

THE ROOM

PILOT
"Natalie Diggs"

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PART ONE

FADE IN:

INT. THE ROOM

A small, concrete, windowless room. A heavy, metal door is the only means in or out.

On the wall, a clock with no hands TICKS loudly - occasionally missing a beat. The room is lit by a sickly-yellow halogen strip-light which flickers randomly.

In the center of the room is a metal table with two chairs near the door and one facing them. A figure in a dirty, grey jump-suit sits in that chair. Head covered by a grey bag. Hands cuffed to the table.

The door opens and a man enters, carrying a paper file-

JAMES LINCOLN

Tall, thin, late-30s. Dark hair so short he might as well be bald. He wears a dark-grey suit over a white shirt with its collar unbuttoned.

Lincoln studies the other figure for a moment and then takes the nearest chair. He opens the file and reads the contents for a few moments, glancing up at the Subject occasionally. Eventually, he stands and walks around-

He pulls off the bag - revealing a woman: gagged and blindfolded, with heavy mufflers over her ears. She tenses as she feels the bag removed.

Lincoln quickly rips of the sensory deprivation devices and throws them into a corner, revealing-

NATALIE DIGGS

Average height, early-30s. Her long, blonde hair is dripping with sweat. She looks terrified, but through it - angry. Defiant.

As soon as we register her face, with her INTAKE OF BREATH-

OPENING CREDITS

Black. Light-grey letters fade in, displaying the title-

THE ROOM

The letters flicker, one by one, and go out.

INT. THE ROOM - RESUMING

LINCOLN walks slowly back to his chair without looking at DIGGS. He studies the file for a moment more and then finally makes eye contact.

She stares back, still defiant, yet apprehensive.

LINCOLN
Natalie Diggs.
(pause)
My name is James Lincoln.

Diggs just glares. Lincoln smiles faintly and studies her a moment longer.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Do you know where you are?

DIGGS
...Yes.

LINCOLN
Where?

Diggs stares back, her BREATHING heavy, but under control.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Say it.

DIGGS
...I didn't-

LINCOLN
SAY. IT-

DIGGS
-The Room.

Lincoln watches her for a moment. Diggs stares back.

LINCOLN
And how do you know about The
Room, Miss Diggs?

Diggs just stares. Lincoln looks back to the file-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
(reading)
Natalie Maria Diggs. Thirty-four
years old. Date-of-birth,
February Second.

He studies her for a moment longer, then back to the file-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
(reading)
Sergeant in the London
Metropolitan Police - Drugs
squad. Unmarried, no family-
(beat)
Miss Diggs, I can keep reading or
you can start talking.
(MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I know which I'd recommend - but, more importantly, you already know which I'd recommend. Don't you?

Hesitantly, Diggs nods. She lowers her head, watching her hands in their cuffs.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

You don't need to be afraid, Miss Diggs. I've got no interest in hurting you.

Diggs snorts a LAUGH; derisive, disbelieving. Lincoln smiles back, enigmatically - trying to figure her out.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Why don't we wind back a little? Tell me how you learned about the room.

Diggs keeps staring at her hands.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I already know the answer, Miss Diggs - believe me, you're only helping yourself by answering.

No reaction.

Lincoln stands and leans over the table towards her. Diggs tenses but doesn't move, staring defiantly downwards.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

(softly)

The man who told you... What was his name?

He takes her chin and gently lifts her head to look her in the eyes.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

(firm, but still soft)

What was his name?

Diggs stares, defiant.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

We can say it together... Ri-...
Come on, Miss Diggs - Rich-...

Natalie just stares. Lincoln's expression darkens, he begins to squeeze. As Natalie's expression grows ever more pained-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

The games are pointless, Miss Diggs.

(MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

We don't know exactly how much
you found out - not yet - but you
do know enough to appreciate-

-Diggs GASPS in pain-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

-what will begin to happen to you
if you're stupid enough to hold
out much longer.

He releases her. She GASPS in relief.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

The name.

Lincoln and Diggs hold eye contact for a long time.
Finally, Diggs opens her mouth-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Richard Bell.

He sits back down.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I did tell you we knew.

(pause)

Have you seen him since?

After a moment's hesitation, Diggs shakes her head. Lincoln
smiles, darkly-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

We knew that too.

Diggs's eyes narrow, angry.

DIGGS

What did you do to him?

LINCOLN

(pause, surprised)

What do you care? He was a
criminal - you caught him
yourself. Interrogated him.
Charged him-

DIGGS

What did you do to him?

