

"THE INTERVIEW"

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. HANGAR. AIRBASE - DAY

Large and impressive situated behind a security fence.

INT. HANGAR

Dark with very little light, move toward a door. On the door it reads: SECURITY OFFICE

INT. OFFICE

The office is dimly-lit. We move through and there is a small desk with two chairs opposite.

Another door opens revealing a tall SUITED gentleman carrying a folder. He takes a seat and places a lighter and a package of cigarettes atop the desk.

Through another door enters an MP holding the arm of a STRANGER. He sits. His features are angular, almost Asian but strangely other-worldly.

SUIT

Are you comfortable? Can we get you some water?

STRANGER (BEAT)

Coke?

The Suit nods to the MP who leaves.

SUIT

You have a particular taste for that I gather. You do realize it's full of sugar and caffeine.

STRANGER

What can I say - it's addictive.

The Suit lights up a cigarette.

SUIT (BLOWS SMOKE)

Life is full of addictions. It takes the boredom out of this shithole.

STRANGER

It's sad that you use such a term to describe what is essentially a truly rare place. You humans seem to take most anything for granted given what you're capable of.

SUIT (SMUGLY)

We're only capable of a few things. Smoking is one; the other is maintaining national security. There are so many threats these days it's hard to keep track.

STRANGER

I gather it's why I am here, and treated most unfairly if I must admit.

SUIT

You have to understand, what with all the paranoia going around, that we are forced to take a few necessary steps in order to placate the trust we are sworn to uphold. This includes any and all threats, whether they're earthly or... otherwise.

STRANGER

Fear is one of the more basic instincts. It serves to keep you grounded I suppose. All beings are born with it, myself included.

SUIT

Then you are afraid? Of what, I ask.

STRANGER

Dying perhaps or failure. Maybe the fear that is the truth you seek yet aren't ready to accept.

SUIT

Is it so wrong to want to keep our world secure?

STRANGER

No, but aside from rogue asteroids and comets, sun flares and other natural elements, fear of the unknown is your biggest failure. Given the nature of your past I can only surmise that you really haven't learned anything and perhaps that's because it is your basic human nature to use fear as a means to - dare I say it - control that which cannot be controlled.

SUIT (SMIRKS AND SHAKES HIS HED)

Unlike the potential threat of another race that comes here in secret, spies on us, abducts our citizens, shuts down our power grids and missile bases, and expects us to let that happen without consequence? Whatever happened to self-determination?

STRANGER

Self-determination without guilt?

SUIT (SITS BACK ROLLS HIS EYES)

Guilt?

The MP enters with a bottle of coke, places it before the Stranger, who picks it up and takes a sip.

STRANGER (WIPES HIS MOUTH)

Ah, the real thing - pleasure is a sorely underrated sense. I should take some of these back with me.

SUIT

Don't think you're going to get out of here anytime soon. You're our guest and as such we must afford you all the amenities that this facility has to offer.

STRANGER

You humans are a funny lot. But I prefer to just while away my time in my cell.

SUIT

It's for protection.

STRANGER

Mine or yours?

SUIT

It's a mutual thing.

STRANGER

Like mutual assured destruction - how very whimsical. I have to hand it to you, that's one of your better ideas.

SUIT (BEAT, SIGHS)

So, would you like to tell us how many more of you there are?

STRANGER

Well, we're never as overpopulated as you, but since you must ask, my kind numbers a little over thirty-million.

SUIT

On your planet?

STRANGER

Well, we're not on the sun. I take it it's a bit hot there, sunburns and all that nonsense.

SUIT

Can you tell me why you're here?

STRANGER

It's not to invade if that's what you're worried about. Though I don't think it would matter much, what with the technological superiority we have over you.

SUIT

You see, that's the sort of jocular threat that can get you into a lot of trouble here.

STRANGER

Oh, I take this very seriously, the incarceration, the psychological testing, and the probing - which I'll have you know isn't part of our scientific evaluation program, that's all you, you sick freaks.

SUIT

I'm not aware of that. All I know is that you arrived unannounced into our air space without proper authorization and we were forced to bring you down. And seeing as your *vehicle* doesn't match any known aerial description current to the uses of most industrialized nations, it's only right that we investigate such intrusive acts.

STRANGER

I could have been killed. Doesn't that account for something?

SUIT

Well it does account for one thing, that you're not that technically superior. It's kind of odd don't you think, that someone who claims to be militarily superior is knocked out of the sky by a simple electronic burst of microwave radiation?

STRANGER

I hear those things are good for popping corn. Personally I like the sweet and salty kind. The butter ones leave your fingers all greasy.

SUIT (SARCASTICALLY)

How many of you are here?

STRANGER (BEAT THEN SMILES)

Not many, but then again it doesn't take much to learn that you're all still somewhat low on the dirt pile as it were. Though, the whole A-bomb thing is a bit worrisome.

SUIT

I think we're a little past that. The A-bomb was seventy-years ago. We have weapons that are a little more *advanced*.

STRANGER

That's the worrisome bit.

SUIT

So, you're here to teach us a lesson or give us a slap on the wrist?

STRANGER

Let's just say that there are quite a few *others* out there that are keen to take advantage of that animalistic lust for violence and all things blowy-uppy.

SUIT

Can I take that as your way of saying you'll give us a hand? I scratch your back, you scratch mine?

STRANGER

Self-determination, remember? And I don't think my wife would like me scratching anyone's back.

SUIT

They have marriage where you're from, huh? That's funny.

STRANGER

I don't think it's funny, but yes, we have marriage or something like it, though it tends to go on for a lot longer.

Perplexed, the Suit shrugs looking at the Stranger.

STRANGER

My species ages different than yours. And there's no such thing as divorce where I'm from.

SUIT (NODS AND SMIRKS)

Is that why you're here?

STRANGER

They were looking for a volunteer, so I volunteered. Who knew I would get captured.

SUIT

Don't you want to go back?

STRANGER

I don't know? I kind of like it here. It's all very different, laid back if you will. Guess I got used to the gluttony and the free cable.

SUIT

You've been here before?

STRANGER

A few times, though the first time was a bit dodgy - all those plagues and burning of free thinkers. Very unsavory.

SUIT

Just how old are you?

STRANGER

Well, time is a relative term. You wouldn't really understand. You're all too fixated on the *then* to bother with the whole Zen of now.

SUIT (LIGHTS UP ANOTHER CIGARETTE)

You're a Buddhist, huh?

STRANGER

You can learn a lot from the whole enlightenment deal. You may not know it but you're capable of much more than just war and entertainment.

SUIT

Tell that to Hitler, Moa and Stalin. I'm sure they would tend to disagree as would the millions murdered because of such enlightened ideals. War isn't a disease, it's the cure.

STRANGER (SIGHS AND SITS BACK)

With that attitude it's a miracle you've survived this long. Once you light that firecracker there's no going back you know.

SUIT

We have fail safes for just such mistakes. In any case diplomacy today is a lot different from what it was.

The Stranger makes a gesture that *he's* the diplomat; the Suit takes this as being an intervention.

SUIT

You can't take credit for everything. The silly apes aren't as dumb as you would have.

STRANGER

On the contrary, I find you practical, but lacking proficiency in understanding the technological apex in which you're headed for. A species needn't be intelligent to understand how to operate a basic clock.

SUIT

Arrogance is not becoming. I understand the analogy; a crow can use a twig to find grubs just as a gorilla can use sign language to talk, even if it's nothing more than mimicry. Nuclear missiles and spacecraft are nothing like the basic clock.

STRANGER

A crow is still a crow with or without the twig. Humans on the other hand are more or less existential; you have a particular fascination for trying to understand why you're so violent while at the same time cheering on a boxing match.

SUIT

I guess we're just assuaging our guilt.

STRANGER

Then perhaps there's still time.

SUIT

For?

STRANGER

I meant reprieve.

SUIT

So this *is* an invasion. The fleet on its way, eh?

STRANGER

My dear man, the *invasion* as you would have it has been going on for thousands of years, though you wouldn't know it.

The Suit straightens up, dabs out his cigarette.

SUIT

Are you telling me - -

STRANGER

That we've been here since civilization first began - yes. Most of us are merely anthropologists taking an interest while at the same time... *guiding* you along a certain path.

SUIT

Then we have no one to blame but you. I suppose self-determination isn't all it's cracked up to be?

STRANGER

Oh, don't get me wrong, we're not interfering but when the children start playing with matches it behooves us to step in so the house doesn't burn down with everyone still in it. Self-determination is also self-control. It's intrinsic to the nature of all species and while you're no different from what we used to be the inherent value of life is universal.

SUIT

What about Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Where were you when that went off?

STRANGER

Well, you have to learn sometime.

SUIT

Seems rather cold.

STRANGER

Perhaps, but given that we lost a few ourselves, there was a need to take a step back before moving forward.

SUIT

Dodgy and unsavory, I take it?

STRANGER

We were taken off guard, but at the time it was too late to do anything. When those cities were destroyed we had to dial it up a notch. This is why you're seeing an increase in all this *aerial* activity. Those things tend to be an attractant; they sort of light the way in. Like moths to a flame.

SUIT

Tell me about your features - I notice you have certain, how would you say - physical differences to us but you still look human.

STRANGER

Nature designed us that way. The humanoid form is the most advanced and basic of biological vessels in the universe. Take the opposable thumb, without it industrialization and mechanical aptitude would hardly be feasible. It's perhaps nature's best invention.

SUIT

And the odd-looking facial features? No offenses but you do look more like a circus freak or a bad accident.

STRANGER

And you're all rather smooth-looking to me.

SUIT

At least we still have hair.

STRANGER

Over-rated in my opinion and vain considering the efforts you go to just to save that hair.

SUIT

Are you a genetic creation?

STRANGER

As per our environment, traits that are variant to genetic abnormalities, diversity through regional differences as species adapt and evolve. Considering my world, we have an ancestral cranial feature that stems from a hominid that once used echolocation under water.

SUIT

Do you still use it?

STRANGER

To a certain degree, but it's rather crude. For instance I can feel temperature variations in this room and with a little effort sense the pressure changes. But it does little good so if you're thinking of dissecting me it'll be a waste of time. You won't find much and in fact notice that we're really not that different.

SUIT

I'll be the judge of that. There is the matter of your craft, how it operates and what sort of fuel is used.

STRANGER

Details are so passé don't you think?

SUIT (LIGHTS UP A CIGARETTE)

I'm not the one who's incarcerated, so yeah, details are valuable to us.

STRANGER

Bicycles, skateboards, motorcars, the how isn't as interesting as the why.

SUIT

Oh, I think I understand the why.

STRANGER

Not from what I've seen.

SUIT

It's the nature of our species, we tend to shoot first and ask questions later.

STRANGER

Does this mean I won't be getting my ship back?

SUIT

Property of the United States government, it's out of my hands.

STRANGER

How do you suppose I get back then?

SUIT

What makes you think you're going anywhere? Besides, determining your stay with us isn't up to me.

STRANGER

But I've done nothing wrong.

SUIT

You're aware of our nuclear capabilities, I'd say that's more than enough reason to hold you, that and you're classified as an extraterrestrial. Who knows what your real intentions are.

STRANGER

Don't I at least get a phone call?

SUIT

Very funny.

STRANGER

I could always use my hypno-ray on you.

SUIT

Is that even a thing?

STRANGER

Well no, but then again you're unaware of our capabilities. I could have some weirdo Jedi mind power or lasers for eyes.

SUIT

It's doubtful. We've scanned you for such things. I'll give you kudos for the attempt. I think that deserves a break.

STRANGER (RUBS HIS HANDS TOGETHER)

Splendid, when's lunch? And no more MRE's, I want macaroni and a chocolate shake... and a slice of pie.

The Stranger rises and is moved along by the MP.

SUIT (SMUSHES OUT HIS CIGARETTE)

Jesus, you really are a glutton.

STRANGER

Don't blame me; your food is just so damn delicious.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Looking through a two-way glass, the Suit and another MAN in a white coat watch as the Stranger sits at a table gorging himself on several plates of food and drink.

SUIT

Wish I had his metabolism.

WHITE COAT

I'd like to take a few DNA tests as well as a vial of plasma. You think he'd be okay with that?

SUIT

At this rate he'll eat our entire monthly catering budget, so no, I don't see why he won't agree.

Through the glass the Stranger holds up a chicken leg and smiles as if he notices the two.

The Suit and White Coat look at each other, bewildered.

SUIT (TAPS ON THE GLASS)

Are you sure this thing works?

WHITE COAT (SARCASTICALLY)

That guy's probably got a tape worm. Where did you say he's from?

SUIT

I didn't.

WHITE COAT

Well, wherever he's from they've probably got two stomachs. And no shame.

Slight laughter from both.

INT. MESS HALL

The Stranger, busily tucking into his many meals, pauses a beat. Then goes back at it.

STRANGER (EATING)

Silly rabbit, tricks are for magicians who know better than to interrupt.

INT. HALLWAY

The slight laughter suddenly stops. White Coat stares blankly then walks away. Perplexed, the Suit squints at the Stranger.

SUIT

You've got to stop doing that. Some people around here might not take it so lightly. Myself included.

INT. MESS HALL

The Stranger smiles and dabs his mouth with a napkin.

STRANGER

You would think that rude of me, but then again I have no shame.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

Seated opposite from each other, the Stranger and the Suit look relaxed. As does the MP behind the Stranger.

SUIT

I guess you're aware that they want to take some tests - -

STRANGER

Unnecessary, there's not a lot that you would learn from my insides, I'm basically a few steps up on the DNA ladder and no, I don't have two stomachs. If you could see what our diet consists of you'd be just as much of a pig. I'm just getting used to my taste buds.

SUIT

One of our better inventions no doubt?

STRANGER

Food is the key to many doorways, though personally I'd rethink the whole MSG thing. And why are you all so uptight about fat? You should enjoy it. I mean, have you ever really enjoyed a caramel sundae, whipped cream, nuts, cherries? It's perverse but so good.

SUIT (POINTS, SHAKES HIS FINGER)

You remind me a kid I used to know. He was smart but obsessed with eating.

STRANGER

Maybe he's one of us. But therein is your problem - you have these cravings yet you fail to enjoy them.

SUIT

It's called will power. Some vices need to be locked away otherwise we'd have anarchy.

STRANGER

Unlike war or control, though I wouldn't call them vices, more perhaps addictions.

SUIT

And what are the addictions on your world - drugs, domination, and blind adoration toward taking over lesser evolved civilizations?

STRANGER

We've risen above past mistakes, and as such have taken to preventing the same sort of disasters on other worlds and it's in no way going against self-determination. What we do is to provide guidance through subconscious intervention.

SUIT

By building pyramids and preventing nuclear war - yeah, I get it you're doing the universe a favor by appointing yourselves some sort of god-like gate keepers. How very righteous. If the public knew of your existence they'd probably be bowing down at your feet, worshiping you as the saviors of all our ills. The children aren't smart enough to evolve.

STRANGER

You're mixing your metaphors.

SUIT (SMUGLY)

Ask me that when come up with warp drive.
And who in the hell made you the hall
monitors of the galaxy? Just because
you're a thousand year ahead doesn't mean
you have the right to interfere, unless
we're your property.

STRANGER (A BEAT TO CALM THE AIR)

I'm afraid you don't quite grasp the
larger picture here. We cannot *negotiate*
this away. We've been a part of your
society since before history. We live here
side-by-side. We're your neighbors, your
co-workers, politicians, teachers,
husbands, wives and yes even a few of the
silly celebrities running amok out there.
We're not alien. We've just as much of a
right to be here as you.

SUIT (LIGHTS UP A CIGARETTE)

And yet you don't share all this fantastic
technology, or your enlightened sense of
being? How can you live beside us and
still look down on us? Seems rather
hypocritical, doesn't it?

STRANGER

To instantly transform a society with
technology would not only be harmful it
would be destructive.

SUIT (BLOWS SMOKE)

Steal that from Star Trek, did you?

STRANGER

We helped write Star Trek. In fact most of
your science fiction entertainment is
aided in part by many of us. We find it a
subtle way to introduce you to new ways of
thinking.

SUIT (COUGHS THEN STANDS)

I knew it! It's conditioning.

STRANGER

I would hardly call Star Trek conditioning, maybe a hopeful way of looking at what is attainable.

SUIT

It's manipulation - there's no new ways of some fantastic dream of the future. Manipulation and nothing more. You talk about self-determination while usurping us, dividing us.

STRANGER

Society is always wrought with such divisions, it's what drives progress. We're used to seeing such mentally destabilizing confusion when contact is made, either forced or by accident. It's outside the realm of normal parameters. You cannot separate myth from reality. The origins of your society have always been in part due to a transformative process.

SUIT (DROPS INTO HIS CHAIR)

Then we've no choice but to accept this?

STRANGER

Statistically - no. This is why we're engrained within society. There's direct correlation with how technological and social evolution proceeds, it's not one without the other; everything is as it's supposed to be. But what's happening is a vehement denial of this change. Spiritually you're ready; diplomatically not so.

SUIT

Does it always go like this?

STRANGER

There have been problems with other worlds, and yes we've had to rethink a few things - -

SUIT

Like war? Like invasion? Armageddon?

STRANGER

Transformative altercations did occur, but that was in the past. We've learned, much as you have, not to delve too quickly into creating new ideas. It's not natural. This is why it takes many generations to bring about true change. It's a cycle. There is no duration or set time. Most worlds readily adapt.

SUIT

You say that like it's some sort of test. What then if none of these things come to pass? What happens if, like with us, we're at the verge of blowing ourselves up? Would you step in or step off and wait until the smoke clears?

STRANGER

We're not sadists. Of course we'd *step in*, but it would never come to that. This is why it takes years, decades in order to properly *influence* the mood.

SUIT

The CIA used to do that back in the fifties, it was called psychological warfare; you infiltrate the enemy with soft conditioning, you drop leaflets, pay-off media and fill the minds of the populace with the notion of a better life. Then when they're properly vetted we go in, take over the infrastructure; build bases and all without firing a shot.

STRANGER (LEANS BACK, A BEAT)

This is how it's been done, how we've established contact. You would have us land on the White House lawn or fill the skies over your cities en masse? We're not the enemy.

SUIT

Then what are you? How can there be trust if this is how things are done? You think this society is going to accept it? What does history teach you?

STRANGER

History isn't - -

SUIT

You've admitted to being here for years, some of you even inside the government. How do we know that our past isn't being influenced, things such as our military programs, our intelligent services?

STRANGER

I assure you if our intention was to take over it would have been easier to wipe the slate clean. True, there are others out there who do just that, they arrive, they do a soft take-over and when all is said and done they rape the resources, remove all threats and leave you to elements. We're here to prevent that. We want you to *rise* to your potential not because of some grand utopian ideology or hand-holding bran muffin hippie sing-along, we're here because whether you want to believe it or not, we are you and you are us. We have ancestral traits.

SUIT

Well come on then big brother why not share the spoils? I am sure mom and dad would be happy that we got along.

STRANGER (CHUCKLES)

I like you, you're a cocky bastard. Smart but still a bastard.

SUIT

And you're the good son; wanted.

STRANGER

We're all bastards. Whoever seeded us did so out of an idea to bring us all together. I reason it was most likely accidental, but then again a little planning to help things along doesn't hurt.

The Suit lights up another cigarette, offers one to the Stranger.

STRANGER (DECLINES)

Thanks, I never touch the things. I prefer cannabis, less addictive with all the benefits.

SUIT

You know, that stuff is illegal.

STRANGER

Laws are meant to serve those who create them. In time, tobacco will be illegal, the other not so much. It's all a matter of perspective.

SUIT (BLOWS SMOKE)

Is that your doing as well?

STRANGER

No, that's all you. Given enough time to think it over the populace eventually come to the notion that they've had enough. It's the same with democracy or save the whales. People power is stronger than you think.

SUIT

Was it ever like that on your world? Did you have to go through the same conditioning? We're you *influenced* as well?

STRANGER

As a matter of fact, yes. At the time we were just like you, too concerned with our own selfish interests, warring factions, social injustices, environmental problems... (BEAT) You see, we're really not so different.

SUIT

I think if you look closer, you'd see we are.

STRANGER

In some respect perhaps, though that's merely your biases. One mustn't expect results overnight. Such drastic changes upset the balance.

SUIT

Teetering on the abyss?

STRANGER

I'm not the bad guy here.

SUIT

And I'm only doing my job.

STRANGER

Don't fault me for doing mine. I could just as easily walk out of here.

SUIT

Why don't you?

STRANGER

That would only serve to cause distress and mistrust. Again, your perception is biased. And you've not yet learned what it is that brings you here.

SUIT

You weren't invited here, we shot you down.

STRANGER

Yes, with a burst of microwave radiation. You'd think us that unaware of such fields. (BEAT) I need another coke.

The Suit NODS at the MP who exits.

SUIT (THUMBS THROUGH A FOLDER)

You vessel, it seems is pretty basic. Reactor, parallel magnetic plates, some sort of fiber optic conduit system.

STRANGER

No warp drive? No dylithium crystals? Anti-gravity isn't that difficult if you understand it.

SUIT

I gather it's all in how you look at it.

STRANGER

When you grasp the technology all things are possible.

SUIT

Like time travel?

STRANGER

A perversion against nature. I don't recommend it.

SUIT

Yet it is possible?

STRANGER

It depends.

SUIT

On?

STRANGER

Humans aren't capable. It goes against how we are evolved into this universe. All beings, humans in particular, have a *unique field*, it surrounds us, you may think of it as a consciousness; a soul. It exists within each of our own special bubbles. One cannot step out of that bubble, nor can we enter into another's.

SUIT

I'm no scientist but I take it you mean by way of a paradox.

STRANGER

In as such, though it's more to do with the fracturing of a certain set of parameters: galactic orbital frequency, diametric intention... (BEAT) That and god won't let us.

SUIT

So you believe in a god?

STRANGER

Good heavens - no. I have no beliefs.

SUIT

Is that because you think yourselves as gods?

STRANGER (SMILES)

You've been reading too many Von Daniken books. We've no intention toward such grandiose veneration. Myself, I ascribe to the values of scientific adaptation and environmental coexistence within the realm of my conscious field.

SUIT

Sounds all rather transcendental -
sunshine and lollipops.

STRANGER

Life is about living the experience; about
creating something wondrous to leave after
you've gone.

SUIT

Is that the meaning of life?

STRANGER

Mine perhaps. But we each have our own
beliefs if you will. Yours may be entirely
different from the next person, bibles and
beating the shit out of snakes or some
such notion taught to you at a young and
vulnerable age.

SUIT

Religion does have its merits.

STRANGER

So does picking the wings off butterflies,
animal testing and atmospheric geo-
engineering. Doesn't mean they're the
correct version though I doubt that Santa
Claus would demand you all bow down and
venerate the sacrifices and the stoning of
reindeer covered in tinsel.

SUIT

Maybe Santa Claus was just you guys
playing with our heads.

STRANGER

Traditions do tend to do that so do
naughty lists, gift certificates and those
delicate little chocolates wrapped in
colored foil. I do so love those.

The MP enters and places a bottle of Coke before the Stranger who takes a long, healthy sip and relaxes back.

SUIT

Who do you report to? Is there a minder or a boss involved? Do you use email or sub-space communication back to the mother ship?

STRANGER (GRINS)

Let me stop you there before you make a fool of yourself. I communicate to no one and there are no bosses or committees to report back to. My job as you would have it is to implement that which is an inborn system of potential growth that we see in you. These are merely ideas brought into being. We influence and inspire not subvert or usurp. And all without reveling anything that might be construed as coming from outside the normal rate.

SUIT

For whose benefit?

STRANGER

Yours... and ours of course. In time we will merge and move forward. We're all part of a community yet you fail to realize that there's more, much more beyond what you are capable of after which you'll be the ones doing what I am.

SUIT

Tell me, will we also have the capacity for immortality, no diseases..

STRANGER

Oh, we're far from immortal, but yes we do live a little longer than you, but that's from understanding the true structure of our DNA. Humans have the capacity to achieve well over five-hundred years.

SUIT

But you're not going to give up the secret?

STRANGER

You'll get there eventually.

SUIT

So, it's all a matter of *guiding* us forward while at the same time making sure to keep us down so we don't mess things up for you. And you talk about trust and self-determination. At this point I find this reasoning to be a little *contradictory*.

STRANGER

Trust has to be earned.

SUIT

Trust is a conviction better suited to uncorrupted children and monks. In the real world we don't have the freedom for such *naïve* thinking. To do so would not only be harmful to our better interests it would also be delusional to our security which is paramount when it comes to the potential threats from an outside technological force. (BEAT) You must understand that this is how things here are done.

STRANGER

I wouldn't expect otherwise. This is why we must proceed slowly; why we aren't about to reveal ourselves. This is how things are done from my point of view. And we aren't about to give up the whole shebang just yet.

SUIT

No, I expect not.

STRANGER

Erring on the side of caution is wise,
from both sides if you can take a little
advice.

SUIT

Meaning?

STRANGER

We're well aware that you've been in
contact with several *outside* groups. Given
what I know it's best to remain vigilant.

SUIT (BEAT)

You're referring to the greys? Reptilians?

STRANGER

Frog-faced slime-scum? Creepy things.
Those and the others. Trading technology
for the rights to kidnap your citizenry
isn't what I would call trust. There's
always going to be trade-offs.

SUIT

I admit they seem all too willing - -

STRANGER

It's because they're not real - they
aren't conscious.

SUIT

Oh - you mean they're artificial, yeah
we've looked into that; retrieved the
crashed vehicles and the bodies. We've
known that for a while now.

STRANGER

Then why would you agree to their terms?

SUIT

For the wares of course.

STRANGER

Shiny beads and trinkets - it's how things are done. Then they take it all eventually. (BEAT) They were created by humans, not us, but others who don't really have your best interests in mind.

SUIT

No - not as such. But this is where things get interesting.

STRANGER

What do you mean?

SUIT

Well, we do know that you and *them* don't easily see eye-to-eye as it were. And that you're distrustful of each other - -

STRANGER

That's because they're parasitical, they feed off the biology of other worlds. Don't think of them as being these superior intelligent beings. Intelligence isn't a requirement for technology.

SUIT

Ah, the apes banging on screens for food - yeah, I see that. I realize they're programmed to do what their masters, er, creators want. We're naïve but not that naïve. So you can see why we're having this conversation to begin with.

STRANGER

It's starting to get a little one-sided.

SUIT

It is, isn't it?

Silence in the room. It's a stale-mate.

STRANGER (BEAT AS HE STARES AT THE
SUIT)

Who are you - really?

SUIT

Just a lowly cog on the great big wheel of
the intelligence services.

STRANGER

No, there's something else - something
you're not telling me.

SUIT

You're very intuitive.

The Suit NODS to the MP who exits.

SUIT

Very... capable.

STRANGER

I don't understand?

SUIT

No, why would you - you're too wrapped up
in your self-worth to see past your giant
ego.

The Suit reaches behind his head...

SUIT (CONT'D)

Too self-important to bother seeing past
that which is right in front of you.

The Stranger sits back, unsure as the Suit pulls at
something at the back of his neck...

SUIT (CONT'D)

You're an embarrassment to your species.

The Suit leans forward and pulls off what is essentially a
MASK, revealing...

SUIT (CONT'D)

An embarrassment to us.

The face of a REPTILIAN. He tosses his mask onto the floor.
The Stranger reels back.

STRANGER (WITH DISGUST)

What is this?

SUIT (GRINS)

This? (HOLDS OUT HIS HANDS) This is your
welcoming.

STRANGER

You - you've... you'll destroy these people.
You can't!

SUIT

Destroy? More like, enlighten. If we left
it up to you these people would end up
prancing around in robes, getting all
gooned on Buddha juice.

STRANGER

As opposed to learning the techniques of
advanced weaponry, the fundamentals of
hand-to-hand blood combat? These people
aren't your beta test for a better race of
soldier. They're above all that.

SUIT

No, I don't think they are. Just look at
them, their penchant for destruction, and
the video games they play not to mention
those ridiculous sporting events. I mean,
come on, freestyle figure skating? Where's
the thrill in that?

STRANGER

You wouldn't understand.

SUIT

Who'd want to?

STRANGER

Not you - you're all too concerned with taking over every damn thing in the galaxy. You're a taker and a user. You have no passion, no art, and no capacity for the finer things in life.

SUIT

And you do? (LAUGHS) Group hugs and sing-alongs? And what're you doing here anyway? It's not like there aren't enough places to fuss over with beads and flowers out there. The stars are filled with life. Go get your own planet.

STRANGER (LEANS IN)

Why don't you just leave?

SUIT

Why don't you?

STRANGER (DETERMINED)

Because we were here first.

SUIT (CHUCKLES)

Right. And what're you going to do about it?

A beat as the Stranger reaches behind his head, tugs at his neck and pulls away the mask covering his face, that of..

A GREY complete with a big head and black eyes.

STRANGER

Anything I want.

Speechless, the Suit sits back and rubs his head.

SUIT

Oh, shit.

The Stranger, now a Grey, grins and folds his arms.

STRANGER (SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS)

Well then, get going.

SUIT

Why? What're you going to do, *probe* me?

STRANGER

Oh, fuck off, we don't do that anymore.

SUIT (CHUCKLES)

You're like the galaxy's own proctologist. What's the matter, can't find anything useful to do to these people you have to start sticking your fingers where they don't belong? You're sick.

STRANGER

Oh shut your face, you damned frog.

SUIT

We're reptiles you bald-headed freak. There's a difference.

STRANGER

Oh, is there... ribbet! Ribbet!

SUIT

Yeah, real funny coming from a big head.

STRANGER

At least I have one. It's a well-known fact that most reptiles have the brains the size of peas, really tiny (HOLDS HIS FINGERS TOGETHER) Wee things.

The Suit lights up a cigarette and tosses the box at the face of the Stranger.

STRANGER

Is that the best you can do?

SUIT

Bite me.

EXT. HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Darkness is rolling in.

STRANGER (V.O.)

No, you bite me.

SUIT (V.O.)

At least I have teeth, big head.

STRANGER (V.O.)

Oh, how very witty, slither tongue.

SUIT (V.O.)

Ass doctor.

STRANGER (V.O.)

Voldemort.

SUIT (V.O.)

Doby.

STRANGER (V.O.)

Kermit the frog.

SUIT (V.O.)

Miss Piggy.

STRANGER (V.O.)

Shut up.

SUIT (V.O.)

No, you shut up..

FADE OUT:

THE END