

( From www.jamiemathieson.com )

INT. OFFICE -DAY

A desk and two chairs in a sparse militaristic office. MR. KINSEY, an authoritative General type in a short sleeve shirt and tie sits reading from a buff folder while smoking. Two suited bodyguards with earpieces and sunglasses stand in the corners of the room. They both touch their earpieces simultaneously.

The door opens, DR. JACKSON enters, bespectacled and bookish, clutching a brown leather bag to himself protectively. MR. KINSEY stands and they shake hands. They are both American.

MR. KINSEY

Dr. Jackson, thank you for coming.

DR. JACKSON

Well it's not like I had a lot of choice. Look, can we just get on with this?

MR. KINSEY

Very well. I take it you've read the file? On the flight?

DR. JACKSON

I read it. I didn't believe it but I read it.

MR. KINSEY

Oh it's all true. The aliens are very real. They're here and they want to talk.

DR. JACKSON

Well, it's incredible, I'll give you that, but I fail to see what it has to do with me.

MR. KINSEY

You're a linguist.

DR. JACKSON

Granted. But I'm hardly the top of my field. I could name you twenty far more versatile -

MR. KINSEY

This isn't about language in the traditional sense. You see the aliens do not speak as we understand it, it's more a kind of, sign language.

DR. JACKSON  
Again, I must ask, why me?

MR. KINSEY opens the buff folder.

MR. KINSEY  
In 1989 you worked for a summer as an assistant at a slaughterhouse, did you not?

DR. JACKSON  
Yes I did.

MR. KINSEY  
It is this skill set which we hope to utilise. To put it bluntly, the aliens communicate, by disembowelment.

A beat.

DR. JACKSON  
Disembowelment?

MR. KINSEY  
Gutting.

DR. JACKSON  
I know what it means.

MR. KINSEY hands over another folder and begins pointing out details.

MR. KINSEY  
We've managed to isolate a few basic words and phrases - it all seems to depend on the angle that the knife enters and the order that the organs are removed.

DR. JACKSON  
So they talk by gutting?

MR. KINSEY  
Yes.

DR. JACKSON  
So who exactly gets gutted?

MR. KINSEY  
Well, the aliens gut one another and well, up until now, we've been pretty quiet.

DR. JACKSON  
So we haven't said anything to them yet?

MR. KINSEY

Well, we gutted a volunteer just to say hello and make sure we were barking up the right tree.

DR. JACKSON

I see.

MR. KINSEY

But given the importance of this alliance, the president has sanctioned the use of death row prisoners in the negotiations.

DR JACKSON looks appalled.

DR. JACKSON

Well, that makes sense.

MR. KINSEY

Dr. Jackson, I'm sensing some resistance here. I realise we're asking a lot but the advances in technology and medicine that they offer us are breathtaking.

DR. JACKSON

I see.

MR. KINSEY

Look, you'll be fully trained up and the prisoners you'll be gutting will all be the lowest of the low.

DR. JACKSON

Can they be dead already?

MR. KINSEY

Er, no. It screws up the verbs.

DR. JACKSON

Well, fully anaesthetized then.

MR. KINSEY

Erm, no, tied up yes, knocked out, no. Apparently the screaming acts as punctuation.

DR. JACKSON

Oh God.

MR. KINSEY

Look, they've offered us cures for every disease known to man and an end to world hunger. You weigh that up against gutting a few deadbeats, it's really no choice at all.

DR. JACKSON composes himself.

DR. JACKSON  
Your right, of course. When do we  
start?

MR. KINSEY  
That's my boy.

FADE TO:

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Same office, same guards in attendance. DR. JACKSON and MR. KINSEY enter. DR. JACKSON has on a full length butcher's apron, wellies and from his chest down he is dripping with blood. In one hand he is holding a gutting hook dripping with gore.

DR. JACKSON  
They were very chatty, weren't they?

He passes out cold.