

EXCEPTIONALS

INTERVIEW 24

An original web series screenplay
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FADE IN

1. INT. STATE PRISON - VISITATION ROOM - DAY

DONALD TRENT sits waiting in a prison visitation room. He has a briefcase and clipboard with him.

The door opens and JIM MARTIN enters. He's in prison clothes and looks around confused. The door closes behind him.

Donald stands to greet Jim. Donald puts out his hand to shake Jim's hand. Jim tentatively goes to shake his hand back.

DONALD
Hello, Jim Martin, I'm -

JIM
I don't get this.

DONALD
What?

JIM
Where's the guards?

DONALD
I asked them not to be present.

JIM
There's a trick. Didn't they tell you I'm a dangerous man?

DONALD
I thought it best to speak alone, considering...

Donald takes a seat and indicates that Jim should take a seat opposite him.

Jim sits.

JIM

You're not my lawyer.
You're not from the parole
people.

DONALD

One of the people on your
last Parole Board contacted
a psychiatrist who
contacted the man I work
with.

JIM

You a psychiatrist?

DONALD

No, I'm a Doctor though. I
study people who have
unusual traits.

JIM

What do you know about my
traits?

DONALD

Only what you told an
earlier Parole Board -
what's in your file and an
observation from a previous
psychiatrist.

JIM

They didn't believe me so I
don't try that no more.

DONALD

You said you cause people
to act a certain way.

JIM

That's what I said.

DONALD

What way is that?

JIM

Look - what - why am I
talking to you?

DONALD

I can help get you out of
here.

JIM

That's what my second
lawyer said. Something
like, oh yeah in 10 years,
which was like 15 years
ago. Then my last lawyer
said something like that,
too. Don't mind if I'm
skeptical.

DONALD

I know people in the
federal government who have
much more pull. They helped
me arrange this meeting
with you. They convinced
the warden to let me see
you alone.

JIM

What do you wanna know?

DONALD

Just what I asked - how do
you believe you cause
people to act a certain
way.

JIM

I don't know how it works.
It just does. If I get
angry, then they do, too.

DONALD

Just like that?

JIM

Just like that. I don't
'spect you'd believe me.

DONALD
Can you prove it?

Jim smiles.

JIM
I don't think you want me to prove it. Not sure I could anymore anyway. But let me tell you this: when I came to this place, they had maybe one riot in 30 years, right? My first month here, there was a riot every other day. I mean guys going ape-shit, guards, too. Said I started it - ins - what's that word?

DONALD
You "incited" them?

JIM
Yeah. Said I incited the riots. Didn't know how. I spent weeks in solitary. That made it better when I wasn't out with everyone else.

DONALD
So with you in solitary confinement, no more riots.

JIM
Yeah. I got to like it in there. It hit me that I was causing it then, too. I wish I'd have known that before - well, before I came here.

DONALD
So the riots stopped and you got out of solitary?

JIM

I didn't get the thing,
the, you know, the
connection - not right way
- I'd get pissed off, bunch
of guys around me would get
pissed off. I'd be back in
solitary.

DONALD

They haven't had riots
lately, then?

JIM

No. When I finally figured
out what was going on, I
decided to fix it. Get my
head straight. They gave me
stuff to read. I read a lot
of Buddhist stuff.
Meditation. Eight-fold path
and right intention. Really
worked on that. Still
working on it.

DONALD

So you don't get angry
anymore?

JIM

I don't get much of
anything. When you take
away those thoughts -
desires, jealousies,
wanting things, you know -
life gets easier. Time gets
easier here.

DONALD

So nothing pisses you off?
Doesn't it make you angry
how you got in here?

JIM

I was getting into fights
all the time. I'd have

ended up here one way or another.

DONALD
But your wife, I mean...

Jim looks down.

DONALD
The jury sure didn't believe you or your lawyer.

Jim shakes his head.

JIM
What's done is done. No point in going over it again.

DONALD
And the judge - he said he never -

JIM
Not talking about this.

DONALD
I guess he was angry, too, huh?

Jim starts repeating a mantra quietly to himself.

JIM
"It's my resolve. I control my thoughts." "My resolve. My thoughts."

DONALD
Your lawyer antagonized the judge, too. Everyone was angry.

Jim stands up and turns his back to Donald. Jim continues to repeat the phrase to himself:

JIM
"My resolve." "My thoughts."

DONALD
Didn't I read that she was
like 105 pounds? Small
woman, your wife.

Jim speaks through the door, then immediately goes back to the mantra.

JIM
Guards. "My resolve."

DONALD
Not very likely that it was
self-defense.

Jim starts getting more agitated. Donald does, too.

JIM
Guards!

DONALD
Damn near every bone in her
body was broken, yet you
said she just kept coming!

Jim turns and glares at Donald.

Jim gets angry.

JIM
You don't know a goddamn
thing.

Donald stands.

DONALD
You're a liar! You fucking
animal - they should've
killed you!

Donald slams his clipboard down on the floor.

JIM
I'm no liar.

Donald throws the chair between them to the side and steps up to Jim.

Donald grabs for Jim's throat.

Jim pushes Donald back and Donald stumbles down. Jim moves away from him.

DONALD
I'll kill you!

Donald lunges at Jim and Jim throws him down.

Donald gets up and wildly swings at Jim's head. Jim dodges.

Jim punches Donald in the stomach and Donald goes down.

Jim grabs Donald from behind and gets Donald in a headlock. Jim is on his knees with Donald in front of him.

Donald thrashes in Jim's hold, but can't get away.

DONALD
Fuck! I'll kill - you
fuck!!!

JIM
I'll snap you boy!

Donald yells and shrieks in incoherent rage.

Jim closes his eyes. He squeezes Donald and Donald looks like he can't breathe.

Jim starts to relax as though he's begun to meditate.

Jim lets go of Donald and Donald falls to the floor gasping for air.

Jim stands up and backs away from Donald. Jim goes to the chair that was thrown down and sets it upright again. Jim looks more relaxed now and he leans on the chair.

Donald rolls over onto his back. Donald doesn't seem angry anymore either. Donald sits up.

JIM
I guess you got what you
needed.

Donald gets up and picks up his clipboard and other items that he brought. Donald is clearly embarrassed.

DONALD

Um - yes - I'm - that was -

JIM

Not like you, right?

Donald shakes his head.

Donald dials on his cell phone as Jim talks.

JIM

I can tell you it was quite
a day in court that day.
Quite a day.

Jim chuckles a bit.

Donald chuckles, but it's from nervousness.

DONALD

(to someone on the phone)
Yes, I'm ready to leave.

Jim sits down in a meditative pose and closes his eyes.

DONALD

I'll tell my people about
this - about what you can
do. You'll be hearing from
us.

JIM

Sure I will kid. Sure.

Donald exits through another door.

FADE OUT