

Whistleblower

by
J.E. Clarke

FADE IN ON:

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

An unseen ammo clip SLAPS into place. HEAVY BREATHING.
The scrape of metal against tiles on a roof.

SEEN THROUGH A SCOPE

The oval sight sweeps across a city sidewalk.

Past a LITTLE OLD LADY with a cane. Then a WOMAN pushing
a STROLLER. The BABY in it coos. None are a target. The
scope recoils from them, moves on.

A man's voice (GRAHAM) growls:

GRAHAM

What *is* he, The Invisible Man?

A second male voice (RICK) laughs harshly.

RICK

Not unless you're Austin Powers. You lost
the target, Graham. That's Strike One.
Two more n' you're out!

EXT. ROOFTOP

The two men crouch in black camo clothing, braced against
a waist-high wall at the roof's edge.

Graham points an AR-15 at the street. Hunting for... who?
He yelps and points.

GRAHAM

Not by a long shot. Over there!

Eyeing through his scope, Graham locks onto:

SCOPE

A MAN WITH A HAT lingers near a revolving glass doorway.

GRAHAM

I don't get it. How'd he get that far,
that fast?

RICK

Maybe he's training for a marathon? We'll
talk reality later. Just take him out!

Graham hesitates. A millisecond too long. The man steps into the building. He's gone.

GRAHAM

Mother fucker.

Graham slumps, sits down. His AR harmless now. Above him, Rick glowers - anger simmering.

RICK

You had him dead on. What's your excuse *this* time? The sun get in your eyes?

Graham waves a weak hand towards the sky.

GRAHAM

Oh, I dunno. Take your pick: the old lady with the groceries? I swear, she looked like my mom. Speaking of mom's, then there's that woman with the baby. You want me to eliminate witnesses, too?

Rick's not having it. Grunts.

RICK

Witnesses - to what? We're on the roof, hidden from sight. All they'd see is that poor asshole's head turning into red mist. After which, they'd be running scared. I really doubt they'd look up. Collateral damage is only necessary sometimes. By the way, that's Strike Two.

Rick whips a CELL from his jacket, scrolls. Sitting next to Graham, he shoves the screen in his face.

RICK

Like clockwork, he comes out at three PM for a smoke. Ducks in that alleyway, far from the street. Which means no witnesses to give you cold feet. That's two hours away. Think you can suck it up and save the day then, big guy?

GRAHAM

(sighs)

If the intel's accurate? OK.

He eyes a bulge in Rick's front pocket.

GRAHAM

Two hours. Got any of those protein bars? It's lunchtime. I could use a snack.

LATER

The two men rest against an EXHAUST PIPE, chow down.

GRAHAM

Double chocolate? Not half bad.

(beat)

I really still don't get it. Why'd the agency get a hard-on for *this* guy?

RICK

(chewing)

Dude, chill. You know the drill. Don't ask, don't tell.

GRAHAM

Uh, that was back in Clinton's time. And it applied to LGBTQ. Not whistleblowers.

RICK

I'm well aware. And it got repealed. Just like *this* guy's gonna, if you do your job right. And, you answered your own question. Our target dug in ta stuff he shouldn't. Getting "the scoop" can be dangerous to one's health. If you do it too well, too many times.

(checks his watch)

Not long now. Almost cancer stick time.

Graham gulps down the last of his protein bar. He rises to his feet. Rick follows suit.

GRAHAM

I dunno. Scoops or not, shooting reporters don't feel right.

RICK

Bud, with all this moral doubt you're confessing, I'm starting to suspect you've picked the wrong line of work.

GRAHAM

Excuse me, *Supervisor*? I'm one of the best urban operatives there is!

RICK

I'll believe that *after* you find the target, pull the trigger, finish the job.

GRAHAM

Look at my record! In Somalia, my best was thirty-three confirms in four months.

RICK

Then that *incident* happened, which is why I'm here. No judgements, but you're just not cut out for solo assignments now.

GRAHAM

I just.. just need to know the mission's fair. Is that so wrong?

RICK

Buddy, our target pops up in non-allied countries all the time. No flight logs - super-secret. He bills himself a reporter? My Iraqi proven ass-cheeks. Full confidence, he's a foreign asset. More a danger than Assange!

(chuckles)

These days, I mean.

The two walk to the roof's edge, look down. Rick squints through BINOCULARS, points.

RICK

There he is, walking into the alley. What a boy scout. Right on time.

Rick scoops up Graham's rifle, hands it over.

RICK

There's no shade up here, I'm exhausted. So finish with the self-doubt! You're doing your country a favor by putting this snitch out of his and our misery. Get 'er done, and I promise I'll give you the best field recommendation in the history of the agency. Erase this bastard, then we both head home.

GRAHAM

(shrugs)

If anyone should reconsider careers, I'm guessing you're top of the list...

RICK

Excuse me, Corporal?!?

GRAHAM

I'm just sayin' you're a good cheerleader. Congrats. You made your point.

Graham braces against the wall. Aims.

THROUGH THE SCOPE

As advertised, the man with the hat's returned. Nestled in the alleyway - far from witnesses - he lights a smoke. The flame glints against his glasses.

INTERCUT BETWEEN ROOF AND SCOPE

Graham mutters to himself. The unassuming target, too.

GRAHAM

Enjoy that puff, four eyes. 'Cause when it's done, you've breathed your last.

He pulls the trigger. The shot PUFFS out.

And rips a hole RIGHT THROUGH the man's fedora. The man doesn't fall - doesn't even move!

GRAHAM

What the fucking, fucking, FUCK?

Rick rushes over.

RICK

Dammit, Graham - how's you miss? A blind mouse couldn't muff that shot!

GRAHAM

(panicking)

I didn't! Did you see that hole? Right above his goddamned ear?

RICK

One hole? You flunk Sniper Preschool? Even a nun knows you gotta double-tap!

The reporter tosses his cigarette aside. Not aware he's been shot, he strolls up the alley, towards the street.

RICK

Don't back out now. Gimme that!

Rick grabs the AR. Aims... shoots.

PUFF-PUFF-PUFF-PUFF. Four BULLETS into the man's chest.

This the target notices. The man takes off his glasses, pokes the holes in his shirt. Curious, but in no pain.

RICK

He's got a bullet proof vest. HQ didn't warn us first?!?

GRAHAM

And a bullet proof hat-helmet? Is he special forces? What's with that?

RICK

He can't protect *everything*. I'll shoot for his face. That'll do.

GRAHAM

He's almost at the sidewalk. There'll be too many witnesses.

RICK

Big whoop. We'll take them out too.

GRAHAM

You said we don't kill spectators!

RICK

Sometimes. But the bastard's been alerted. If he escapes, all bets are off!

Rick raises the AR - aims at the target's face. Pissed off, the man stares right back.

RICK

(whispers)

It's not like he can see us. Right?

The man's eyes flare with a sudden RED GLOW. LASERS lance out, burn Rick's head to ash!

Graham shrieks, ducks. Crawls away. Bumping into the exhaust pipe, he curls into a fetal position, rocks.

GRAHAM

Just like Somalia. Mommy, make it stop!

CLUNK. Rick's cell falls to the ground, face up. Right next to his now-headless corpse.

Blood sparkles on the screen. Ash drifts down onto it, like black snow. Quickly, the screen's covered. But not before one can read what's on it:

"Schedule for Clark Kent. Whistleblower and suspected spy. Executive order: liquidate with prejudice."

FINAL FADE OUT: