

How Do You Like Your Blueeyed Boy...

by

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FADE IN

INT. - TIME INDETERMINATE

In a warehouse, dark, but with a glow of light as well, as if from windows very high up. A VOICE cries out: DR. JEREMIAH KISSÓV.

KISSÓV

Let me go!

No answer.

KISSÓV

You don't know how much trouble you're in!

No answer.

KISSÓV

Let me go.

CEILING

The SNAP of a light switch, and a single bulb covered by a tin shade pops on.

UNDER THE LIGHT

Kissóv is taped to a wooden office chair: arms to the arm rests, a band of tape around his chest, legs to the legs.

Kissóv hears FOOTSTEPS. He twists and turns to see if she can see who is making them.

EDGE OF THE LIGHT

The tips of a pair of shoes—nice shoes, but not too expensive—just break into the circle. They step forward.

Into the light walks a leather-trench coated, leather-gloved lower half of a body. Its right hand holds an automatic pistol.

The body stands behind Kissóv, to his left; Kissóv wrenches himself to see who it is but can't get far enough around.

The body's VOICE cuts through Kissóv's PANTING.

VOICE (O.S.)

Dr. Jeremiah Kissóv.

KISSÓV

Let me go.

The gun gets placed behind his left ear.

VOICE (O.S.)

Shut up. You've been summoned. So shut up until I need you.

KISSÓV'S LEFT EAR

The gun-tip digs into the bone just behind the ear lobe and leaves a red round circle.

The gun tip disappears.

EDGE OF THE LIGHT

The feet, behind Kissóv, walk to Kissóv's right. They make slight SCRAPING and CRUNCHING noises as they move across the concrete floor.

UNDER THE LIGHT

Kissóv tries to see who is behind him, but she can't do it. His BREATHING becomes more RASPY.

KISSÓV'S RIGHT EAR

The gun-tip digs into the bone just behind the ear lobe. It pushes just hard enough to force Kissóv to tip his head to the left.

VOICE (O.S.)

Okay, now I give you permission to talk.

Kissóv says nothing. The gun-tip releases its pressure, leaving behind an ugly red mark.

A mouth, a pair of lips, cozies up to Kissóv's ear.

VOICE

Suddenly mute, are we? That's actually fine—I was getting tired of your whining.

KISSÓV (O.S.)

Please put the gun away.

The mouth does not form any words.

KISSÓV

Put the gun away.

The mouth disappears.

EDGE OF CIRCLE OF LIGHT

The body circles Kissóv along the rim of light. The FOOTFALLS make ECHOES that underscore Kissóv's harangue.

UNDER THE LIGHT

KISSÓV

You are in a lot of trouble! I'm sure someone saw us leave and knows where we are. Even I know where we are since you didn't even bother to blindfold me. And when they get here—assault, kidnapping, emotional abuse—my lawyers—do you know who I am? I'm known all over the world! You won't get away with this, whatever it is you're doing. Release me. Now. Right this minute. Immediately.

Kissóv runs out of steam. The feet take two steps more, then the body sits on Kissóv's lap, and Kissóv sees the face of LILAH LAWTON. The gun remains in full view.

LAWTON
Finished? Hmm?

KISSÓV
Yes.

LAWTON
Keep adding to it if you want to—we have time.

KISSÓV
No.

LAWTON
Sure?

KISSÓV
Yes.

LAWTON
Good. Then we can get started.

KISSÓV
Started?

LAWTON
Why I've brought you here.

Lawton stands up, walks out of the circle, then walks back into it with a folding chair on which she sits. Though she does not sit there long before she gets up and paces as she speaks.

LAWTON
Dr. Jeremiah Kissóv. A.k.a. DeathMaster. Murderer.

KISSÓV
I don't kill people.

LAWTON
That's right—you have a new name for your assassinations. Remind me.

KISSÓV
Dig—dignicides.

LAWTON

Right. You perform dignicides.

KISSÓV

What are you doing to me? Why have you—

Lawton hits him with the pistol on the back of his head, just hard enough to remind him.

LAWTON

What is a dignicide?

KISSÓV

What?

Lawton slowly presses the gun against Kissóv's temple, forcing him again to cock his head painfully to one side.

KISSÓV

Dignicide. Death with dignity.

Lawton releases him.

KISSÓV

I help people die with dignity—all right?

LAWTON

And just how do you do this?

Lawton taps him lightly with the gun as a reminder.

KISSÓV

They do it themselves—

LAWTON

(coaxing)

With a device—

KISSÓV

—I've put together—they make the choice when to die.

LAWTON

A device.

KISSÓV

An injection device—they push a plunger—

A moment of loud SILENCE. Lawton faces the chair to Kissóv, sits.

INTERCUT between Lawton and Kissóv.

LAWTON

Dr. Jeremiah Kissóv, I want to question you about the death of one Alice Lawton, the most recent victim of your—circus. I can't wait for the courts or the talking-heads or the Last Judgment to get around to it. You will answer now for her death. And admit what an infection you are, what a running sore you are, what a disposable creature you are. Agree?

KISSÓV

What?

Lawton hits him with the gun in some way that is moderately painful.

LAWTON

No questions! Full attention. Tell me what you know about Alice Lawton.

Kissóv, in an attempt to act bravely, purses his lips and shakes his head no.

Lawton takes the little finger of her left hand and inserts it into her own left ear, wiggles it around as if to clear out the wax. She switches the gun to her other hand, then does the same thing to her right ear.

Lawton stares at Kissóv, then tosses him a most winning smile.

LAWTON

Oh, all right. You can ask some questions—for clarification.

KISSÓV

What are you doing to me?

LAWTON

(to a schoolchild)

Obvious, isn't it? I am treating you to death with undignity. Just like you do to all your victims. Don't you recognize it, my blue-eyed boy?

KISSÓV

That's not what I do. Let me go.

LAWTON

Soon released. Tell me about Alice Lawton first.

KISSÓV

Age 65. Beginning stages of Alzheimer's. She wanted me to help her die because she didn't want to face the "dissolving"—her word.

Lawton puts her boot against the chair leg and gives the chair a slight push.

LAWTON

And the allegations in the press that you may have "nudged" her along?

KISSÓV

She made her own choice. I am in pain—I need your help.

LAWTON

You said in one news story you had contacted all next of kin.

KISSÓV

I always do. She didn't have any—just some close friends.

Lawton erupts from her chair. The folding chair SKITTERS back into the darkness.

In a flash Lawton is behind Kissóv and pulls Kissóv's head back by his hair so that she glares into Kissóv's upside-down face.

LAWTON

Wrong. Wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong.
Daughter.

KISSÓV

Daughter?

LAWTON

You missed her daughter Lilah. You. Missed. Me.

Lawton pushes Kissóv and the chair over so that Kissóv slams into the floor on his left side.

FLOOR

Kissóv's left cheek presses into the floor. Dust is stirred by his heavy breathing.

CIRCLE OF LIGHT

Lawton stalks around the perimeter of the light. Her heavy breathing ECHOES in the room.

FLOOR

Lawton's shoes stop. Kissóv sees that the tips are slightly scuffed.

Then the shoes move away as Lawton walks behind Kissóv and pulls him upright.

UNDER THE LIGHT

Lawton brushes the dirt off Kissóv's left cheek. The gun is no longer in Lawton's hands.

LAWTON

Me. Lilah Lawton.

KISSÓV

She never mentioned you.

LAWTON

That's not true.

KISSÓV

It is. True. No one mentioned you.

LAWTON

She must have mentioned the daughter "given away," her youthful—lapse—

KISSÓV

No—no. I'm sorry—she—she never mentioned a—

With a GROWL of rage, Lawton reaches down, grabs the legs of the chair, and upends Kissóv onto his back.

Lawton straddles his knees and glares down at Kissóv. The light overhead swings, throwing around shadows.

LAWTON

I know she was not sick. This is when you squeal in protest and say, "How could you know that?" Hold up your end of the interview.

KISSÓV

How could—

LAWTON

I also work in the health "industry," though as a real doctor—not some "lower level" grunt like, say, a forensic pathologist—oh, yes, I forgot, that's what you are! Pathetic.

Lawton unstraddles him, then moves around, grabs the chair, and sits Kissóv up upright.

Kissóv is clearly in pain.

The swinging light casts shadows.

Lawton walks into the darkness and comes back with the folding chair. She sets it down, sits.

LAWTON

Well—here we are again. As I was saying—I have been a doctor without borders. Some of my operating rooms: Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda. I could write a Michelin Guide to a killing field. And I can also get access to records, just like you. I know all about her medical history. Her whole history. Did you know about her recent treatment for melancholia? Don't answer—I already know you don't know.

KISSÓV

Why are you doing this?

FACES TOGETHER

Lawton puts his face only inches from Kissóv's. The shadows play across the both of them.

LAWTON

Do you have any idea the life I've lived?

KISSÓV

How could I?

LAWTON

Blood up to my elbows in places that have no name.

KISSÓV

That's not death—that's slaughter. That's not what I do.

LAWTON

Death is a messy, filthy business, and no one needs a liar like you telling them it has dignity!

KISSÓV

What you and I do—as doctors—we're not different.

LAWTON

Not different?

Lawton pulls away.

UNDER THE LIGHT

LAWTON

Not different?

KISSÓV

You did everything you could to reduce their pain—

LAWTON

We are done here.

KISSÓV

Listen to me! If they were dying, you wanted them to die with dignity, yes? Just a difference in degree with me—

LAWTON

The defense gets no time at all.

KISSÓV

—but the same point: no one needs the kind of pain that eats away their pride. We're alike.

LAWTON

Shut up! Shut up.

KISSÓV

I won't. Shut. Up! Kill me if you're going to kill me, but she never mentioned you.

LAWTON

The Alzheimer's was a ploy to get you to do a low-rent suicide, and you obliged, to up your own score.

KISSÓV

That's not who I saw. She didn't do this for attention.

LAWTON

What do you know?

KISSÓV

I know I saw a woman who did exactly what she wanted to do. She wasn't weak.

LAWTON

She wanted to die?

KISSÓV

She chose—freely, calmly.

LAWTON

I can't believe you.

KISSÓV

Alice Lawton—

LAWTON

I know she wanted me to come home. To see me before she died. You took that away from me.

KISSÓV

She never mentioned you.

LAWTON

Because she was so disgusted with her own life. And because of your ambition—

KISSÓV

Ambition?

LAWTON

—you have stolen my only chance to bring this prodigal child back to her.

KISSÓV

Prodigal—you wanted to come home—

LAWTON

Home!

KISSÓV

Home. After all you've seen— And no one there to—
welcome—you—love—you—

Lawton stands up, moves the folding chair out of the circle, stares at Kissóv as if deciding. Then decides.

LAWTON

Prosecution rests.

KISSÓV

Wait.

LAWTON

Your greatest sin, Herr Kissóv, is not killing my mother.
What I indict you for is not making her have second
thoughts so that she might think of me again. I'll never
escape that hunger. And if I can't escape—neither should
you.

Lawton slides the gloves off her hands, holds them in his right hand. With her left, she reaches into the left pocket of her coat and pulls out a Swiss Army-style knife. Switching the knife for the gloves, she slides the gloves into the coat's left pocket.

KISSÓV

What she didn't say is not my fault!

LAWTON

Right- or left-handed?

KISSÓV

What?

LAWTON

Right or left?

KISSÓV

Left.

Lawton opens the knife and cuts the tape holding down Kissóv's left arm. Kissóv flexes his hand.

LAWTON

Leave it on the armrest.

Lawton pulls a roll of tape from an inside pocket, holds the roll as she closes the knife and puts the knife away in the inside pocket. He then pulls the gun out of the right pocket.

LAWTON

Don't move.

Lawton kneels on his right knee. He puts the tape in Kissóv's lap, then puts the gun in Kissóv's left hand, Kissóv's finger through the trigger guard. He takes up the tape, pulls off a length of it, and tears it off the roll. He puts the roll on the floor, then uses the tape to tape the gun in Lawton's hand.

LAWTON

You think you're a good doctor? A good doctor always finishes his work.

Lawton lifts the gun and jams it against his own temple.

LAWTON

Finish what you started.

KISSÓV

I can't do that!

LAWTON

C'mon, two for one. Finish it!

KISSÓV

I can't!

Lawton raises Kissóv's arm straight up, slips a finger into the trigger, and FIRES OFF a round. The CRASH reverberates throughout the space.

Lawton puts the gun back against his own temple.

LAWTON

Complete the circle.

KISSÓV

You'll have to shoot me because I won't do it.

LAWTON

It's my free choice—

KISSÓV

—but not mine—

LAWTON

—you're just the device—no guilt—what's the problem?

KISSÓV

You have—life left to live.

LAWTON

Even your hesitation shows you don't believe that. Do it—
or I'll kill you and do it to myself anyway. Finish. Your.
Work!

Kissóv glares at Lawton. Her body shakes.

KISSÓV

(low-voiced)

No. We are not different.

Lawton looks at Kissóv shivering. Kissóv scans Lawton's face for intentions.

Lawton lets go of Kissóv's hand, rests it back on the armrest. Lawton stands.
Kissóv pulls away as Lawton goes to stroke his hair.

LAWTON

Mama, mama, mama—

KISSÓV

Don't!

Lawton touches Kissóv's hair anyway. Kissóv holds himself very still.

LAWTON

It's a long list, mama. I don't want to add his name.

Lawton reaches into his pocket to get the knife, which she opens, and cuts the
gun free, then cuts Kissóv free. Kissóv springs out of the chair. The chair falls
back.

LAWTON

You should probably go.

KISSÓV

I don't want to turn my back on you.

Kissóv indicates the gun.

KISSÓV

Or on that.

Lawton tosses Kissóv the gun, which Kissóv catches.

LAWTON

Do what you have to do.

Kissóv hesitates, then pockets the gun.

INTERCUT Between Kissóv And Lawton.

KISSÓV

What I do—it's not the best way. For some, it's the only way. I am going to go.

LAWTON

Tell me. Tell me about her. You were the last.

KISSÓV

I have to go.

LAWTON

Bring me home to her. You were the last to see.

KISSÓV

She was never treated for melancholy.

LAWTON

I made that up.

KISSÓV

I never doubted her.

LAWTON

Tell me. Bring her home to me. Help me remember what I never knew about her. Help the prodigal child.

KISSÓV

I should go— What do you want to know?

LAWTON

Begin with when she never mentioned me. Our last common ground.

Kissóv hesitates again: a look at Lawton, a look at the darkness and escape.

Get the chair. KISSÓV

Lawton uprights the chair.

Sit. KISSÓV

Lawton sits.

Alice Lawton. KISSÓV

FADE OUT