LINCOLN

We determined his source of
information and are presently
pursuing various avenues of
investigation to-

DIGGS

Is he dead?

LINCOLN
Again - why do you care?

DIGGS
He was a human being.

LINCOLN
-Barely.

DIGGS
Perhaps we have different
definitions on who qualifies.

LINCOLN
Suddenly so talkative. Easy when
you have something to be
righteous about, isn't it?

Diggs opens her mouth to respond and stops. Lincoln smiles.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
...Why did he tell you about The
Room?

Diggs does not respond. She just watches Lincoln,
unblinking - yet somehow he sees something in her gaze-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
(fascinated)
Or did you ask him?

Diggs' expression remains the same...

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
(incredulous, impressed)
Did you already know?

Diggs just keeps staring at Lincoln. He stares back, his
expression slowly breaking into a knowing smile. Diggs
looks down, defeated.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
How many times had you heard it
before?
(pause)
How many times before the Urban
Legend grew beyond just myth?
(pause)
How many suspects did you ask
before Bell gave you a thread?

Diggs just stares down at her hands. Lincoln leans forward.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
We knew you were looking for us,
Miss Diggs - otherwise, you
wouldn't be here.
(pause)
(MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
...But I don't think any of us
realized just how much you'd
learned... Until now.

She looks up again-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Tell me.

The two stare at each other for several moments.
Unblinking.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
Say it, Natalie. Tell me why
you're so afraid. Tell me what
you know.

He stares at her. She stares back - tears in her eyes, yet
somehow retaining her resolve.

DIGGS
No one who sits in this chair...
No one leaves The Room alive...
Ever.

Lincoln smiles calmly back.

Slowly, he takes a revolver from under his jacket and
places it heavily onto the metal table (THUD) never taking
his eyes off Diggs...

Off Diggs, eyes locked on the gun, fear returning to anger-

FADE OUT.

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

FADE IN:

INT. THE ROOM - RESUMING

DIGGS faces LINCOLN across the table. He studies her...

LINCOLN

You knew when we brought you in.

(pause)

You knew what was happening the moment you felt light-headed. - You knew we'd found you. You knew where you were going. And you knew how it would end.

Still no response. Lincoln rolls his eyes.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

These are simply idle questions, Miss Diggs. You might as well answer - you're just delaying the inevitable.

DIGGS

Isn't everyone?

LINCOLN

(chuckles)

Everyone else has the luxury of denying that fact. You're staring death in the face.

DIGGS

That's no reason to give up.

Lincoln briefly checks the file again.

LINCOLN

Give up what, exactly?

As Lincoln leafs through the contents of the file-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

You're not married. No children. No siblings. Parents both dead. You don't socialize with your colleagues or... anyone that we could tell. You can't even say that you've sacrificed your life to your career because - as we both know - ...you don't have much in the way of promotion prospects. Not after that incident with the young girl two years ag-

DIGGS

-Don't you fucking dare.

Lincoln studies her for a moment, his expression unreadable, and then he closes the file.

LINCOLN

What actually happened, that night?

DIGGS

You've got the report-

LINCOLN

I've read the report - it's bullshit. The only person who really knows... is you.

DIGGS

Go to Hell.

Lincoln smiles-

LINCOLN

Miss Diggs... we're already here.

He studies her. She glares back. After a few moments, Lincoln stands, picking up the file. He wanders away and casually tosses the file onto the floor-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

The thing about paper, is that it only tells me who the world thinks you are - but I knew who you really were the second I heard you were looking for us.

(pause, wandering around the room)

You see - only a certain type of person actually goes looking for the gates of Hell. It is - as you now know - little short of suicide. And yet you set about hunting us down simply because we existed. You had no vendetta. No cause for revenge.

Lincoln walks behind Diggs and places his hands on her shoulders.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

And I don't even think you cared that what we do here falls in the deepest reaches of the moral grey.

He lowers his head to Diggs' ear. Uncomfortably close.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

You sought us out simply because we were there to be sought. Because that's who you are. An obsessive. Nothing at half measures. Ruled... by curiosity alone. You'd probably have made a good officer if chance hadn't intervened-

DIGGS

Is this supposed to impress me?

(pause)

So you figured me out? That's why you sit on that side of the table, and I'm cuffed to this one. It doesn't change any-

LINCOLN

Yes it does.

He releases her and resumes wandering-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

It tells me how to get my answers. How to make you talk.

(pause)

Curiosity. It is, after all, the only thing you have left... Quid. Pro. Quo.

Now it's Diggs turn to study Lincoln-

DIGGS

...You wouldn't tell me anything significant.

LINCOLN

Why not? I'm the last person you'll ever see - where's the risk in telling you anything?

In passing, Lincoln casually retrieves the gun from the table and stows it back in his jacket.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

I'll even let you go first.

Diggs studies him again, long and hard...

DIGGS

...Has anyone ever escaped?

LINCOLN

Yes.

Diggs lowers her head - finding a glimmer of relief.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Once.

She looks up again. Lincoln smiles - he's playing with her.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Before my time.

She looks down again, defiance returning.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

But there are others who've sat
in that chair and walked away.

She looks up again, slowly - not believing; studying him -
trying to figure out why he's telling her this.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Don't believe the folklore, Miss
Diggs. There are always gaps.
Every urban legend grows from
something real - but there aren't
really alligators in the sewers.

DIGGS

You can cut the crap.

Lincoln stops his walking and arches an eyebrow -
surprised, yet impressed at her bravado.

DIGGS (CONT'D)

I know why you're telling me this
- there's no escape, no lifeline.
No one's escaped and no one's
walked away from this chair - but
the second you take that illusion
away - that's the same second
I'll take everything to the
grave.

LINCOLN

...Is that so?

DIGGS

What else would I have to lose?

Lincoln shakes his head, smiling - patronizing her.

LINCOLN

Miss Diggs - there's always
something more to lose.

Diggs glares at him. Lincoln watches back, a touch of
admiration in his expression...

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

You're good.

DIGGS

I know.

LINCOLN

(jovial, casual)

But I've broken good people before.

(pause)

That's somewhat the point. We deal with the worst cases - the ones where no one else would stand a chance. And, occasionally, those cases where no one else could do it in time. Aside from that, we protect our interests.

(pause)

And it's my turn.

(pause, wandering again)

You found out a lot - most of it probably just by sorting feasible myth from fantasy... However, there are a few facts you uncovered which I know you didn't learn on the street. I want a name. Who told you?

Diggs hesitates on the brink of answering.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

We're at the core of it now, Natalie. No games.

(pause)

Please... Don't make me do something you'd regret.

He watches her, his expression sympathetic.

DIGGS

...Graham Soles.

Lincoln nods, wandering to lean on the back of his chair.

LINCOLN

He's Home Office - just high enough to know about us officially. And just stupid enough not to see our necessity.

(beat)

So you don't recognise the names Peter Shaw or Emily Gaines?

DIGGS

I thought it was my turn?

Lincoln smiles, enjoying himself.

LINCOLN

Of course-

He sits, casually taking out the gun and placing it lightly back onto the table. Diggs' eyes flick to it briefly, warily, before returning to Lincoln, who smiles-

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

-Fire away.

Off Lincoln, smiling confidently-

FADE OUT.

END OF PART TWO

PART THREE

FADE IN:

INT. THE ROOM - RESUMING

LINCOLN smiles, waiting for DIGGS to ask her next question.

DIGGS

Who do you work for? The Room -
who runs it?

LINCOLN

Now that, I honestly don't know.
I have a boss, he has a boss.
That's as far as I'm allowed to
see.

DIGGS

...I don't believe you.

LINCOLN

Fair enough - but that's the only
answer you're getting.

DIGGS

That wasn't an answer.

Lincoln studies her, trying to decide.

LINCOLN

True. So ask another.

Diggs hesitates, making up her mind.

DIGGS

Who hires you? Who tells you who
they want in this chair?

LINCOLN

Anyone.

(beat)

Well, anyone "in the know".
Governments and government
agencies - when they need
something they can't get
themselves. Other organizations
with varying degrees of legality.
Businesses sometimes - but
nothing we deem frivolous. On
occasion, we'll be hired by an
individual for his own personal
needs - but only someone powerful
enough to have discovered our
existence more legitimately than
you did.

DIGGS

So you just work for the highest bidder?

LINCOLN

It's my turn, Miss Diggs. Have you ever heard or had any contact with Peter Shaw or Emily Gaines?

DIGGS

...No.

(pause)

Who are they?

LINCOLN

Is that your next question?

Diggs hesitates.

DIGGS

No. The first one. Do you just work for the highest bidder?

LINCOLN

...No. Mostly, we take contracts for what we deem to be the common good. We've even had projects commissioned internally when we felt action needed taking. But we're a complex and expensive organization and we take funding where we can find it.

