



BARSTOOL DECEPTIONS

By
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FADE IN:

INT. BAR - DAY

A quiet airport bar. Rustic decor. Moose horns on the wall. A buff BARTENDER in a flannel shirt polishes a glass.

Only one customer at the bar. RYAN, 35, casual appearance, a worn satchel by his feet. He nurses a beer, while keeping a lazy eye on a football game on the TV.

JESSICA, 28, walks in. She's tall, stunning, hair tied tight, shoulders back. She carries a duffel bag. Looks like an off-duty military officer without identifying patches.

She walks up to the bar, takes a seat, parks her bag between her feet.

JESSICA
(to the bartender)
Bulleit Bourbon, neat, please.

The bartender prepares her drink.

Ryan studies her. Sips his beer. Tries on a smile.

RYAN
Military?

She glances over at him with an amused smirk.

JESSICA
That obvious?

Ryan adds a little charm.

RYAN
You have that look.

She gazes over at Ryan. Studies him.

JESSICA
Journalist?

Ryan chuckles.

RYAN
That obvious?

A smile from Jessica. She's hot.

JESSICA
You have that look.

RYAN
Touché.

Ryan raises his beer for a toast. She raises her glass in return. He drains the rest of his beer. She takes her whole drink in one swallow.

Impressed, Ryan takes notice. He turns to the bartender.

RYAN
Another one of what she's having,
for both of us.
(to Jessica)
As a show of appreciation for your
service.

JESSICA
(skeptical)
Of course.

The bartender serves them their drinks.

RYAN
Where are you heading?

JESSICA
Minot.

RYAN
Ah. Air Force then?

Jessica takes a sip of her drink, avoids the question.

JESSICA
What about you?

RYAN
Great Falls Montana.

Surprised, Jessica snickers.

JESSICA
Is that where you're from or is
there a story there?

RYAN
There are service members at the
Malmstrom base saying they have
seen things. Strange things...

JESSICA
Let me guess. Aliens?

Intrigued, Ryan leans in a little closer.

RYAN
So, you've heard the rumors too?

Jessica savors the aroma of her drink, thoughtful, then --

JESSICA
No.

She downs her bourbon, turns to Ryan with a mysterious smile.

JESSICA
I've seen them...

Surprised, he stares at her, then he moves to the seat next to her. He gestures to the bartender to serve her another.

RYAN
You've seen them?

JESSICA
Many times.

Ryan grows more excited by the minute. Drains his drink without thinking, then digs in his pocket for his phone.

RYAN
When? Where?

He puts the phone down on the bar between them.

The bartender serves them both new drinks.

RYAN
You wouldn't mind if I recorded this conversation, would you?

Jessica laughs.

JESSICA
Do I get royalties?

RYAN
I'll make sure you get the first copy. Free of charge.

JESSICA
Generous. Make sure it's signed.

Ryan's turn to laugh.

JESSICA

So, you must be one of those -- UFO
enthusiasts or alien theorists.

Ryan turns on the phone's recording app. Looks at her with a
tipsy smile.

RYAN

If I wasn't earlier today, I sure
am now.

Ryan settles in, ready to do an informal interview.

Amused, Jessica watches him. She raises her drink.

JESSICA

To the ceaseless pursuit of truth,
and the awe-inspiring revelations
that shake our perceptions and
illuminate our place in the cosmos.

Awestruck, Ryan stares at her, raises his glass.

RYAN

Wow. Just, wow.

They both down their shots. Ryan grimaces at the strong
liquor. Jessica doesn't.

RYAN

You drink like a soldier.

He blinks hard a few times. Eyes getting watery. He clears
his throat, concentrates.

Jessica gestures to the bartender for two more shots.

RYAN

How many shots do I have to buy to
get you to tell me everything?

JESSICA

Keep em coming and my lips will
keep moving.

Ryan smiles, can't believe his luck.

RYAN

Let's start with, where have you
seen them?

JESSICA

Minot, Malmstrom, and some in
Warren.

RYAN

All remote Air Force bases with
missile silos. Why there?

Jessica waits while the bartender serve them their drinks.

JESSICA

Why not big cities?

RYAN

Yeah.

JESSICA

Just like humans, they are seekers
of knowledge. These remote bases
are centers of technological
advancements. They prefer
isolation, less chance of their
actions triggering widespread
panic. The vast, clear skies make
it easier to navigate.

Ryan stares at her, mouth agape. He lowers his voice.

RYAN

What... what do they... look like?

Jessica seductively picks up her drink, waits for Ryan to
pick up his. They throw back their shots. Ryan breathes out
hard. Jessica fights to hold back a laugh.

JESSICA

Like anything they want.

Ryan's more than tipsy. Mulls this over.

RYAN

The ones you saw. What did they
look like?

JESSICA

They can morph into beings familiar
to them, those they've studied and
believe would blend in here. In
their quest for inconspicuousness,
they sometimes opt for peculiar
forms. The dumbest one I've seen
was a Minotaur.

Ryan stares at her, then breaks out laughing.

RYAN

A minotaur? Wait, wait. You're
putting me on.

JESSICA
Why would I do that?

RYAN
A minotaur. That's ridiculous.

Jessica gestures for more drinks.

JESSICA
I told you it was dumb.

RYAN
So, why have no one heard of this before?

JESSICA
Because of this.

RYAN
This what?

JESSICA
No one believes it.

Ryan, nods in agreement.

RYAN
I want to believe you. I really do, but I'm a guy who needs proof. Like photos. Videos. You know?

JESSICA
There are plenty of those.

Astounded, Ryan perks up.

RYAN
Really?

JESSICA
They use a network of interstellar waypoints, celestial markers if you will, to travel across the universe. The silos are basically electromagnetic anomalies to them. Every base, every silo, even our most subtle communication arrays, all emit a unique signature of electromagnetic radiation.

Ryan's lost, but loves to listen to her.

JESSICA

To them, it's like a beacon in the night, easy to find and follow. Hence, their ability to locate our missile silos with ease and the remote locations provide an uncluttered electromagnetic environment, making it easier to isolate each signal.

Ryan pours his drink down his throat, looks her in the eye.

RYAN

I love it when you talk dirty like that. Go on. Please.

Jessica's amused.

JESSICA

The silos are fortified with layers of top-tier security, including state-of-the-art surveillance systems. The moment they descend, cameras capture their presence, video rolls. They know this, so they use their advanced cloaking technologies which make the footage unclear, but the evidence is there, captured in pixels and timecodes.

Gobsmacked, Ryan can't help but staring at her.

RYAN

Will you get in trouble for telling me all this?

JESSICA

Why would I?

RYAN

This must be top secret information. You could be court-martialled.

Coy, Jessica looks him in the eyes with a mysterious smile.

JESSICA

I never said I was in the military. You assumed.

PA ANNOUNCEMENT (O.C.)

Flight eight one six two from Minneapolis to Minot is now boarding.

Jessica checks her watch. Ryan jolts back to reality.

RYAN

Wait. Wait. I need your name.

Jessica gets up, grabs her duffel bag.

JESSICA

Thanks for the drinks.

Ryan fumbles with the phone, points it at her.

RYAN

Please, give me your name. A phone number. Anything.

Instead he accidentally, plays the recording.

RYAN

(recording)

What... what do they... look like?

Jessica's answer is garbled. Unintelligible. Ryan stares at his phone in horror.

RYAN

No no no no!

He looks up at Jessica. She gives him a smile and a wink, then walks towards the exit.

Ryan puts money on the bar, gathers up his stuff in a hurry.

RYAN

Hey, wait!

Before Jessica reaches the exit, she morphs into an exact copy of Ryan.

Ryan stops in his tracks. Stares wide eyed after her. He turns to the bartender who has his back facing him.

RYAN

Did you... see that?

The bartender shrugs.

BARTENDER

See what?

Mortified, Ryan sinks down onto one of the chairs, looks at his phone, then gazes into the empty space she vanished.

FADE OUT: