

# Ninety Degrees South

EPISODE ELEVEN: Peppermint.

Brian M Bradley

INTRO MUSIC

STATION HUM ABOVE, SOUND OF HEART MONITOR BEEPING.FADE INTO  
MEDICAL BAY

JULIAN:  
and breathe out.

BASS:  
(exhales, slight wince-groan)  
better than yesterday, for sure.

### TAPPING ON IPAD

JULIAN:  
And the pain on a scale of one to ten, your lungs?

BASS:  
(ponders)  
A two.

JULIAN:  
And on the same scale, if you weren't trying to  
put on some sort of male bravado?

BASS:  
(frustrated)  
Doc, seriously; it's a two.

JULIAN:  
(not believing)  
mmmmhmm.

BASS:  
look, Doc, when can I get out of here?

JULIAN:  
(Sarcastic)  
Well, let's see, Deputy Marshal, you arrived unresponsively,  
hardly breathing, had to be carried in. You were unconscious  
for seventy two hours, suffered minor damage to airways and

lungs, and caustic chemical irritation around your eyes; why.....  
I'll sign your release papers now!

BASS:

(curt)

Perfect!

LEANS UP FROM GURNEY, SQUEAKING OF PLASTIC

JULIAN:

(serious)

I was joking!

BASS:

(also serious)

Yeah, Doc, well, I'm not. My time is limited, I only have two, maybe two and a half more months if I'm lucky to hunt this bastard down, and now they've gone and pissed me off.

JULIAN:

(stern)

I will not discharge you, Deputy Marshal.

BASS:

Nor will you keep me here while I have a target on my back!

JULIAN:

(loud voice)

GUYS?

SURGICAL CURTIN PULLS BACK

JULIAN:

You know Zeke has appointed his team as round-the-clock guards for you while you're here. It just so happens that Dan & Dave Biggs have this shift. Now, what was that you were saying, Deputy Marshal, about Wayne Gretzky?

LOW GROWLING

BASS:  
(disappointed)  
Oh, that's just forty shades of wrong!

JULIAN:  
(firm)  
Now we can go about this two ways, Deputy. Way number one : you let me finish examining you stem to stern. If I'm happy with your progress, I'll discharge you on \*lite\* duty. Number two: You invoke your right to decline medical care and release yourself against my orders. Boys. . .what was that thing you got arrested for in Christchurch last year?

DAN/DAVE BOTH:  
Cross-checking.

BALLPOINT PEN CLICK.

JULIAN:  
Your move, Deputy.

3SP

BASS:  
(half-serious)  
I hate you, Doc.

JULIAN:  
Music to my ears! (over to the Biggs brothers) Hey boys, why don't you wait out in the hallway/I'll call you if he wants to debate the Maple leaves.

GUYS CHATTING AS THEY EXIT CLUB MED

JULIAN:

Now look at the tip of my pen and follow it with your eyes only.

BASS:

(curious)

So, the analysis on the chemical that did this to me; it come back from Christchurch yet?

JULIAN:

(focusing on the exam)

Not as far as I am aware. Thankfully, however, whatever it was, it didn't affect anybody else.

WRITING ON TABLET

JULIAN:

Tilt your head back so I can look up your nostrils.

PENLIGHT CLICK ON

JULIAN:

(As he's looking up a nose)

The hazmat team contained it pretty quickly, and A-4 reopened a few hours after Zeke got you here. (pause)Any irritation in your nostrils when you inhale deep?

BASS:

(considers)

mmm, no.

JULIAN:

I'm going to listen to you breath a bit more. Take deep breaths and hold till I say.

2SP

JULIAN:

In

DEEP INHALE AND HOLD

2SP

JULIAN:

And exhale.

DEEP EXHALE

2SP

JULIAN:

In

DEEP INHALE AND HOLD

2SP

JULIAN:

And exhale.

DEEP EXHALE

WRITING ON IPAD

JULIAN:

(hesitant)

Alright, Mr. Marlow, I'm going to go ahead and discharge you. However, I'm serious when I say \*lite\* duty, and if you should

feel any dizziness, severe irritation of the lungs, or in your nose, I want you back in here immediately.

BASS:

I understand, Doc.

PA OPEN CHIME

CHERYL-LYNN:

(Over PA)

Maintenance team, please report to the Cargo Pallet Line.  
Maintenance team, Cargo Pallet line. Thank youuuuuuuuuuu.

PA CLOSE CHIME

JULIAN:

Go ahead and put your shirt back on and wait in my office.  
You have a visitor in there waiting to see you. I'll finish with the discharge form and get you in a few.

BASS:

(curious)

Visitor, um yeah...sure?

SOUND OF SITTING UP OFF GURNEY AND DOOR OPENING

BASS:

(pleased)

Kendra!

STIRRING AND SITTING UP FROM A COUCH

KENDRA:

(waking up)

Oh, Bass. I'm happy to see...that you're back on your feet.  
How...um...are you feeling better?

PATS CHEST SLIGHTLY

BASS:

(reassuring)

no-no, all good. Doc Ambrose gave me a clean bill of health,  
and I'm going to get back to it. (pause). Have you been waiting  
here long?

KENDRA:

um...I came in around five thirty while you were still asleep. I  
just pulled an all-nighter. After...when I ...Julian told me to  
take a nap in his office and that he'd let me know when you  
were up.

BASS:

Have you been here for three hours?

KENDRA:

(low voice)

I wanted to make sure I was...that when you got up, you saw  
me.

BASS:

(happy)

I'm glad you did.

KENDRA:

I'm...sure you heard the evidence you had is missing.

BASS:



Zeke told me yesterday when he stopped by. Said my desk was picked through, and the item I left was missing; he also said the camera mysteriously stopped working just as the alarm's started. Somebody found and deactivated it.

KENDRA:

I'm so sorry, Bass.

BASS:

Don't be...it was a ruse. I have copies of everything. I was worried something might happen.

BASS WINCES AND GROANS A BIT

KENDRA:

(Not convinced)

You're sure you're okay?

BASS:

(bluffing)

Absolutely...

KENDRA:

(shyly)

We...um I don't know if you recall...there was a dinner we had plans for before...I'd like when you're better of course...if we could...

BASS:

(flattered)

How does eighteen hundred tonight sound?

KENDRA:

Your office again?

BASS:

(curious)  
How about the galley? You up for that yet?

KENDRA:  
(Pauses, low voice)  
I'm...I don't know if...(deep breath) I guess part of baby steps  
\*are\* 'steps.' The galley would be great.

BASS:  
Great. See you there.

KENDRA:  
(low voice, shyly)  
I'm happy you're better.

BASS:  
Thank you, Kendra.

FOOTSTEPS LEAVING ON TILE. DOC AMBROSE'S VOICE STARTS A BIT  
SEPERATED BUT GETS CLOSER AS HE TALKS

JULIAN:  
(instructional)  
Alright, Deputy Marshal. Against my better judgment, I'm  
going to give you walking papers, but I want you to keep in  
mind the conditions I set.

BASS:  
Haven't forgotten, doc.

JULIAN:  
I also want you to take this; it's an emergency inhaler. You'll  
only need it for a week or so. If you find it difficult to  
breathe, use this, and it will help open your airway.

BASS:

(curt, wanting to leave)  
Understood. (changes tone to cordial) Oh hey, Doc...thanks for letting Ken...Doctor Jennings use your office for a few hours.

JULIAN:  
(chuckle)  
Few hours? For the first two days, you were here and unconscious; she was practically living out of my office. She wanted to be close.

2SP

JULIAN:  
None of my business, but my medical diagnosis is that she may have some feelings for you. Moronic decisions about his own health and all!

BASS:  
(Internally pondering, half-listening)  
yeah... Doc..got it. Thanks again.

PHONE CALL IN PROGRESS. LIGHT BREEZE OUTSIDE

CHUCK:  
(Over phone)  
You have no idea how good it is to hear the sound of your voice, boy. How's the airbags?

BASS:  
Sore, Charlie. Slight burning sensation when I breathe deep. My head is throbbing a bit, and I feel like puking every 45 minutes or so.

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

So let me guess. You checked yourself out of the station hospital against doctor's orders.

BASS:

(caught)

Well....I wouldn't say \*exactly\*...

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

Damn it, Bass, you seriously haven't learned a thing since Cincinnati, have you?

BASS:

This situation is night and day different than Cincinnati!

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

I'll say! Back then, you had fewer donkey brains than you do now!

BASS:

Always the charmer, Charlie.

CHUCK:

So then let me give you the good news.

INDISTINCT MURMURING IN THE SLIGHT BACKGROUND, SMALL CROWD.

CHUCK:

Portions of the NSF are pushing back against Beau-Low, citing the attempt on your life as a direct result of them expediting

the investigation unduly. The two had it out, and surprisingly, the NSF won.

BASS:

(surprised)

That's...unexpected.

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

Well, it helped when the Marshal's office said they would send down half a dozen more deputies and go public on the attempted murder; non-disclosure agreement or no! Changed the whole ballgame.

BASS:

(curious)

I wondered why they kept sending me emails reminding me about the liability waiver I signed. I just thought they were just no-class pieces of shit.

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

Bottom line, you should start seeing a lot more support provided to you than before. I'm sure the station manager will make some half-assed effort. I understand he's a piece of work. You make sure he puts his \*whole\* ass in, you hear me, Bass?

BASS:

(chuckles)

Oh, I'm going to love that!

SLIGHTLY MORE PEOPLE, MORE INDISTINCT MURMURING IN SLIGHT BACKGROUND, LARGER CROWD.

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

Okay, Bass, I'm going to be flying back to Honolulu later this week. Meetings and reviews in DC went much better than anticipated. I want you to keep better watch down there!

BASS:

(Reassuring)

I know Charlie, I know. Whoever the killer is, I've rattled their cage. They messed up, and now they will be even more dangerous than before.

CHUCK:

(Reciting) (Over phone)

The most dangerous creature is. . .

BASS:

(Finishes)

...One that is cornered.

CHUCK:

(Over phone)

That's my boy! You heal up, son.

BEEP OF CALL ENDING. OOOHHHHING, AND AWWWWWING FROM CROWD. SOUNDS OF FOOTSTEPS HEADING THAT WAY. VOICES START LOW BUT BECOME LOUDER AS BASS APPROACHES.

IT EMERY:

(Anxious)

Somebody said they saw her on the horizon.

RANDO PRSN 2:

(Doubtful)

...could just be another false alarm?

IT CHRIS:

(serious)

Come on, everybody, Five highly probable sightings in the last two days? You heard Topper; he said the winds were shifting to head back from the Thiel Mountains.! (Pauses...waiting) The Theil Mountains, which, as we all know, is where she lives!

Multiple:

(agreeing)

yeah, yeah, that's right. Theil!

RANDO PRSN 1:

(excited)

Is that her? Over there!

IT CHRIS:

Binoculars, people!

### WIND GUST AND EXCITED MURMUR

BASS:

(confused)

Mr. Todd? What's going on?

IT CHRIS

(Slight surprise)

Oh, Deputy Marshal, glad to see you back to bi-peddle. We've heard that Peppermint may be back.

BASS:

(confused)

Peppermint? Who is that?

IT EMERY:

(chuckles)

Not a who....

IT CHRIS:

(Curt)

Keep watching down there, Hawkeye! (To Bass) Peppermint, the divine and generous.

BASS:

Is this one of those. . .dungeon and dragons live-action...Second life make-believe...groups?

IT EMERY:

(correcting)

LARP.

BASS:

Beg pardon?

IT CHRIS:

(Cuts in)

LARP. Live.Action.Role.Playing. What you just described and no. This isn't that. Waynewright wouldn't support it. No, this is real-life Deputy Marshal. Peppermint is real.

BASS:

(confused, slight frustration)

Could somebody ...please explain.

FADE IN PAN FLUTE MUSIC

IT CHRIS:

(Begins story, overly dramatic telling)



It all began...they said fifteen years ago. Back during the dark times. Before Star Trek shows returned to the airwaves, and when Hanna Montana was first being inflicted upon us.

BASS:

I swear, one day, I'll learn about asking . . . Keep going.

IT CHRIS:

Winter is coming..... Was coming. Stronger winds than any had seen before were reported. Darkness was creeping slowly towards the station, and Cargo DeWalts struggled with...  
*(pause, stops dramatic account. Goes Angry)* EMERY! Enough with the pan-flute, huh?

PAN FLUTE STOPS ABRUPTLY TO BE LEFT WITH JUST BACKGROUND WIND

IT EMERY:

It sets a mood.

IT CHRIS:

*(curt)*

Set...your eyes on the horizon and keep watching for her!  
*(pause, deep breath)* Besides... rather offensive to the native Americans, don't ya think?

IT EMERY:

*(proud)*

oh, not at all. I read the message boards and the SJW rants. This wasn't Native American; it was written by my cousin Matty! Everybody loves Matty!

IT CHRIS:

*(thinks)*

Oh yeah...I like Matty, cool cat, super friendly...(regains)  
Just watch the horizon for her, okay Zamfir!

IT EMERY:

(Slightly muffled)  
Zamfir, a white European, so still not cultural appropriation!  
Suck it, Reddit bitches!

IT CHRIS:  
(Deep sigh)  
Where was I? (Return to overly dramatic storytelling voice)  
Cargo DeWalts struggled to get the pallets of supplies secured  
for the veil of winter darkness.

### SLIGHT GUST

IT CHRIS:  
The way this story has been passed down, one of the DeWalts  
made an innocent comment. He looked into the coming winds  
and said, I wish we could get this over with, and  
WHOOOOOSSSSH!

BASS:  
Whoosh?

IT CHRIS:  
(correcting him)  
No no...more...WHOOOOOSSSHHHH! (back to storytellers  
voice) A sudden gust of wind. More significant, faster than any  
that day, came from the mountains and ripped cargo tarps off  
their pallets.

### 2SP

IT CHRIS:  
(Storyteller)

The tarps, large and brown, stayed low to the ground.(pauses for effect). They say it looked like a stampede racing down the ice runway. The wind...slowly died like it left to follow the stampede. The DeWalt who made the wish looked up, and saw an enormous tarp in front, looked exactly...uncannily, like a giant Caribou.

ALL:

(Church chant)

Peppermint!

BASS:

(unbelieving)

A cargo tarp that looked like...giant Caribou?

ALL:

(Church chant)

Peppermint!

BASS:

So this...is a religious thing?

IT EMERY:

No Deputy Marshal, not oppressive; it's spiritual!

BASS:

(lost for words)

I...its a bit...

IT CHRIS:

(normal voice)

Oh trust us, we know!! (Storyteller) Every year, as the winter season begins to approach, on the horizon, sometimes if the winds shift...from the Theils, you may catch a glimpse of her on the horizon. If you are truly blessed, she grants you a wish

BASS:

Like a genie?

IT EMERY:  
No man, A caribou.

ALL:  
(Church chant)  
Peppermint!

IT EMERY:  
(Proud)  
Tell him the name, Chris!

IT CHRIS:  
(curt)  
Funny how you can look with your MOUTH when not using  
your EYES to scan the horizon!

2SP

IT CHRIS:  
(Storyteller)  
So every season, a small group of true believers gather to keep  
watch. Act as a sentry and wait for her to return. We all  
here...Are the Personhood ...of the Divine Wind-Dancing  
Caribou Spirit.

ALL:  
(Church chant)  
Peppermint!

2SP

BASS:  
(Deadpan)

Okay...I'm going to go back in now...but hey, fantastic tale,  
excellent presentation. Mr. Waterman, I loved the pan flute!

IT EMERY:

(flattered)

Aw, thanks man!

BASS:

so yeah....I'm going.

FOOTSTEPS CRUNCHING IN THE SNOW, VOICE BEHIND GETTING LOWER

IT EMERY:

This direction clear, no sign.

RANDO PRSN 4:

Wind is kicking up in Sector 9!

IT CHRIS:

Keep watching people! We can't miss her this time!

(2SP)

FOOTSTEPS UP DA STAIRS AND DOOR OPENS

BASS:

Absolutely something In the water.

ROBOTIC VOICE – RECORDING STOPPED

RECORDING IN PROCESS, ARCHES HUM

ZEKE:

(questioning)

The Ice caves? Not much to see in there, just a glorified maintenance tunnel.

BASS:

Yeah, I've heard, but there was something that Waynewright was worried about people seeing down there. I overheard him on the phone when the Trolls were here. He also referenced them in the emails Doctor Rodney hid. It has to be a connection.

ZEKE:

(sighs)

Man, you just got let go from Club Med five hours ago. You sure you up for this?

BASS:

(reassuring)

I'm good Zeke, I'm good, thanks to...

ZEKE:

(cuts him off)

yeah yeah yeah yeah...Ain't no mushy stuff okay, Just need to grab my cold weather gear and radio.

BASS:

Let's go.

WALKING DOWN THE HALLWAY. MECHANIC AND SHOP SOUNDS IN THE BACKGROUND. HYDRAULIC WRENCHES AND THE LIKE. DOOR OPENS, LIGHT GOES ON.

ZEKE:

I'll suit up and radio in.

FRANKLIN

(muffled from inside cage)

Is that the resilient Deputy Marshal Marlow I hear? Glad to see you didn't go towards the light.

BASS  
(half-acknowledging)

Franklin.

SOUND OF ZIPPERS AND HEAVY COAT BEING PUT ON

FRANKLIN

So what's this I hear about somebody trying to take you out? Chemical attack or some such.

BASS

I've had people try to kill me before Franklin, not rattled, just. .

FRANKLIN

Oooooohhhhhh. Vengful. Angry. *[Switch to demon]* Ready to unlash wrath. *[sniff sniff]* Oh good times! Nothing like making them pay for what they did. Eye for an eye! Old testament style. You know, before the almighty started to listen to marketing focus groups!!! *[chiding]* Go on Bass, knock them down and then make them drink whatever compound they tried to inflict. . .

BASS

Yeah, that's not how the law works these days. We arrest, try and prosecute. I'm not going to enact my own sentence. Not my place to punish, just enforce. Now, *[sarcastic]* where is the little angel that appears on \*this\* shoulder to tell me to be a good boy and play by the rules?

FRANKLIN

Ugh! This whole enlightened . . .you humans are horrible at repressing your true nature. You need to let go, if you're going to hunt. . .really hunt! Really put yourself in the killer's shoes, or boots. *[Frustrated]* Whatever the footwear they favor. Put them on!! Your killer. . . is out there. They know they messed up. They botched it. Now, they'll need to pick up their game. Don't let them. . .find them. Find them and. . .

ZEKE

OK lawman, I'm suited up and. . .**HEY!** We talked about this man! Don't listen to deviled eggs. Do. Not. Engage! Don't let him get into yo head! Don't tell him about your childhood. C'mon man. . .It's *EXACTLY* how Hannibal got to Jodi Foster!!

FRANKLIN

*[Back to human]* Another time, Deputy Marshal Marlow! Remember what I said. Do unto others. . .before they do unto you. *[Snif Snif]*

ZEKE

Just one time, I want to come in here without you runnin yo mouth?

ZEKE:

Okay, lawman. Don't know what you're expecting to find down in there, but if you have your heart set on it, I'll take you in.

FRANKLIN:

(muffled from inside cage)

I'll ...you know, hold down the fort here. I'll Just, keep on shining!

SOUND OF LIGHT BEING SHUT OFF AND DOOR CLOSING. WALKING IN THE ARCHES WITH THE OVERHEAD NOISE.



SOUND OF VML DOOR OPEN AND CLOSING. THE GUYS WALK AND TALK

ZEKE

Got to say Lawman, most people learn demons are real. They lose they shit. You? You takin' this pretty damn good.

BASS

Appreciate the compliment. Just. . .They're these Mongolian artists. They do this form of ...throat singing. Can achieve very Deep, strange and odd vocals. [*Deep Breath*]. I'm still kinda processing it all. I know you think he's a real demon, and after what I just experienced. . .I'm not at that point myself. Not yet.

ZEKE

[*Offended*] Mongolian what now? C'mon man, you been down here long enough now to see. This ain't like back in the world. We got next level dookie happening up in here. Use your own eyes lawman. You saw what happens with him and holy water. You've seen Alt-right Sondra and you said yo recordings were all distorted, but nooooooobodys else's was. Bo-Low got a count of every rivet, every coffee bean stored down here. They know when somebody uses more toilet paper than they should, and you don't think \*they\* know about Mephistopheles? C'mon! You a smart man, an investigator, a lawman. . .you also the most stubborn dude I met.

PAUSE TO ALLOW TO SINK IN

ZEKE

BUT... You need more time to do that math yourself? Okay. I respect that! As for Senor Diablo, *pshhhhhh* he ain't going nowhere. He's on lockdown but good!

BASS:

[Curious]  
What does he do in that tube all day?

ZEKE:  
[nonchalant]  
Aw hell, I stopped thinking about stuff like that years ago.  
Besides, he can go back to his hellhole any damn time.

BASS:  
[confused]  
So, he's not really 'stuck' then?

ZEKE:  
Nope. The way he explained it, he can stay in that tube section  
for all of eternity or turn 'round and go back to hell. He's been  
holding out for option three since we locked his ass in there.

BASS:  
Set him free?

ZEKE:  
Yeah, that ain't gonna happen under my watch. It would take  
an army to get me to open that there cage.

BASS:  
[thinks]  
So what happens when your contract ends, or you decide to  
leave?

ZEKE:  
[reassures]  
Man, that's down the road, lawman; "Like my boy Luther  
said... *[sing song]* here and now. . . .RIP playa!

STOP WALKING

ZEKE:

Alright, you ready?

BASS:

I'm good.

COAT UNZIPS, RADIO BEEP

ZEKE:

Zeke here, Annie.

ANNIE:

[over radio]

Go ahead, Chief.

ZEKE:

Me plus one going into the tunnels. It should be about thirty minutes. Will squawk clear when out.

ANNIE:

[Over radio] Copy that Chief, tagging two in tunnels; fourteen twenty hours with egress at fourteen fifty expected.

RADIO BEEP OUT

ZEKE:

Follow me, lawman. It's pretty open down here, but there is a section or two where you gotta squeeze through cause of pipes or access hatchways.

WALKING DOWN TUNNEL

BASS:

What's with the holes in the wall and stuff. That some kind of shrine?

ZEKE:

[chuckles]

Yeah, a bunch of winterovers came up with it about fifteen years back. Every year people cut out a section and leave their little mark.

BASS:

[surprised]

Is that..... a cake?

ZEKE:

Yup. Temps down here go from fifty to sixty below. Cake, ice cream, hell, any food you put down here will never get moldy. Don't know I'd go sampling, but it won't go green on ya.

2SP

BASS:

[surprised]

Huh, puppets! I though Nic was exaggerating, but there they are. Didn't think they'd be...

ZEKE:

[Nervous, cuts off Bass]

*[STERN!]* Nuh-Uhhh! NOPE, NO WAY! Don't be messing with them puppets! That's some bad hoo-doo shit in there! See that one in the back, with the googly eyes? Richard Johnson! He's the worst! Punk-ass Muppet gets into yo head, knows things....you keep away from em Lawman!

BASS:

[confused]

Alright, alright! We'll just.....keep on walking.

ZEKE

[Anxious]

You never seen Chucky movies? Thing will probably cut out your kidney while you're asleep and you wake up in a bathtub of ice. Un-uh man, not happening. Not to this cat! No-way!  
*[Under his breath]* Freaky-ass Raggedy-Anne doll.

BASS:

OK, we're good Zeke, no more puppets.

ZEKE:

Up ahead about a hundred meters, the tunnels turn left. Do you want to tell me what we looking for?

BASS:

[pondering]

Not sure. Something odd or out of place?

ZEKE:

[confused]

You down here, in the freezing cold, looking for something, hell knows what, and you just \*hope\* when you see it, you know it?

BASS:

Yeah, more or less.

ZEKE:

[frustrated]

Turn left!

### WALKING ON SNOW STOPS

BASS:

[curious]

Zeke, what's this sign here mean? 'South Pole Gravity Station.'

ZEKE:

[psssstttt]

Aw, that's nothing, lawman. This used to be an old tunnel we blocked up six years ago. Some fool put that sign up as a joke. You know, here is the X-files stuff civilization thinks we do down here. Where we keep Aliens and Zombie brains in a jar. It's clownin'.

TAKES A FEW STEPS, CLICK OF A KNIFE OPENING

BASS:

[Examining closely]

They say...the best place to hide something...

SOUND OF METAL ON METAL

BASS:

...is in plain sight.

ZEKE:

[unsure]

The hell? Aw man, you probably just hit an old pipe or something.

SOUND OF GLOVE BEING TAKEN OFF.

2SP

BASS:

Then why is this wall of ice...warm?

ZEKE:

[nervous]

Bass...you feel that? On your arms?

BASS:  
Like hairs raising.

ZEKE:  
[nervous]  
yeah, man, me too.

RADIO BEEP

ANNIE:  
[over Radio]  
Chief? Come in.

UNZIPPING COAT AND RADIO ANSWER BEEP

ZEKE:  
Go ahead.

ANNIE:  
[over radio]  
Uh Chief, you're being instructed to exit the tunnels,  
immediately. Doctor Waynewright's orders.

BASS:  
[not surprised]  
Well, imagine that!

RADIO BEEP

ZEKE:  
Me plus one heading out. Will squawk when we're clear.

RADIO BEEP

ANNIE:

[over radio, nervous]  
Doctor Waynewright instructs you to his office upon exit.

BASS:  
[insistent]  
Give me that thing!

RADIO BEEP

BASS:  
Tell the Good Doctor that Deputy Marshal Marlow will come to his office after we exit....in the spirit of our newly acknowledged partnership.

2SP

BASS:  
[content]  
Here ya go, notice that shut him up!

ZEKE:  
Man, you enjoyed that way too much.

BASS:  
You're damned right.

WALKING DOWN, THE TUNNELS FADES OUT.

FADE IN, SOUND OF THE GALLEY, MODERATELY FULL OF PEOPLE CHATTING.  
UTENTIZLES HITTING PLATES, LITE MUSAK.

KENDRA:  
(low voice)  
...and he just...let it go?

BASS:



(happy)

Yeah, the NSF and I'm sure Beauregard-Lowing didn't give him much choice. They're still worried about somebody trying to kill me and the potential for the press. (pause) I mean, this cooperation won't last long, I figure, but so long as it does...

KENDRA:

(slight laugh)

Well, I hope you're careful.

BASS:

I promise you, more so than ever!

### BACKGROUND CHATTER DURING AWKWARD SILENCE

KENDRA:

(Low voice, nervous)

Bass, tell me about your wife?

BASS:

(Gags on drink, coughing)

Pardon?

KENDRA:

(Low voice)

It's just...I've noticed, it's something you don't like...talking about. You told me before, and you haven't...you said it's been ten years since you spoke of it.

BASS:

(off guard)

Kendra, I...

KENDRA:

(Low voice, reassuring)

Baby steps. You've done \*so\* much for me, Bass. \*Are\* doing so....I want to return the favor. If you're not comfortable....if now isn't...mrrmmhhh.

BASS:

(Deep breath, apologetic)

You're right. You're absolutely right. What would you like to know?

KENDRA:

(low voice, thoughtful)

Well...nothing too personal, of course. Just...tell me about \*her\*.

BASS:

(Considering)

She...we met around fifteen? No, my God, it must be close to twenty years ago! I was this...hot-head little punk who was about to graduate from Glynco down in Georgia... Glynco is the US Marshal's training academy. Anyway, the night before the ceremony, some buddies and I decided to hit the town. It must have been the third...bar we hit that night. Off of highway 341. . .It's called Mulligans now, but back then...I can't remember what it was called.

2SP

BASS:

We're young. Ready to graduate the next day, prepared to change the world, and there she was. Long blonde hair, these deep green eyes. When the light hit her skin, it was almost like it glowed. She was so pretty. The prettiest thing I had seen at twenty-five years of age.

KENDRA:

(Low voice, curious, playful)

So, in a drunken fit of courage, did you go up and try to hit on her?

BASS:

(Lost in memories, snaps out)

Hrmm? Oh no...she was too busy kicking these redneck guys' asses!

KENDRA:

(shocked, chuckling)

You're not serious?

BASS:

(serious)

100% truth! We walk in, and this five-foot-two whirling dervish is kicking the shit out of these six-two, two hundred-fifty pound rejects from Duck Dynasty. I didn't know then where she learned it, but the woman could take care of business.

KENDRA:

(Enthralled with the story)

So, what happened?

BASS:

Well... the bouncers get the two rednecks out, more likely saving them before she knocked one unconscious. (Pause) Me, being me, I walk up and introduce myself and identify as a US Deputy Marshal, which technically...I wasn't for another twelve hours. Tell her I have to take her statement.

KENDRA:  
(Low voice)  
Oh, that's horrible, Bass!

PA ON SOUND

CHERYL LYNN:  
(over PA)  
Trevor Jones, please contact the Ops center. Trevor Jones,  
need you to call Ops center, Shug. Thank youuuuuuuu

PA SOUND OFF

BASS:  
So she tells me what happened, the fat one started to get  
handsy with her and her friends. The even fatter one started  
in too. One of them commented about her...supposed  
promiscuity, and that's when the hell was unleashed. So I  
finish taking her statement. Get her phone number and tell  
her if I have more questions, I'd follow up.

KENDRA:  
(Low voice, guessing)  
So, you called her back a few days later?

BASS:  
(Swallows water)  
Was called into the Head Instructors office at oh-five-hundred  
the next morning. I got there and was smoked for two hours.  
Said I was impersonating a US Marshal, using my non-existent  
authority to hit on a young lady. Behavior unbecoming a

Federal Agent. I was sure he was going to pin JFK's assassination on me too!

KENDRA:

(Low voice)

She called to complain?

BASS:

(laugh)

No, she told the head instructor how cute I was and how much balls I had to do something like that...to the head instructor's daughter.

KENDRA:

(hand over mouth, stifling a laugh)

BASS:

That was when I focused on his desk and saw photographs of her. (Pause). Well, needless to say, the old-man took pity on me, no doubt because his daughter told him to. After I graduated, we started dating, kept in touch. . .and a few years later...

### SHOUT FROM ACROSS THE ROOM

RANDO PRSN 1:

(excited)

THERE, ON THE HORIZON!

### EXCITED MURMURING AND CHAIRS SCOOTING BACK

RANDO PRSN 4:

(excited)

IS IT HER? WHO HAS BINOCULARS?

KENDRA:  
(Low voice)  
Bass, what is it?

BASS:  
(Sigh)  
Some spirit Reindeer...thing?

KENDRA:  
(low voice, surprised)  
Peppermint?

BASS:  
(Shocked)  
Oh God, not you too!

KENDRA:  
(Low voice)  
What? No, I... Bass, I'm a scientist; I don't go in for that stuff.  
It's just...it's a cute little tradition for when the tarp flies back  
around after catching the prevailing wind again. You're  
supposed to make a wish!

CHANTING FROM THE CORNER, SLOW DRUMMING STARTS.

BASS:  
(confused)  
A wish?

KENDRA:  
(Low voice.)  
Mmmhmm. That's the tradition. Just...you're here, and the  
tarp is back. Play along. Baby steps.

BASS:  
This is ridiculous!

KENDRA:  
(low voice)  
Bass, learn to let \*your\* guard down now and again. Just...play  
along.

BASS:  
(sighs)  
Fine...a wish...um...

#### FROM OTHER SIDE OF ROOM

IT CHRIS:  
(mad, at a distance)  
Damn it, Emery, if the flute wasn't acceptable, why would you  
think this is?

IT EMERY:  
(Bummed, at a distance)  
Don't let Reddit win!

#### DRUMMING STOPS

BASS:  
Fine...wish made...nothing? Nothing! (Content snort) Thought  
so

KENDRA:  
Oh, don't be a grump, finish your pasta! I want to hear more  
about her.

THOMAS:  
(excited)  
Oh, hey guys. Doctor Jennings, Deputy Marshal.

BASS:

Mr. Kelley

THOMAS:

Oh hey, I almost forgot. While you were in the hospital, some packages came in for you. They're being stored down in Logistics. (pause) What do you need with so many water testing kits?

SOUND OF FORK DROPPING ON PLATE

BASS:

(shocked)

Son of a Bitch!

SONG and Outro