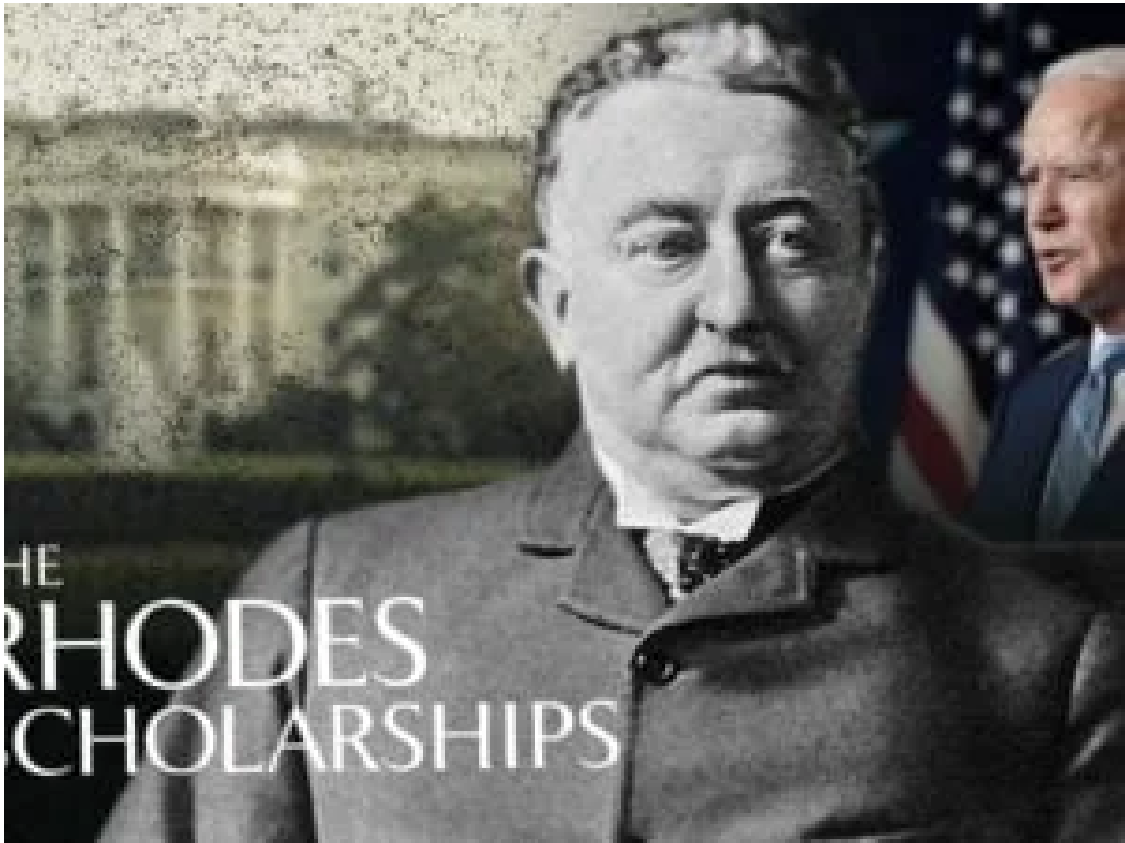
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