

Bird Song

By

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FIFTH DRAFT, SEPTEMBER 2012
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2012

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1. THE INITIAL INTERVIEW.

A stark Police interview room. One door. Long, thin rectangular windows line three of the walls, starting a few inches from the roof, the endwise sides stopping a few inches short of the wall joints. They let in a pale blue light, suffusing the room in a *Minority Report* look.

In the center of the room, a metal table. Seated at the table, in wrist and ankle cuffs, a Caucasian girl from the wrong side of the tracks, ABIGAIL 'ABIE' SAMANTHA BAKER, age 29. She wears a neon red prison uniform in stark contrast to the gray-green sandy wash of the walls.

She non-nonchalantly smokes a cigarette, flicking the tip into an ashtray, kicking the legs of the table, looking bored and irritated. The smoke curls film-noir like in the light around her.

She looks around the room. There are seemingly no security cameras or any kind of monitoring going on.

ABIE

Hey! Are you people going to fucken interview me in here or what?

The door opens and a woman, ASTRID ELIZABETH MASON, age 25, enters. She is immaculately well groomed, suited, a real no-nonsense professional type. She carries a manila folder containing a dossier on Abie.

(ABIE CONT'D)

About fucken time...

Astrid reaches the table and immediately reaches across and takes Abie's cigarette from her lips, extinguishing it in the ash tray. Abie moves to protest but relents.

Astrid places the manila folder on the table and then sits, emptying the contents of her pockets: a handkerchief, which she sets neatly on the table, and a pen, which she lines up with the handkerchief forming an orderly row. She lifts her face to the ceiling.

ASTRID

Access Request, Police Minos System. Voice Recognition, Astrid Elizabeth Mason.

We hear a musical tone, like a computer alert. A pleasant, lilting female voice is heard from an unseen loud speaker system.

VOICE

Voice recognized, Astrid Elizabeth Mason. Access granted.

(CONTINUED)

Astrid flicks through the dossier while she speaks, familiarizing herself with it.

ASTRID

Interview started twenty fifth of May, two thousand and forty, fifteen eighteen hours. Section Six Interrogation Room. Subject, Abigail Samantha Baker, age, twenty five; Detective Sargent Mason conducting the interview.

Astrid finally looks up at Abie.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

You know why you're here, Abie?

ABIE

Where's my fucken lawyer?

ASTRID

This is Section Six, we're not required to give you one.

Abie sighs.

ABIE

Stabbed some cunt in the eye.

ASTRID

Your 'client' was a prominent state politician. Were you aware of that?

ABIE

Always someone important. One small dick looks the same as another to me.

ASTRID

Joseph Cornell, up for reelection in July. And you didn't just stab him, you wrenched his eye out with a cork screw. The severity of your crime is why you are here. Now, I'd ask you why you did it but I think we both know it'd just be more bullshit. Pretty much like everything in here, right Abie?

Astrid taps her finger on the dossier. Abie says nothing.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

So I've got a better question, one that'll cut right to the quick: who are you, Abigail Samantha Baker?

ABIE

Are you fucken high?

Astrid takes Abie's birth certificate from the dossier and holds it up for Abie to see.

ASTRID

This is the birth certificate you gave "The Elegant Lotus" Gentleman's Club. Why'd you have to get ambitious Abie? If you'd stuck to the usual rat holes you sell your wares in, you never would've had to produce this document.

ABIE

Just trying to improve myself.

ASTRID

It's fake. I checked it with the Office of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

ABIE

So what, I faked a brothel? I've been living on the streets most of my life, I don't have any real ID.

ASTRID

It's a unique fake in that it's 16 years old. You would have been 13, Abie; what's a 13 year old street kid need with a fake ID?

Astrid slides another photo to Abie. This one depicts a middle aged Chinese woman. Abie stares at the photo.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

This is Vivian Wu, career criminal, forging identity papers, operated *16 years ago*. At that time she was also working as a cleaner, here...

Astrid takes another photo from the dossier and slides it across to Abie. It depicts the outside of an large building.

Seeing it, Abie's breathing intensifies.

ASTRID

Recognize that building?

ABIE

Never seen it before.

ASTRID

That was the Jonathon Preacher Orphanage. It burnt down killing everyone inside...16 years ago.

Abie says nothing. Astrid taps on Vivian Wu's photo.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Vivian was never officially on the books. Katherine, the administrator, took her on as a favor; true to her other profession, Mrs. Wu's own papers weren't above board either.

Abie seems to be tearing up.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

You want this?

Astrid offers her the handkerchief. Abie spits in her face.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

Looks like I might be needing it.

Astrid wipes Abie's spit from her face.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

I wouldn't have even connected Vivian had I not gone over evidence collected at Katherine's apartment. Strange check stubs with no payee name on them. I checked with the bank of course...

ABIE

You spoke to Vivian in prison, right? What did she tell you?

Astrid slides over another photo. It shows a man in his twenties with his hands on the shoulders of two young girls, ages 9 and 13. The girls look wounded and fearful. We can't see the man's face as the photo has been folded under along the top obscuring him.

Upon seeing it Abie clasps her hand over her mouth, stifling a cry.

ASTRID

Vivian stole this from Katherine. She wanted to remember her two favorite girls from the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ASTRID (cont'd)
orphanage. One of them is you,
isn't it Abie?

Abie slowly nods.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
Vivian told me that you and this
other girl had been in Jonathon
Preacher about 9 months before
the fire. If that's true, then
I'm talking to a ghost. All
bodies inside that building were
accounted for based on records
with social services.

Astrid leans across the table.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
But here's the thing: Vivian
remembers the day of the
fire, two new girls were brought
in. Katherine would not have had
time to file their papers.
Meaning you and this other girl
could've conceivably escaped with
the bodies of the two new girls
being mistaken for your own.

Astrid sits back.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
Am I right?

ABIE
(Defeated)
Yes.

ASTRID
One last puzzle piece, Abie.

Astrid unfolds the photo of Abie, the mystery girl and the
mystery man. The revealed mystery man has a bright grin.

Upon seeing his face, Abie goes stiff with rage.

(ASTRID CONT'D)
Vivian told me this man was
Katherine's partner back then. Do
you know who he is?

ABIE
You have no idea what you've
done...

ASTRID

That's my boss, Abie. Deputy
Commissioner Trevor Reid.

Astrid leans across the table, boring her eyes into
Abie's.

(ASTRID CONT'D)

What the fuck is my boss doing
with two little girls from an
orphanage that burnt down?

ABIE

We were so close, you've ruined
everything.

The light coming from the rectangular windows suddenly
turns red, giving the room the look of a submarine's
interiors in attack mode, e.g *The Hunt for Red October*.

A different musical tone sounds and the lilting female
voice is heard again through the loudspeakers.

VOICE

System error, repeat, system
erro-

ASTRID

Are you doing this?

ABIE

No, this isn't me.

ASTRID

Tell me what happened, Abie. Who
is the other little girl?

ABIE

Is it too late; can I fix this?

ASTRID

I see the looks on your faces, I
know that look, what did he do to
you?

ABIE

I don't know, I don't know...

Astrid stands, walks around the table and lifts Abie up by
her collar, pressing her against a wall. Abie just keeps
repeating, 'I don't know' over and over

ASTRID

Damn it, you tell me, Abie! If
he's involved in something...you
tell me what happened!

(CONTINUED)

ABIE

He raped us! Ok?

Astrid takes a step back.

(ABIE CONT'D)

He raped us when we were little kids. Me and my sister Elenore. That's who the girl in the photo is.

Abie catches her breath.

(ABIE CONT'D)

He'd do it when the lights would go out. And Katherine knew as well, that bitch, I'm glad she burned.

ASTRID

Did he start the fire?

ABIE

No, she'd planned everything.

Abie walks over to the table and picks up the photo of Vivian Wu.

ASTRID

Vivian knew about the rapes? She planned this?

ABIE

She'd give us a new life, burn the old one. We'd been waiting for two new girls for months.

ASTRID

How did you escape?

ABIE

Vivian copied the key. We went out through the back door when the fire started.

ASTRID

Do you have a real name?

ABIE

Emma, Emma is my real name.

Astrid goes over to the table and picks up the photograph of Abie and the mystery girl, holding it in front of Abie's face.

ASTRID

Where is she, Emma? Where's Elenore?

Abie gives a small, crazed laugh.

ABIE

She's standing right in front of me.

Astrid just stares at her.

ASTRID

Emma, this is serious; my Boss has committed a capital offence, which I intend to try him for -

ABIE

What you intend to do, is immaterial. You were only ever a means to an end. A way to get close to *him*.

ASTRID

I don't understand.

ABIE

We designed you to be an overachiever, the best Cop on the force; to rise up through the ranks so Elenore could get close enough to Trevor Reid to kill him.

ASTRID

You *designed* me?

ABIE

You don't exist. You're as fake as my birth certificate.

ASTRID

This is is ridiculous.

ABIE

What do remember of your childhood, Astrid, before your foster parents?

ASTRID

How did you know I had...

The photo slips from Astrid's fingers.

ABIE

Vivian promised us a new life. But she didn't just forge papers,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ABIE (cont'd)
Astrid, she could implant new
identities inside you.

Abie picks up Astrid's pen from the table.

(ABIE CONT'D)
Just like that...

Abie mimes injecting herself in the neck with the pen.

(ABIE CONT'D)
...into the neck. Identities so
convincing that person would
never suspect they weren't real.

ASTRID
No...

ABIE
You are a fake identity Vivian
and I planted inside my sister.
You were always supposed to a
great Detective, Astrid, but you
were never supposed to start
investigating yourself.

ASTRID
This is too much, it's too
much...

ABIE
I quite agree. You must go now,
Astrid Elizabeth Mason, and allow
Elenore to come forward.

Abie rushes forward and presses the pen into Astrid's neck, we hear a hiss as she injects her with something. Astrid collapses. As she falls it seems that she falls down into darkness, all light being sucked out of the room.

In the darkness:

ABIE
Elenore?

Light returns, the lights from the windows are now a dim yellow. A warm yellow light falls across the face of Astrid, pressed against the floor. The film now looks like the yellow hues of *Delicatessen* or *Amelie*. Astrid wakes as though from a dream, groggy but now assuredly Elenore.

ASTRID
Emma?

Abie has just finished uncuffing herself, she tosses the key away from her. She helps Astrid into a sitting position.

ABIE

Thank God, I sometimes wonder if you're still in there.

ASTRID

Emma...I've been down in the dark so long, I...Emma, she sees him everyday. I see him through her eyes, and...and she doesn't know.

ABIE

I'm sorry, I can't imagine how that feels.

ASTRID

I...I don't think I can do this anymore.

ABIE

What are you talking about? We're so close now. We can still do this -

ASTRID

He lives, he dies; what does it matter? Where is my life, Emma?

ABIE

Do you know what I had to do just to see you this time? The life I've lived to get us here? You can't quit on me now.

ASTRID

Emma, it's over. Something's gone wrong out there, either he was watching or he knows, and there is no way -

ABIE

You don't know that. That could've have been a glitch, nothing to do with us or him.

ASTRID

That's a big if, sister.

ABIE

I have not come all this way -

ASTRID

Then do it on your own! I'm done.

Abie places the pen in Astrid's hands.

ABIE

Does this still mean anything to you?

Astrid turns the pen over in her hands, remembering.

ASTRID

He gave this to us. Before the fire, he thought he could buy us off...with a pen.

ABIE

That pen is many things, sister: a tasteless bribe, the switch for your identities, but it has always represented...the end.

Abie takes Astrid's hands in her own.

(ABIE CONT'D)

You're right, it's fucked. The plan's gone to shit and we've lost out on any real life. He took that from us long ago. So fuck it, let's go out in a blaze of glory. We make a break for his office and we finish this the way we always intended. We take his fucking bribe and stab him here...

Abie presses the pen tip against Astrid's jugular vein.

(ABIE CONT'D)

...here...

Abie presses the pen tip on Astrid's chest, above her heart. Astrid takes the pen from her and presses the pen tip against Abie's crotch.

ASTRID

...and here.

Astrid and Abie look at each other.

ABIE

How bout it, sis?

The sisters moves over to the door. Abie takes the handle and Astrid stands by the door, ready to move through it.

ASTRID

I love you, Emma.

ABIE

I love you too, Elenore.

Abie turns the handle and yanks open the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

12.

FADE TO BLACK.