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Strip Search

By Tom Fontana

(Woman) I heard this big bang
and then the building is falling down!

It looks like a second plane.

(Bush) The US military has begun strikes.

(Reporter)... cases of anthrax...

We need every tool that's available to us.

Tools that respect...

(Bush) My focus
is bringing al-Qaeda to justice.

(Man) Say, theoretically,
that the government of the United States
could rid the world of terrorism forever,
but only if for a single day,
you gave up all of your rights
as American citizens.

24 hours with no rights.

What would you say? Would you do it?

Sure.

OK. The government says
it could rid the world of terrorism forever...
if you give up all of your rights for...
a week.

Would you do it? Come on. A week.

A week. A week, all right?

A month?

A year? A year.

Just a year.

Ten years?

- Ten years.

- No.

A lifetime.

Absolutely not. No way.

(Bell)

(Oriental music)

Sorry. Sorry.

(Door being unlocked)

(Keys jangling)

Are you uncomfortable?

I'll bet you are uncomfortable.

Do you promise to behave?

How's that?

That's better.

I'm a public servant.

I'm here to serve.

Why am I here?
Were you hurt
when the officers arrested you?
Arrested?
I told them to be respectful.
Why have I been arrested?
I haven't done anything wrong.
Filthy habit.
Unhealthy.
Listen. I know that I'm a foreigner,
and as such I may not be aware
of all the laws that you people have,
but I swear I can't imagine
what crime I've committed.
- How long have you been in this country?
- A year. Maybe a little more.
I can see how that may not be enough time
to learn our laws.
Not all of them, no. Basics.
You know, the ones
that are common everywhere.
- Against murder and stealing...
- Perhaps I misspoke.
You were not arrested.
You've simply been brought in for questioning.
An interrogation?
An interview.
Because I'm a suspect?
A subject of an inquiry.
An investigation...
into crimes,
some of which may not as yet
have been committed.
You think I may commit a crime?
Anyone is capable
given the proper circumstance.
My own mother...
was arrested for shoplifting.
She's an old lady.
I have no criminal record,
no prior arrests either here or at home.
Good.
I'd like to see a lawyer,
contact my embassy.

Why?

Because, not knowing the local laws,
I'm afraid...

That you will indict yourself?

No.

I...

don't know my rights.

You haven't read me my rights.

That's because...

you are not charged with anything.

Then I can go?

No.

- No.

- I can be held without being charged?

Yes.

For how long?

48 hours. Seven days, six months,
however long it takes.

Takes for what?

You to tell me what I need.

You mean confess?

Confess to a crime that
may or may not have been committed?

That I may have committed
not knowing it was a crime
or that may not even be a crime yet?

The photograph doesn't do you justice,
you're much more handsome.

Or maybe the word is pretty.

Look...

You've certainly been to plenty of places.

Russia, Cyprus.

Venezuela.

Israel. You're not Jewish.

Indonesia. Now there's a hotbed of terrorism.

What were you doing there?

- None of your business.

- Sit down.

Please.

Oh.

It's hot in here.

Yes. That time of year.

(Whirring)

Sometimes...

the best thing to do is to just sweat.

(Tires screeching)

- (Groans) What are you doing?

- Easy, man.

I'll break you up. Get down. Stay down.

Aargh!

All right, buddy, let's go.

Head down.

Right. Come on.

Come on.

Move it.

Come on.

- Watch your head.

- Get in.

- Easy.

- Let's go.

My government has started
fingerprinting foreigners from certain countries.

But I don't think that's enough.

I think maybe the best solution
is to put ankle bracelets,
monitoring devices, on specific visitors.

Not you.

In order to keep an eye on their movements.

That way...

we know where they go,
who they associate with,
what they're up to.

Anyway, that's what I think.

But who am I?

Just a lowly cog in a rusty wheel.

Ignored.

Unappreciated.

Underpaid.

Can you identify this man?

No. Who is he?

I don't know. I was hoping you could tell me.

We think he might be a natural-born citizen,
but we're not sure.

See, that's the problem with my concept
about the ankle bracelets.

One does not have to be a foreigner
to be disloyal.

Disloyal? What do you consider disloyal?