(pause)

And Shaw and Gaines are two other recent promotees who officially learned of our existence. We knew it was either one of them or Soles who helped you along. That one's a freebie.

Diggs studies him, suspicious.

DIGGS

...So what's your question?

Lincoln watches her...

LINCOLN

...What happened with the girl two years ago?

DIGGS

...What? How does that-?

LINCOLN

It doesn't. But I'm curious.

Diggs glares at him and sits back in her chair.

DIGGS

Screw you. I'm taking that with me.

Lincoln nods.

LINCOLN

Fair enough. We can get the rest from Soles.

He stands and lifts the revolver from the table. Diggs' eyes leap wide, she starts to panic-

DIGGS

No. Wait. There's more I can tell you. More answers-

LINCOLN

And yet...

He levels the gun at Diggs' head. She freezes - gaze locked on the barrel.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

...there's only one more thing I need to know.

Lincoln pulls back the hammer. The CLICK echoes through the room. His expression grows suddenly grim. Angry. Bitter.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Do you understand this part? The necessity?

Diggs does not respond - hypnotised by the barrel of the gun. Lincoln CLICKS his fingers to get her attention.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

Hey. Hey!

Diggs looks at him.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)

(snarling, bitter)

These are your last moments, Natalie. Don't miss them. And don't waste them.

(pause)

Do you understand why I'm doing this? Why I have to?

Slowly, Diggs nods - tears in her eyes, yet still composed.

DIGGS

This place only exists because no one knows it does.

Lincoln nods.

LINCOLN
 We save more lives than we take.
 But we can't risk-

DIGGS
 -Save it. Tell yourself what you
 have to, but don't-

LINCOLN
 (you fucking hypocrite)
 You think you could do this?

Diggs' eyes widen in surprise.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
 You think you could you kill
 someone? To keep a secret you
 knew needed keeping?
 (pause, with emotion-)
 Without this place - without The
 Room... you have no idea how many
 tragedies have been averted, how
 many lives have been saved at the
last second.

Lincoln is ranting now. Raging. Summoning all his anger and
 resentment to lay upon Diggs. He pushes the barrel into her
 forehead. Diggs refuses to react.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
 (bitter)
 To keep that going... to keep
 their last, shadowed chance
 alive... Could you do what I have
 to?
 (pause)
Could you pull this trigger?

Diggs stares at the gun... and then back at Lincoln.

DIGGS
 ...We'll never know.

LINCOLN
 No. You do. Right now. - Right
 now you know yourself better than
 most people ever will.
 (pause, doubting,
 scorning)
 Could you kill a broken prisoner?
 Could you promise them salvation,
 knowing that you will be the one
 who takes it from them?
 (pause, bitter,
 regretful)
 (MORE)

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
 Could you kill a wretch who you
 even think might be innocent,
 just for the mere possibility of
 finding the next guilty one?

Diggs stares at him for a long time...

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
 COULD YOU DO WHAT I HAVE TO!?

Through Lincoln's rage, Diggs find serenity.

DIGGS
 Yes.

She watches the gun again. Lincoln watches her, seething.
 The silence draws out. Any second...

LINCOLN
 (perfectly composed)
 ...Prove it.

He uncocks the revolver and puts it back into his jacket -
 taking out a set of keys at the same time.

Diggs stares at him in shock and confusion, as he unlocks
 her wrists and bends to free her ankles.

DIGGS
 What...? What are you doing?

Lincoln finishes with the cuffs and stands.

LINCOLN
 Unlocking you. You'll find it's
 easier to stand that way. And
 we'll see about a change of
 clothes.

DIGGS
 I... I don't understand.

LINCOLN
 We need you silenced. That
 doesn't always mean dead.

Lincoln looks to the empty chair on his side of the table.
 His expression grows sorrowful. Regretful.

LINCOLN (CONT'D)
 ...And someone needs to fill that
 chair.

He walks to the door-

DIGGS
 Are you offering me a job?

Lincoln stops, his hand on the handle.

LINCOLN

Not offering, Diggs. That's not
how it works. You're hired. Live
with it...

(meaningful)

...Or don't.

Lincoln opens the door and exits, leaving the door wide.

Diggs looks at her wrists, free of the restraints, and
takes hold of the edge of the table. Slowly, warily, she
pushes herself to her feet.

For several moments, she stands, expression blank, watching
the empty doorway. Then, slowly, she walks around the table
and steps outside, closing the door behind her.

As the door THUDS closed-

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE