

Middle Passage
an original screenplay by
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A ship full of alien abductees awake in the vastness of space.
In despair and among others they cannot understand and technology
beyond their comprehension.
Their only strength is the will to survive, to confront their captors
and live moment by moment until they accept their new reality.

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EXT. HOPI TRIBAL POLICE STATION - DAY

A black SUV pulls into the parking lot. The station is a grey single story building with a blue roof in the middle of the desert highway AZ-264.

The driver steps out. He is a JEROME TURNER, a black LA police detective in his late thirties. He looks at the bare hills across the highway, turns looks at the Mesa in the distance behind the station.

TURNER

This is it?

INT. HOPI TRIBAL POLICE STATION - DAY

Turner steps up to the desk. Takes his badge out and lays it on the counter for the female officer. There are two tribal officers with long hair drawing grid lines on a map. They do not turn around.

Officer RUTH LOMAKEMA has her hair pulled tight back to a bun, rose tinted shades. The type of officer you see on a recruitment poster. She gives the badge back to Turner.

OFFICER LOMAKEMA

You are taller than I expected.

TURNER

Taller eh?

OFFICER LOMAKEMA

Chief!

Chief DAVID HONANIE steps out his office. He is short, stocky, with a crew cut. Black uniform without a crease or smudge.

OFFICER LOMAKEMA (CONT'D)

Los Angeles, California.

CHIEF HONANIE

Ah, Detective Turner. Come on in.

The two tribal officers look up from the map. Turner nods, they smile and give him the fist pump on the way in.

INT. POLICE CHIEF OFFICE - DAY

CHIEF HONANIE

Paperwork?

Turner hands his envelope to the Chief. The Chief reads it and signs. Gives Turner the Hopi paperwork to sign. Turner signs without reading.

CHIEF HONANIE (CONT'D)
 You should read that. It says you
 are one of us, in full. Not a
 visitor.

TURNER
 I read it become I left my precinct.
 I did not expect to play tourist.

CHIEF HONANIE
 Good man. This job is twentyfour by
 seven. No time clock. In or out of
 uniform we are on the job. Community
 policing. Get to know the folks,
 make a couple friends. Don't be an
 outsider.

TURNER
 I can do that. Seems a tight
 community.

CHIEF HONANIE
 (Loud)
 Begay !

CHIEF HONANIE (CONT'D)
 Officially this says we have an
 exchange program, but why are you
 here?
 (Loud)
 Begay!

Chief Honanie holds up his palm to stop Turner from answering.

CHIEF HONANIE (CONT'D)
 Ruth!

SGT BEGAY, thirtytwo, short hair, wears a cowboy hat, with a
 Hopi tribal badge he wears like a bowtie walks in.

SGT. BEGAY
 You must be Turner. Chief.

CHIEF HONANIE
 Sgt Begay is your other half. He
 goes to LA. You pick up all his
 duties. Fill him Begay. And you
 Turner, you call in every four hours.

TURNER
 I am on duty?

CHIEF HONANIE
 Yes! Now answer my question.

EXT. LA ALLEY DOORWAY - NIGHT

Turner is pinned behind a metal door in a shootout with drug traffickers. The traffickers have large caliber weapons so Turner is being slammed as the rounds hit the door.

The two heavily armed traffickers are walking towards the door firing. They pause to reload. Mistake.

Turner takes a breath and steps out and shoots the first trafficker through the middle of the chest, his second shot hits the other trafficker in the shoulder, as the trafficker falls he fires.

EXT. LA ALLEY - MIDDLE OF THE ALLEY

The trafficker is down on one knee getting up to fire.

TURNER

Hold it, hold it or next one through the chest.

The trafficker does not answer.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Through the chest brother, by the book.

The trafficker drops his gun and sits back. Turner walks over, his gun pointing at the trafficker's head, walks behind and handcuffs him.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Before your \$1000 lawyer pleads you, listen. You have a right to remain silent, you have a right to...

There is a groan from behind a garbage container.

EXT. LA ALLEY WALL - NIGHT

Turner pushes the drug trafficker in front and over to the container. There is disheveled young man laying bleeding from a head wound.

TURNER

Is he with you?

The trafficker shrugs his shoulder in the silent "I don't know." Turner pulls his radio.

TURNER (CONT'D)

10-78, 5th and Lansbury, gunshot.

TURNER (CONT'D)

You saw him?

TRAFFICKER

Never saw him. You shot the man.

INT. POLICE CHIEF OFFICE - DAY

CHIEF HONANIE

Senator's son. Bet you made the nightly news. Hmmm! Last year you applied to be Police Chief of some small town in Washington State. Why?

TURNER

Tired of the crime and the death. I am trying to find some place I belong. Slow down.

CHIEF HONANIE

Go easy on the policing out here. Most folks just want you to make a decision in a dispute. Ok? He is all yours Mike.

INT. HOPI TRIBAL POLICE STATION - DAY

Turner shakes the hands of the two tribal officers. Begay points to the map showing Turner the highway through the Reservation. Points out the Kykotsmovi Village.

SGT. BEGAY

This is your patrol area this week. Chief will assign you a ride with one of these two slackers here next week.

EXT. KYKOTSMOVI VILLAGE SOUTH END - DUSK

Sgt. Begay and Turner are on a ridge looking down at the road going south. The two buildings behind them. A small house and a one room auxiliary police station.

SGT. BEGAY

(pointing)

Check the south road everyday. We don't want drug traffic to start rolling through here. They come off the 1-40 trying to hide.

TURNER

Copy that.

SGT. BEGAY

One more thing don't drive off the road at night. You could do a Thelma and Louise straight off a Mesa or a ridge.

Sgt. Begay motions for Turner to follow him inside. They walk into a single room police auxiliary station with a single cell.

INT. HOPI AUXILIARY POLICE STATION

SGT. BEGAY

Remember when you arrest someone here, they have kids at home unattended. Mom will bring them breakfast.

TURNER

Your Mom?

SGT. BEGAY

Yes Mom. You live next door. Mom has the key. Old Warrior Cheveyo has a key to this building. He sleeps in the jail when his old lady drinks and he can't stand the talking.

TURNER

What is this, Mayberry?

SGT. BEGAY

You wanted slow, you got slow.

Sgt. Begay radio cackles.

OFFICER LOMAKEMA (V.O.)

You better not be late.

SGT. BEGAY

I won't. Getting Turner settled. Out.

SGT. BEGAY (CONT'D)

That was Ruth.

TURNER

Ruth?

SGT. BEGAY

Officer Lomakema. I promised to marry her when I was ten. She is going to remind me a dozen times before I leave in the morning.

Begay picks up his rifle off the wall.

EXT. HOPI AUXILIARY POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Sgt. Begay picks up a duffel bag and starts to walk to his truck. Turner is watching him walk with the rifle over his shoulder cowboy style.

TURNER

Hey, don't I get a deputy?

Sgt. Begay stop, turns.

SGT. BEGAY

Just you Lone Stranger. Oh almost forgot. Do not chase Billy into the desert.

TURNER

Billy? Major trouble maker? What?

SGT. BEGAY

Billy is a prankster. He is going to test you. Ignore him. He knows the desert like you know LA. Chase him, make sure you have water and a radio.

Turner watches Sgt. Begay get in his truck drive away.

TURNER

Bet he shoots somebody day one.

Turner, looks around, walks to his SUV to get his stuff out. Turns and looks back at the mountain and heads to the house.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Damn, lonely ass place. Gonna be boring as hell.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. HOUSE BEDROOM - MORNING

Turner is waking up to voices outside. Rolls over and there are two kids, BEN and TALASI, sitting on the chair staring at him.

TURNER

Ok, who are you?

The kids stare but no answer.

TURNER (CONT'D)
Ok, turn around, I have to put my
pants on.

The children turn around and shout together.

BEN / TALASI
Grandma!

INT. HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Turner is still putting his pants on when a MRS. BEGAY walks into the kitchen. Her hair is grey streaked and she hardly notices Turner in the next hurrying to get dressed. Turner is hurrying to put his pants on.

MRS. BEGAY
Hey, I have four boys, and two
brothers and 8 years as an army nurse.
Seen everything. My son told me to
feed you this week until you get
used to us.

TURNER (O.S.)
So you are Mom. Ok, Thanks! I have
to get my things.

MRS. BEGAY
How long will you stay with us?

TURNER (O.S.)
Six months. Are you going to
introduce me to the town?

Turner walks into the kitchen pants and shirts but no shoes.
Mrs Begay nods.

MRS. BEGAY
No, need. Every one will find an
excuse to come meet you. Don't be
too official, they just nosy. Good
time for you to make a friend or
two.

TURNER
Check out the outsider eh? See the
bad policeman.

MRS. BEGAY
Nah! We are just gonna decide if we
let you be one of us, or keep you on
the outside.

INT. HOUSE KITCHEN - MORNING

Turner is sitting eating breakfast. The children are still staring at him so he pushes his breakfast at them. They smile at him, and take it.

MRS. BEGAY

Those kids ain't hungry you know.

(To the kids)

Ben, Talasi, stop that. You two, don't do that no more.

(to Turner)

Now they know you are a soft touch.

Geez! You have been had.

TURNER

(feigning anger at
the kids)

Well, tomorrow morning. Nothing,
None!

The kids laugh, the little boy is trying to see if Turner has a gun.

BEN

So how many people you killed, like
40,50? Shot them dead?

MRS. BEGAY

Ben, I told you not to talk TV. He
lives in the damn TV.

TURNER

No Ben, life is not like TV. I never
wanted to shoot anyone. Ever! It
leaves a hole in you, you understand?
A big hole.

Ben nods twice.

MRS. BEGAY

We all know why you are here. Better
to use the time to get back to the
Earth. Dinner will be in the fridge.
Warm it up.

TURNER

Can I deputize these two? They can
show me around. Mike told me to
keep an eye on the South Road
everyday.

MRS. BEGAY

Yea, he is keeping us safe from the outside world. Better not take that fancy vehicle out there. I took the department Jeep to get supplies. It is out back.

Turner reaches into his pocket and gives her the keys to his vehicle.

TURNER

Then use mine until I get back.

MRS. BEGAY

You let me drive that city car?

TURNER

(Turning to the kids,
making a fist)

You two throw up in my ride, you are dead, dead for sure.

The children laugh and Ben puts his finger in his mouth and pretends to throw up. Turner gives them the angry fist.

EXT. KYKOTSMOVI VILLAGE - DAY

Turner gets out the Jeep to walk down Main Street. People nod as they walk by. Some turn to look. There are three old Hopi men walking up to him.

TURNER

Morning gentlemen.

The three talk in Hopi and laugh occasionally.

TURNER (CONT'D)

I thought you people were hospitable. This is damn rude.

CHEVEYO

Sorry, long history joke. But Ahote here wants to know if you will fix his parking tickets?

TURNER

So you are bribing me day one?

The two Hopi are laughing hysterically.

CHEVEYO

This is the desert, city policeman, people park where they please.

TURNER
 Okay making fun of the new guy. I
 get it.

Ahote asks another question in Hopi.

CHEVEYO
 (Smiling)
 Ahote here wants to know if you give
 speeding tickets?

Ahote is laughing harder.

TURNER
 I bet you don't have a car.

CHEVEYO
 Not since he got the cataracts.

The three saunter off still laughing.

TURNER
 I may as well go back to bed.

TURNER (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Make a friend Turner. Make a friend.
 (to the three men)
 Hey You! I'll buy you breakfast.
 Where?

AHOTE
 Village Store. Bacon and eggs and
 toast?

TURNER
 Now you speak English.

EXT. LOWER MESA - DUSK

Turner parked the Jeep low in the arroyo to hide it. He is looking down the road in trying to see movement in the distance. Trying to keep out the sun, staring down the road. He is hot, and takes another sip of water.

The sound of a dirt bike gets louder and louder. There is a rider coming out the arroyo across the desert fast. The dust trail follows the rider.

TURNER
 Damn fool will kill himself riding
 without lights.

Turner starts the jeep. Drives up the road parallel to the rider.

The rider veers back into the arroyo, out of Turner's view.

Turner slows, turns off the road, drives off road to the edge of the arroyo. There is no motorcycle noise. Turner gets out the Jeep, climbs down looking for tracks.

Turner looks up the ridge and sees BILLY BEGAY walking past at the top above him. He looks just like Sgt. Begay with longer hair, denim jeans, plaid shirt no sleeves, tribal necklace with a charm. Billy looks down at Turner and continues walking.

TURNER (CONT'D)

Hey You!

Billy picks up speed and starts loping across the top of the arroyo. Turner is following below. Billy slows down just to let Turner keep up. Finally he stops, turns and taunts Turner.

BILLY

Run kinda slow for a black man. Mr LA.

TURNER

Shit, Don't tell me you're Billy.

BILLY

Aha, see my brother told you not to chase me out here, Big City policeman. Look up, those stars will be all you see tonight.

TURNER

Do you enjoy being a pain in the ass? You are starting to piss me off.

BILLY

I will drop by for breakfast in the morning Detective. No one is coming up the South Road.

Billy backs up a step and runs to jump across the arroyo. He takes the step, but he does not make it. He is picked out the air above Turner like a flyball in the outfield. Turner hears slight humming sound. Turns around see nothing.

TURNER

What the hell? What the goddamn hell!

Turner clammers out the gully to the top, looks around for Billy. Sees nothing, turns around again. Stops and stares.

Coming fast across the Mesa in his direction is a bubble, Like an invisible bubble. He does not see it, but sees the distortion as it goes past the dirt and rocks.

Turner takes his gun out and waits, takes a shooter stance and lifts his weapon. Turner gets one shot off. As soon as he does, the velocity of the bubble increases, stretches out and snatches Turner and heads straight up.

Louder humming sound and static that fades.

(MORE)