

EZEKIEL

Written by

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BLACK.

And then...

A GASP for breath.

Someone regaining consciousness.

We're in a dark POV. Something covers our head.

Straining and struggling. But it's no use.

We try to control our breathing.

MAN (O.S.)
Someone else there?

We go stock still... Then...

WOMAN
Yeah.

MAN (O.S.)
You zip tied to a chair too?

WOMAN
Yes.

MAN (O.S.)
What agency are you with?

Beat. We don't answer.

MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Yeah, I wouldn't answer that
either.

WOMAN
Where are we?

MAN (O.S.)
Fuck if I know. Last thing I
remember I was flying private to
what I thought was a job interview.
One minute I'm sipping champagne,
the next I got a fucking sack over
my head.

WOMAN
Same. Except it was scotch.

MAN (O.S.)
Hope it was expensive.

WOMAN
Clearly it was.

A DOOR opens from somewhere.

MAN (O.S.)
Well, either we're the final two
candidates for whatever the hell
job this is, or we're about to be
tortured for state secrets.

A trio of FOOTSTEPS head towards us.

We brace ourselves.

The SACK is lifted off our head...

Eyes adjust to the light and we see--

An old man, HOWARD BARKER, 80s, smiling down at us. He has
the features of a kindly grandfather, but there's something
unnerving about him.

We're in an AIRPLANE HANGER. Empty except for a metal table
and three chairs. And we've been in the POV of--

MIA BRIGGS, 30s, strong build, short blonde hair, and blue
eyes that stare back at the old man with contempt. She looks
over at the other man bound to a chair beside her...

GAVIN LYNCH, 30s, looks like he could have rowed crew for
Harvard, but he's got the edge of a man who's killed before.

Howard places two bottles of water in front of them and sits
down in a chair.

HOWARD
My name is Howard Barker. It's
wonderful to finally meet you both.
Apologies for the restraints and
subterfuge, but I'm sure you'll
come to understand.

Two ARMED GUARDS behind Gavin and Mia slash the zip ties
binding them to their chairs.

MIA
Where are we?

HOWARD
Where is unimportant.

MIA
... Why are we here?

HOWARD

Because your government believes you to be trustworthy.

MIA

That why you drugged and kidnapped us?

HOWARD

Again, my apologies Ms. Briggs...
(smiles, then)
You have been deemed some of the best secret keepers at your respective agencies. Willing to go to lengths others might not. That's exactly the type of person I need.

GAVIN

Need for what? What agency are you with?

HOWARD

In due time Mr. Lynch...

MIA

No, cut the shit and tell me why I shouldn't just walk out the door right now.

HOWARD

I won't stop you. But you'd be missing out on the opportunity to get answers to questions I know you've had for a long time.

MIA

How do you know what questions I have? You don't know me.

HOWARD

Well Mia, I know you were an orphan, raised by foster parents. You were on your way to being an Olympic gymnast, until you suddenly quit and emancipated yourself. A few years later you enlisted in the Army. You flew Blackhawks in Afghanistan. Studied global affairs and cryptography at Georgetown. And were quickly recruited by the NSA.

(MORE)

HOWARD (CONT'D)

You've spent the last few years as a Special Collections Service Officer planting bugs on some of the world's most impossible to reach targets. Your wiretapping of Baghdadi was especially impressive.

Mia stares at him, *no fucking way he should know about that.*

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Gavin, you come from a military family. Your father was KIA and your mother died shortly thereafter from cancer. Following in your father's footsteps you joined the Marines and earned a bronze star. Then studied political science at Yale. You've risen fast at the CIA and are a key player in the NSC. Your work in Turkey helped us avoid an international crisis.

MIA

You did your homework. But a lot of people can keep secrets. Why us?

HOWARD

You're both stars. But you also have almost no family and few personal connections.

GAVIN

You want us to become ghosts.

HOWARD

Do you believe in ghosts Mr. Lynch?

GAVIN

(shrugs)

Who doesn't love a good ghost story?

HOWARD

Indeed. Would you like to hear one?

Gavin and Mia share a glance. Sure...

HOWARD (CONT'D)

I was an Air Force pilot during the Korean War. Do you know what forty thousand of my fellow service men and I had in common?

(off their blank looks)

We were all killed in action...

(MORE)

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Officially at least.

(winks)

Unofficially, I never got near Korea. Now I'd like to continue my story, but I'm afraid it will alter the course of your lives quite significantly. And I'm well aware of how self-important that sounds, but I encourage you to make this decision as if it had life or death consequences. You can stay, hear the rest of my story, and come to understand what you might be signing up for. But if you're content with your life and the path you are currently on, I suggest you stand up now and we will escort you home. Absolutely no hard feelings.

Mia and Gavin stare at Howard. Trying to understand just what the hell they've gotten into. But neither gets up.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

It's true what they say about ignorance... Believe me.

They don't budge.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Very well... I was barely 19 when Korea broke out. They needed lots of men to fly. And as soon as possible. I was sent to Nellis Air Force Base and right away I started flying exercises. On this particular day, me and my flight instructor, Bob Green, were doing climbs over the hellscape that is the Nevada desert.

We hear the ROAR of a single engine plane.

EXT. SKY - DAY (1951)

A metallic 1950s era two seater plane with Air Force markings streaks across the sky. Big white clouds stretch across the desert.

INT. COCKPIT - DAY (1951)

A dashboard of analog gauges and controls.

YOUNG HOWARD wears goggles, a primitive flight helmet and a shit eaten grin on his face as he pulls up on the yoke.

Sending the plane higher.

His flight instructor BOB GREEN, 30s, sits behind him, white knuckling his seat.

BOB
Easy Barker. Don't tip the
outhouse.

But Young Howard keeps climbing.

He shoots through the clouds. And levels off.

Young Howard marvels at the fluffy white horizon.

Then squints his eyes.

YOUNG HOWARD
The hell is that?

Bob leans over, looks out.

BOB
What?

YOUNG HOWARD
Hovering just above the clouds,
there. Three o'clock.

Bob look to the other side. And sees it --

A BIG SHIMMERING DISK. Translucent.

BOB
What in the sam hell...?

Young Howard turns towards it. Going closer to get a better look. Eyes full of wonder when--

The disk darts through the clouds, impossibly fast.

Young Howard pushes the yoke down, giving chase.

BOB (CONT'D)
Barker! Wait--

But Young Howard flies down through the clouds.

He emerges out of them to find--

No sign of the disk. Howard looks around, WTF did it go?

And then he sees the thing behind him. It's massive, and fluid-like.

Bob looks too. Horrified when--

SHHHHRRROOOOMMMMMM!

The disk accelerates right through the plane.

CLOSE ON YOUNG HOWARD -- eyes wide, IN SLO-MO his pupils dilate.

A RIPPLE OF energy pulses through the plane and then--

Nothing. No sign of the disk.

A warning light flashes in the cockpit. Young Howard is in shock. And then...

The engine cuts out.

Young Howard looks back. Bob is slumped over. Not moving.

And the plane starts to fall.

CLOSE ON Young Howard -- terrified. He grips the controls.

GAVIN (PRELAP)

You've got to be fucking kidding me.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGER - DAY (PRESENT)

Back to Gavin, Mia, and Howard.

GAVIN

This is about little green men?

HOWARD

It's not little green men, I assure you. And I'm surprised by your skepticism Mr. Lynch, considering you yourself have witnessed a comparable event even your Ivy league brain couldn't comprehend.

Gavin's shocked silence confirms as much.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Ms. Briggs you saw what you described as a shimmering orb in the sky near Kandahar before a fellow Blackhawk fell out of the sky. You had the guts to report it, but it was dismissed as a drone attack. These things do have a stigma. That's probably my fault.

MIA

Who do you work for?

HOWARD

(smiles)

May I continue?

They just stare at Howard.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

So there I was, plummeting thousands of feet in the air, only weeks into flight training. Just moments ago I had experienced a feeling so intense it was like the DNA in all the cells in my body had been re-written. By some miracle I managed to land the plane and keep us alive. Bob came-to eventually. But we were in the middle of nowhere. Miles from our flight path. In hundred degree heat with no water. And our radios were shot. So after hours of waiting with no rescue, we decided to climb up a ridge to see what we could see.

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - DAY (1951)

Young Howard and Bob climb up a rocky ridge. Young Howard stands, and in the distance he sees...

A JEEP coming their way. They wave their hands and yell.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (1951)

CLOSE ON a JEEP tire coming to a stop.

The door opens and a pair of white cowboy boots emerge.

MR WHITE, 50s, a slender man with a white cowboy hat steps out. A white handled COLT REVOLVER holstered at his hip.

He tosses TWO CANTEENS to Young Howard and Bob. They guzzle greedily.

HOWARD (V.O.)

He said his name was Mr. White. We didn't know who the hell he was. He wasn't Air Force. But he insisted on hearing our story, right then and there.

LATER

All three sit in the shade of a large boulder. Young Howard talks, animated. Mr. White listens. Bob is still in shock.

Young Howard finishes talking. Mr. White says nothing for a long time.

Just looks between the two of them. Then finally--

MR. WHITE

What you boys experienced is beyond your current understandin' of reality.

BOB

No shit... Now who the hell are you?

MR. WHITE

The man who can change that understandin'. Provide answers. I got a job offer for ya.

YOUNG HOWARD

We already got a job. Fighting communists in Korea. Our boys need us over there.

MR. WHITE

Noble sentiment. But the reality is that war will last a couple a years. People will die. Then the world will move on. But the job I'm offerin'? It's got no expiration date. It's for life. And it's of the highest importance to our nation.

YOUNG HOWARD

What's the job?

MR. WHITE

Keepin' secrets. Like what you just experienced. They must be kept at all costs. They might even require you to kill.

YOUNG HOWARD

Why would I kill for something like that?

MR. WHITE

Why would you kill a communist you've never met and know nothin' about?

YOUNG HOWARD

For my country.

MR. WHITE

Bingo.

BOB

Sounds like a bunch a balooey. Who do you work for, White?

MR. WHITE

A recently created agency within the defense department. A black box operation with a higher security clearance than President Truman himself. He don't know squat about us. But you do.

BOB

What's this outfit called?

MR. WHITE

Officially it don't have a name. But we call it Ezekiel.

GAVIN (V.O.)

Ezekiel??

INT. AIRPLANE HANGER - DAY (PRESENT)

GAVIN

Like the Ezekiel from the bible who saw creatures and their machines in the clouds?

HOWARD

I didn't come up with it.

GAVIN

You can deny it all you want, but this is about aliens.

HOWARD

Would that be of interest to you?

GAVIN

Seeing some aliens?

HOWARD

Proof that we're not the only intelligent life out there.

GAVIN

Hell yes.

HOWARD

Ms. Briggs? You're awfully quiet.

MIA

If this is true, and not part of some elaborate prank on the two of us, why would you go to so much trouble to keep all these events secret?

HOWARD

If you move forward with us, you will find out for certain. But think about it in the abstract. Do you know how the world would react if all of a sudden we provided proof of the existence of otherworldly beings? The political, religious, and existential upheaval it would cause?

MIA

A lot of social scientists think it would bring the world together. One species, instead of many opposing tribes.

HOWARD

It's a nice thought isn't it? But the reality is, no one knows for certain what would happen. And governments like certainty... and stability.

Mia can't argue with that.

MIA

So what did Mr. White say to you to convince you to give up your life and keep his secrets?

Howard smiles.

EXT. DESERT - DAY (1951)

MR. WHITE

Imagine getting a definitive answer to one of mankind's greatest questions. Are we alone in the universe? Now from what you just witnessed, you may think you already know the answer. But it's so much more than that.

(grins)

Shit will blow your mind...

Young Howard and even Bob are sucked in.

MR. WHITE (CONT'D)

We operate with total impunity and an unlimited budget. You'll get all the creature comforts you could want for the rest of your life. But here's the cost of admission... You don't get to be you anymore.

(beat)

And I only got room for one of ya.

Mr. White begins to unholster his COLT REVOLVER...

MR. WHITE (CONT'D)

And the other knows too much.

INT. AIRPLANE HANGER - DAY (PRESENT)

HOWARD

So, you're in the middle of nowhere, with nothing but the clothes on your back. A stranger places a gun equidistant from you and another person. He says one of you will get to eat the apple from the tree of knowledge that will shatter your entire perception of our existence. And the other won't make it out alive. What do you do?

Mia and Gavin stare at him in disbelief.

Howard stares back... and then he gets up from his chair.

He walks toward the door. The guards follow him.

Howard takes something out of his coat. A white handled COLT REVOLVER.

He places it on the ground. Equidistant from Mia and Gavin.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

The cost of admission. And I know
you both want in. You've wanted
these answers your whole lives.

Howard and the guards leave through the door.

GAVIN

Is this a fucking joke??
(to Mia)
This is a joke right?

MIA

I don't think so.

GAVIN

Yeah.

And suddenly, Gavin is up, running for the gun.

Mia stays put.

Gavin clutches the COLT. And turns back around.

MIA

We don't have to play his game.

GAVIN

Come on, that old man knows exactly
who we are.

Mia looks at him sadly.

MIA

So you think I'm Bob in this
situation?

GAVIN

Afraid so.

Gavin raises the Colt--

BOOM! --

Mia dives under the metal table, flips it over and--

RUSHES Gavin.

Gavin fires.

BOOM! -- PING!

Mia keeps coming... About to ram him with the table...

EXT. AIRPLANE HANGER #2 - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Howard. Listening to it all go down from the next hanger over.

We hear a CRASH.

A struggle--

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Then silence.

Howard's eyes shift to the door where a guard waits.

FOOTSTEPS on the other side, coming closer.

BANGING ON THE DOOR.

Howard nods to the guard, who opens it.

MIA emerges. Splattered with blood. But unfazed.

She holds the Colt. Stares at Howard.

He smiles at her.

HOWARD

Congratulations Ms. Briggs. Welcome
to Ezekiel.

CLOSE ON Mia. Catching her breath.

She looks beyond Howard. Eyes go wide.

She drops the gun.

MIA

Holy shit--

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END