Speaking negatively about our government.
Criticizing our leaders.
That's dissent. There's a difference
between disloyalty and dissent.
I'm sure in your mind...
that's true.
(Beeping and whirring)
(Beeping)
Are you uncomfortable?
I bet you're uncomfortable.
Do you promise to behave?
How's that?
Better.
I'm a public servant. I'm here to serve.
Why am I here?
Were you hurt
when the officers arrested you?
Arrested?
I told them to be respectful.
Why have I been... arrested?
I...
- I haven't done anything wrong.
- That's a filthy habit.
It's unhealthy.
Listen.
I know that I am a foreigner
and as such I may not be aware
of all the laws you people have...
but I can't imagine what crime I've committed.
How long have you been in this country?
A year.
Maybe a little more.
Well, I can see why that may not be
enough time to learn our laws.
Well, not all of them.
No.
The basics.
The ones that are common everywhere.
You know.
Against murder or stealing...
Perhaps I misspoke. You were not arrested.
You've simply been brought in for questioning.
- An interrogation.
- An interview.

Because...

I'm a suspect?

Subject of an inquiry,
an investigation into crimes, some of which
may not as yet have been committed.

Oh, you think I may commit a crime?

Anyone's capable
given the proper circumstances.

My own mother was arrested for shoplifting,
she's an old lady.

I have no criminal record,
no prior arrests or convictions
either here or at home.

- Good.

- I would like to see a lawyer,
contact my embassy.

Why?

Because, not knowing the local laws,

- I am afraid that...

- You will indict yourself?

No.

I don't know my rights.

You haven't read me my rights.

That's because you aren't charged
with anything.

Then I can go?

- No.

- I can be held without being charged?

- Yes.

- For how long?

48 hours.

Seven days.

Six months.

However long it takes.

Takes for what?

You to tell me what I need.

You mean confess.

Confess to a crime that may or may not
have been committed.

That I may have committed
not knowing it's a crime or...

that may not even be a crime!

Yet!

(Beeping)

(Beeping stops)
Photograph doesn't do you justice.
You're much more handsome.
Or maybe the word's...
pretty.
Look...
Ooh. You've been to so many places.
Russia.
Cyprus.
Venezuela.
Israel.
You're not Jewish.
Indonesia.
Now, there's a hotbed of terrorism.
What were you doing there?
It's none of your business.
Sit down.
Please.
- It's hot in here.
- Hm.
Yes.
It's that time of year.
Sometimes the best thing to do is to just...
sweat.
My government has started
fingerprinting foreigners from certain countries,
but I'm not sure that's enough.
Maybe the best solution
would be to put ankle bracelets, you know,
monitoring devices, on specific visitors.
I mean, not you.
In order to keep an eye on their movements.
That way we'll know where they go,
who they associate with,
what they're up to.
Anyway...
that's what I think, but...
who am I?
Just a lowly cog in a rusty wheel.
Ignored, unappreciated.
Underpaid.
(Beeping)
Can you identify this man?
No. Who is he?

I don't know.

I was hoping you could tell me.

We think he might be a natural-born citizen,
but we're not sure.

You see, that's the problem with my concept
about the ankle bracelets,
one does not have to be a foreigner
to be disloyal.

Disloyal?

What do you consider disloyal?

Speaking negatively about our government,
criticizing our leaders.

Well, that's dissent.

There is a difference between...
disloyalty and dissent.

I'm sure in your mind that's true.

- You claim to be a student.

- I am a student.

You seem a little old.

Were you left behind as a child?

No. I'm doing graduate work.

I'm officially registered.

You have the papers, proper documents?

They're...

They're back at my apartment.

I could go get them.

You could send someone to go get them.

Uh... What do you study?

What's your major?

Political science.

Oh, ho, ho, ho.

That's funny?

In my experience, politics is no science.

It isn't exact enough.

But I don't mean to editorialize.

Are you a good student?

Are you a good student?

Yes.

A "B" in Marxism.

Well, if you have the information in the file,
why do you keep asking me?

Fair enough.

I see that you've studied the teachings
of Mohammed, Buddha and Jesus...

Adam Smith, Chairman Mao.

But what the file doesn't tell me is...

what you believe in,

what ideology, theology, you follow.

Do you believe that your religion

is the only true religion?

That God is on your side?

That all other faiths are false?

That those who follow errant faiths

are doomed to eternal damnation?

That the rest of us should

either be converted or destroyed?

There are...

extremists...

- fanatics, who...

- But not you?

- No.

- So, then, I repeat my question.

What do you believe in?

If not the absolute power of an absolute god,

what?

The individual?

The ability of the human mind,

the ability of the mind to...

to make a choice?

The ability of the mind to make a choice?

Democracy?

Pure democracy, yes.

But they certainly don't have pure democracy

in your country, do they?

May I have a glass of water?

Of course.

Democracy...

mean different things

to different people,

as does freedom, peace,

tolerance...

justice.

And if you look at history,

any country's history,

in order to achieve these ideals,

there must first be revolution,

uprising...

Lenin.

Ben-Gurion. Mandela.

George Washington.

He crossed the Delaware at midnight.

A sneak attack on Christmas Eve.

By today's standard,

I guess he'd be considered a terrorist.

So you can see

why I understand your actions.

Which actions?

What exactly am I accused of?

- Can you identify this man?

- No!

No.

May I call my family?

I'm supposed to phone my mother about now.

She'll worry.

Your mother knows exactly where you are.

- She does?

- Or will shortly.

We live in a new age, if you will,

where law enforcement agencies all over

the planet are coordinating their efforts,
exchanging information.

- About me? I'm nobody.

- You're wrong.

(Beeping)

- All we've got is 24 hours.

- Yeah, yeah.

I understand.

(Phone)

Hello?

Hello.

(Speaks Chinese)

- Is this your handwriting?

- You broke into my room,
rifled through my belongings,
and stole my papers?

We had a warrant.

Granted by some very patriotic judge,

I'm sure.

Is this your handwriting?

- Yes.

- So you wrote this?

Yes.

"The tree of liberty must be refreshed
from time to time
"with the blood of patriots and tyrants."
That's a quote from Thomas Jefferson.
It's for my thesis.
You say it's a thesis,
I say this document advocates treason.
It's only words on a piece of paper.
You know that words
are as dangerous as any bomb.
Words in the wrong hands can be misused.
What's the saying?
"Even the devil can quote the Bible."
All I was trying to say
is that every single one of us
has a mandate to do what's right.
Ah, to do what's right.
And what is right?
Each person must decide that
for him or herself.
Is that treason?
Perhaps.
All I was trying to say is
that every single one of us
has a mandate to do what is right.
Ah.
To do what's right? And what is right?
Well, each person must decide that
for him or herself.
Is that treason?
Perhaps.
From October 7th...
to November 10th,
you exchanged 16 phone calls
with someone we'll call x.
You tapped my phone?
X has made numerous inflammatory
anti-government statements,
including a threat to blow up
several buildings in this area,
the bridges, the reservoir.
People in anger say stupid things,
people who think that their conversations
are private, who are talking to friends.

- So x is your friend?

- I don't know.

We may be talking about two different x.

- On November 10th you attended a meeting.

- I went to a dinner at the center.

You talked about?

- Politics.

- People expressed opinions.

That's usually what happens
when people talk politics, you know.

But I have to tell you, I think it's funny
that you suspect our little group
of some deep, dark conspiracy.

We get together after class
and fool around and drink.

Mostly we drink.

And you guys have been monitoring us?

We don't need a reason
to monitor a group or club.

We don't need to suspect anyone of anything
to follow them.

What else have you done?

Got in our bank records, emails?

Long-distance bills?

Yes.

Well, you must feel really disappointed,
going to all that effort monitoring us.

On the contrary, our work bore fruit,
we have a witness...

...who says that you were criticizing
certain policies, advocating violence.

Show me this witness!

Let him step forward and accuse me
face to face.

The witness is a she.

The witness is a she.

And... we don't handle things that way.

If you won't let me talk to a lawyer,
if you won't let me confront this
so-called witness...

how can I defend myself?

Simple. By speaking the truth.

I have told the truth.

No! You haven't!

You're lying!

I'm not!

You're a liar.

You really believe this girl
is part of a terrorist cell?

We believe that she has associated with
certain individuals who are potential terrorists.

Whether she herself is a terrorist,
who knows?

Look, I'm getting a lot of heat
from the ambassador, from home,
I've got to tell them something.

When can I say she'll be released?

Depending on how cooperative she is,
we'll either start deportation proceedings
by the end of the week or put her to trial.

Assure me that she'll have access
to a lawyer.

No problem. We've found
lawyer/client meetings to be very informative.

That is unless it's decided
she goes before a tribunal, then all bets are off.

No lawyer, no jury.

(Knock at door)

(Speaks Chinese)

- Lieutenant. You know Mr. Hudson.

- Yes.

He wants an estimate as to when
you will have finished with Sykes.

- By noon.

- Are you causing her any physical harm?

You Americans want our government
to help you,

feed you information,

but you get nervous with our methods.

Do I look nervous?

I just don't want to be surprised
by any bruises.

- Don't worry.

- Did you bring the file?

This is everything we could get
on such short notice.

Thank you.

Back to work.

You are welcome to wait.

For what?

I don't even know she's here.

You really believe

this boy is part of a terrorist cell?

There's been an increase in chatter

the past few weeks.

Our intelligence tells us

something is about to happen.

We believe Sharif

can lead us to the perpetrators.

Whether he himself is a terrorist,

who knows?

Look, I'm getting a lot of heat

from the ambassador, from home,

I have to tell them something.

When can I say he'll be released?

Depending on how cooperative he is,

we'll start deportation by the end of the week

or put him on trial.

Assure me he'll have access to a lawyer.

No problem. We find the lawyer/client meetings

to be very informative.

That is unless it's decided

he'll go before a tribunal, then all bets are off.

No lawyer, no jury.

- May I see him?

- That isn't advisable at this time.

Did you bring the file?

This is everything we could get

on such short notice.

Ah, thank you.

Oh.

Back to work.

You're welcome to wait.

For what?

I don't even know that he's here.

- Take off your clothes.

- What?

- Your clothes. Take them off.

- Why?

Because I'm going to do a strip search.

- Strip...

- Full cavity.

But why?

Because it's what we do.

It's part of the procedure.

I thought searches were done by people...
of the same sex.

Well, usually they are,

but there are occasional exceptions like this.

Take off your clothes.

Take off your clothes.

- What?

- Your clothes. Take them off.

Why?

Because I'm going to do a strip search.

- A strip...

- Full cavity.

But why?

Because that's what we do.

It's part of the procedure.

I thought...

searches were done

by people of the same sex.

Usually that's true, but there are
occasional exceptions like this.

Take off your clothes.

What if I say no?

- Say no?

- Well, I don't want to.

Look at the situation from my side.

I can't take the chance

of releasing the wrong person.

I cannot give you the benefit of the doubt.

I can't give you the benefit of the doubt.

I demand to see somebody

from my embassy.

Why? Why not cooperate?

- Have you got something to hide?

- No.

Is it your body that you're embarrassed about,
something smaller than it ought to be?

There we go.

Thank you for the cooperation.

Do you have something to hide?

No.

Is there a part of your body

you're embarrassed about, something...
smaller than it ought to be?
There we go.
Thank you for your cooperation.
Uh, uh.
Hm.
You work out.
You have a good solid body.
So I figure maybe you go to the gym.
Pants.
Sexy.
Take them off.
Yes. A good solid body.
And by solid I don't mean fat.
You are not fat.
We can all afford
to lose a few pounds, of course.
But you're not even close to fat.
Sexy.
Take them off.
Yes. You've got a good solid body.
By solid I do not mean fat.
You are not fat.
We can all afford to lose a few pounds,
of course, but you're not even close to fat.
Did you know that the al-Qaeda
in their training manual
suggest that martyrs for Allah shave off
all of their body hair before they die?
Why?
For what purpose?
I ask you, why?
I don't know anything about al-Qaeda.
(Sighs) I'm not saying that you do.
- Open your mouth.
- My mouth?
Wide.
Aah.
Like at the dentist.
I mean, you do go to the dentist, don't you?
Wider.
Come on, help me out.
My mouth doesn't go any wider.
Open like during oral sex.

You know they call this a cavity search,
cavity meaning every orifice in the body.
But you'd be surprised the number of times
I actually find a cavity in someone's teeth.
But not you.

Yours are in tiptop condition.
There. That wasn't so bad, was it?
Ever been married?

No.
You...
like girls,
don't you?

Yes.
So if I touch you down there...
what do you think your reaction will be?

Don't.

Don't?

Please.

Don't.

(Sniffs)

Ever been married?

No.

You like girls, don't you?

Yes.

So if I touch you down there,
what do you think your reaction will be?

Don't.

Oh.

Don't. Did you say don't?

Please don't.

Ah.

That was sweet. Er...

What's the word?

Plaintive.

That's what happens to people
who end up in here.

Outside these walls they're tough,
they've got an attitude.

But once that door shuts, they crumble.

They turn into little girls.

That's what you remind me of now.

A frightened little girl.

Stop.

That a sensitive area for you?

I don't like being touched.

- Being touched there or anywhere?

- Stop!

Careful! You don't want to hit me!

That's what you remind me of right now,
a frightened little girl.

Stop.

- I don't... Stop!

- Is that a sensitive area for you?

- I don't like people touching me.

- Touching you there or anywhere?

Stop!

Careful. You don't want to hit me.

The consequences would be dire.

Aargh! Aargh!

Oh.

Tell me about your girlfriend.

I didn't say I had a girlfriend.

There are references to her in your emails.

Is there any part of my life

you haven't picked through?

Was she the great love of your life?

Why did she leave?

There is nothing in my emails

about her leaving.

How do you know she left?

I can see the pain in your eyes.

Why did she walk out on you?

I don't know. Why does anybody walk out?

Look familiar?

That's her.

Yes.

Gorgeous.

By the way,

she's our witness.

She's going to testify against you.

No.

She wouldn't.

She wouldn't do that.

(Cries)

Settle down.

So why did she walk out on you?

I don't know.

Why does anybody walk out?

Look familiar?

- That's her.

- Yes.

Gorgeous.

By the way,

she's our witness.

She's gonna testify against you.

No!

She wouldn't.

- She wouldn't do that!

- Settle down.

We found these photos

in your apartment.

Airports, bridges.

A tunnel.

Dam.

I'm a tourist. I photograph things.

If you looked, you also saw...

mountains, sunsets, children playing.

A week ago, you rented a car.

Ah, no, I just signed the forms for a friend.

We found trace elements of TN in the trunk of that car.

- What?

- Granted they're only molecules,

but why was there TN in the trunk of the car you rented?

I told you, I didn't rent the car for myself.

A friend asked me as a favor.

Which friend? What's the name?

I'm not gonna tell you.

I'm not guilty of anything and neither is he.

You harbored a terrorist.

- No.

- You financed a terrorist.

- No!

- You aided and abetted a terrorist.

No!

Would you still say that

if you were attached to a lie detector?

- Yes.

- And you'd answer every question?

- Yes.

- What if I gave you truth serum?

- Truth serum?

- Inject you with truth serum.

OK. Go ahead.

We believe your friend x
is involved in terrorist activities.

- You're wrong.

- Why would you protect him?

Why would a decent person protect someone
who's planning the deaths of innocent people?

- He's not...

- I'm what you might call old school.

To stop crime, you threaten criminals with
physical punishment, imprisonment, death.
But these suicide bombers, they've already
chosen to die, they're not afraid of prosecution.
So we have to stop them before they act,
we have to keep them alive.

That's their punishment.

Make the bastards wish they were dead.

Humiliate them.

Or make them aware that if they die in here,
alone,

that their deaths will have no meaning,

no resonance,

no effect on anyone whatsoever.

Turn around.

Put your hands on the wall.

Palms flat.

Spread your legs.

Turn around.

Put your hands against the wall.

Palms flat.

Spread your legs.

I have to tell you this is my least favorite part.

I took the test,

went through the academy, for what?

Thought I'd be out in the field,

doing good, saving lives.

Instead I spend my days

with my hand up other people's asses.

Might as well have gone to medical school.

Become a gynecologist.

Or a... What's the word for a colon specialist?

Stop talking and just do it.

What? I didn't hear you.

You heard me.

I know what you're up to. I'm not an idiot.
So do whatever you want.
I'm gonna stare at this wall,
I'm gonna focus on this wall,
memorize this wall.
I will own this wall.
What you should be focusing on...
...is the children.
Orphaned children.
Traumatized children.
You see, unlike you, I have a child, a boy.
I want him to live in a world that's safe.
Where he feels safe.
I want him...
to live...
in a world that's safe,
where he feels safe.
Doing this, what kind of role model are you,
what kind of legacy
are you handing down to him?
Safe...
but not free.
Alive but not human.
It is not my fault
that we don't live in a perfect world.
(Clash)
It's not my fault
that we don't live in a perfect world.
I'm going to do this every day, all day...
until it becomes as natural as breathing,
you will come to need it like air.
And the best part is
I didn't have to touch you.
(Takes deep breath)
So let me ask you again...
do you know these men?
- (Sobs)
- Do you?
Do you?
OK.
That's it.
Someone else will be in to talk to you.
(Door slams and locks)
We're going to do this every day,

all day...
until it becomes as natural as breathing.
Yes.
You will come to need it...
like air.
The best part is...
I didn't have to touch you.
So... let me ask you again...
do you know these men?
Do you?
Yeah.
OK.
That's it.
(Beeping)
Someone else will be in to talk to you.
Ah.
(Knock at door)
(Speaks Chinese)
(Muffled screams)
(Lift bell)
(Man) Say, theoretically,
that the government of the United States
could rid the world of terrorism forever...
but only if for a single day you gave up
all your rights as an American citizen.
Would you do it?
Would you give up your rights for a week?
A month?
A year?
Ten years?
Forever?
English SDH