

INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVIL

Written by

Kyle Coffman

Shooting Draft

Kyle.Coffman@sebastianfilmsunlimited.com
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FADE IN:

On a SUBTITLE:

Eight years ago a former college student walked onto the campus of Briar Community College and opened fire on his former classmates.

FADE TO:

After opening fire in the quad, he entered four different classrooms and fired in rooms targeting female students.

In the 6 minutes of shooting he fired over 300 rounds of ammunition and killed 23 students and wounded 58 students and faculty.

Briar State Prison has agreed to allow a journalist to interview the shooter for one day only.

He has never spoken to the press before.

1 EXT. BRIAR STATE PRISON - DAY 1

Establishing shot of Briar State Prison. Cement walls surrounded by fences topped with barbed wire.

2 INT. BRIAR STATE PRISON - GUARD'S CHANGING ROOM - DAY 2

ELI WILLIAMS, early 40's and wearing a suit, stands before his cameraman, COREY, and soundman, MARCUS, buttoning up his collar shirt. The shot is from Corey's CAMERA'S POV. Eli is a hot shot reporter with great hair, perfect smile, and a model physique. Corey is mid 20's and boyish. Marcus is early 30s.

ELI WILLIAMS

Hello and welcome to the behind the scenes footage of our Shooter segment.

Marcus waves for the camera and pulls the camera towards him.

MARCUS

And this is our trusty cameraman, Corey.

THE CAMERA SWINGS AROUND TO SEE COREY, WHO WAVES TOO. THEN BACK ON ELI.

ELI WILLIAMS

My name is Eli Williams and today
we're going to get into the mind of
a killer.

Marcus giggles. This shot ends.

COREY

We're not shooting footage yet,
Eli. You can turn off the anchor
voice.

Eli is finished buttoning up his shirt as Marcus snaps on a
mic to his collar shirt.

MARCUS

How much did this equipment set you
back?

ELI WILLIAMS

Enough.
(fidgeting with lav mic)
But when I'm back on top boys...

It's adjusted to his liking, with the final helping touch
from Marcus.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

You'll both be coming with me.

Corey and Marcus eye each other unconvinced. Eli catches a
glimpse of himself in the mirror. He smiles big and winks at
his reflection.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Let's do this.

He walks off with Marcus and Corey following behind with
camera and sound equipment.

4

INT. BRIAR STATE PRISON - INTERVIEW ROOM

4

A prison recreation room surrounded by cement walls and large
barred windows. Two chairs are placed directly across from
one another. Corey has rigged one camera to face one chair,
and is working on the other camera to face the other chair.
Eli paces.

ELI WILLIAMS

Peter Piper picked a peck of
pickled peppers. Peter Piper picked
a peck of pickled peppers.

Marcus eyes the clock on the wall. Eli starts opening his mouth doing jaw exercises and making La la la la la sounds.

MARCUS

It's almost time.

Corey has finished the camera set up and lighting for the interview just as a door BUZZES.

Eli straightens his posture as a GUARD escorts JAKE LANDRY, late 20s, into the room. Jake wears a red prison uniform and is shackled from his hands to his feet. His eyes lay deep in his skull and in almost a trance. His face is tormented.

Eli steps aside as Jake takes small steps forward because his restraints won't allow him otherwise.

ELI WILLIAMS

(to Guard, re: cuffed restraints)

Are those really necessary?

The guard splashes Eli with an annoyed glance. Jake finally has a seat in the chair Corey directs him to. The guard steps a few feet away and rests his hands on his belt prepared for any sudden movements from this inmate.

Eli has a seat in front of Jake and snaps his fingers for Corey to begin recording both cameras. Corey turns them on.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Hello, Jake. My name is Eli Williams and I'm the journalist producing this segment.

A half smile fades across Jake's lips. Eli crunches his forehead in confusion.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Something funny?

Jake nods. Eli eyes Corey who shrugs.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Care to elaborate?

Jake lifts his head revealing his eyes. There's nothing behind them. Not even the tiniest bit of light.

JAKE

You. You are funny.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

Calling yourself a journalist, when
in fact you are just a shiny face
on television.

Not sure how to react, Eli swallows.

ELI WILLIAMS

Even shiny faces on television
study journalism.

JAKE

Didn't you just get fired?

ELI WILLIAMS

It's under investigation.

JAKE

You know what you never see? Fat TV
journalists. Do fat people not
study journalism? Or is it they're
considered too ugly for television?

Eli leans back in his chair. Jake has a chip shoulder.

ELI WILLIAMSZ

Let's talk about you, Jake. I want
to thank you for agreeing to do
this interview.

Jake, not looking up, nods his head. He twiddles his thumbs
making a squeaking sound with his handcuffs.

JAKE

You want to know why I did it.

ELI WILLIAMS

I'm sorry?

JAKE

That's why you're here. You want to
know why I shot up the school.

Eli stares at Jake. Eventually, Jake's eyes look up once
again and meet Eli's.

ELI WILLIAMS

That's right. A lot of people want
to know. A lot of families lost
their loved ones that day and can't
seem to get closure without
knowing.

JAKE

I don't care about them.

ELI WILLIAMS

You don't care they lost their loved ones?

JAKE

No, I don't care about the loved ones that are lost. I don't care about *them*.

Eli eyes Corey again, but remains focused.

ELI WILLIAMS

You don't care about the innocent people you murdered?

Jake pops his neck and stares dead into Eli's eyes.

JAKE

I didn't say they were innocent. You said that. They weren't innocent. None of us are innocent. We walk around committing sins and crimes every day. I was their executioner that day. I was righting the wrongs they've done since they took their first breath. What if there's not a motive? What if people are just plain psychotic?

ELI WILLIAMS

Do you really believe that?

JAKE

Do you not? People have to hear a motive so they can sleep well at night. The world would be a lot noisier place if people just accepted that some people are just plain crazy. Or are we?

ELI WILLIAMS

You think it's okay for innocent people to die if their killer is 'just' crazy?

JAKE

I didn't say that. You said that.
(beat)
You see that's the problem with you journalists. You twist everyone's words to fit your narrative.

ELI WILLIAMS

Enlighten me. What did *you* say?

JAKE
Why were you fired?

ELI WILLIAMS
We're not here to talk about me.

JAKE
I'm here to talk about you.

Eli and Jake stare into each other's eyes daring the other to make a move. Finally...

ELI WILLIAMS
A woman. She accused me of something.

JAKE
And just because she accused you, you were fired?

ELI WILLIAMS
It would appear so.

JAKE
That's not legal.

ELI WILLIAMS
(brushing it off)
There's an investigation. My lawyers are on top of it.

JAKE
Isn't that the problem with women?

ELI WILLIAMS
Why don't we stay on topic. That day you...

JAKE
(interrupting)
You answer my question, I'll answer yours.

ELI WILLIAMS
That's not how this works.

JAKE
That's how it works today. You want to know something? I'll tell you.

(smirking)
Give a little, get a little.

Jake stares intently at Eli while running his tongue across the front of his top teeth. Corey and Marcus shift uncomfortably.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Now answer me, isn't that the problem with women?

Eli doesn't dare show any sign of defeat, but allows Jake's game.

ELI WILLIAMS

What's the problem with women?

JAKE

How they can just "say" something about a man, and it's automatically true. Boom. Eli Williams, television journalist for Arc News for the last 15 years. Fired. Because one woman said so.

ELI WILLIAMS

There were two women.

Jake snickers.

JAKE

The great Eli Williams had two women come forward? You're probably guilty then. That's why you were fired.

Eli shifts in his chair.

ELI WILLIAMS

Tell me about the day of the shooting. What were you feeling that morning?

JAKE

Excited.

ELI WILLIAMS

That's an interesting word to use.

JAKE

Weren't you excited when you made a pass at that woman who reported you?

ELI WILLIAMS

Excuse me?

JAKE

Didn't you feel the power? You had power over her and it felt good. You just didn't expect her to turn you down.

ELI WILLIAMS

It's not about power. I misread the signs.

JAKE

It's always about power. You had it and you wanted her to know it.

(beat)

You don't know true power until you hold a gun to someone's face. They cry, mucus drains out of their nose, as they beg you to let them live. And you have the power to decide if this person lives or dies. And when you pull that trigger. Nothing. You feel nothing for their miserable soul. Why? Because you still have the power and you go to the next person and feel it all over again.

ELI WILLIAMS

Is that what you did that day?

JAKE

I did it 23 times and each time I felt more and more power.

(beat)

You reported on the shooting.

ELI WILLIAMS

I did.

JAKE

You were on the news for like 6 hours straight.

ELI WILLIAMS

I was.

JAKE

You said I suffered from temporary insanity. That it was a mental illness.

ELI WILLIAMS

I did.

JAKE

Do you still believe that?

Eli pauses for a moment.

ELI WILLIAMS

I believe that a sane person cannot commit those acts.

JAKE

Do you think I'm insane or suffer from temporary insanity?

ELI WILLIAMS

How do you mean?

JAKE

That day. You said temporary insanity.

ELI WILLIAMS

I believe you were temporarily out of your mind when you committed the violent acts. So yes, temporary.

JAKE

You see your cameraman over there?

Eli glances to see Corey.

JAKE (CONT'D)

I would like nothing more than to see his brains sprayed across that white wall right now. The red blood dripping ever so slightly down the wall like the rhythm of a slow moving river.

Corey swallows hard, Eli tries not to let Jake know he's been disturbed.

JAKE (CONT'D)

So do you still believe I was temporarily insane?

Eli fidgets in his seat. Jake notices.

JAKE (CONT'D)

See? Power.

(beat)

Tell me about the women that came forward and reported you. Did you have sex with them?

ELI WILLIAMS
You keep trying to steer the
conversation back to me.
(Snapping fingers at
Corey)
Turn the cameras off.

Corey starts but...

JAKE
Leave them on. You're just going to
edit out the stuff you don't want
anyway.

Corey waits for Eli's response. Eli waves Corey off.

ELI WILLIAMS
What are we doing here, Jake? Your
lawyer said you agreed to an
interview.

JAKE
And I bet you came all over
yourself when that call was made.
Jake Landry's first interview about
the shooting. I bet you even hired
these two goons out of your own
pocket.

Eli stares. Jake stares back. Corey and Marcus eye one
another.

ELI WILLIAMS
I am funding this. That is correct.

JAKE
Sell it to the highest bidder? All
the integrity flies out the window
in the name of ratings. I'm sure
all will be forgiven when the great
Eli Williams shows the networks
Jake Landry's first and only
interview.

ELI WILLIAMS
Only?

JAKE
The women?

Eli tries to remain unnerved.

ELI WILLIAMS
What about them?

JAKE

(interrupting)

They made you believe you had a chance at screwing them, didn't they?

Jake leans in and wags his tongue making a vile sexual innuendo to cunnilingus.

JAKE (CONT'D)

Then at the last minute they changed their mind. After they got you all ready to go.

Jake grabs himself and cups his crotch at the very moment of saying "ready to go." Eli just stares at him.

JAKE (CONT'D)

But you didn't stop, did you? Now they're getting a big pay day from the network and probably the promotion you were gunning for. Am I right?

Eli shakes his head in disbelief.

ELI WILLIAMS

Like I said, my lawyers are handling it.

(then)

You specifically targeted 23 students that day with an AR-15 and killed them. Why were they all female?

JAKE

Women are manipulative and calculating. That's exactly how I was the day I shot up that campus. Manipulative and calculating. A girl played me and I killed her first, then her best friend that was sitting right next to her.

ELI WILLIAMS

I thought you said there wasn't a motive.

Gotcha. Jake becomes silent. He seems unnerved.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Tell me about *her*. Bridget.

Jake's eyes snap to Eli's. He's restraining himself.

ELI WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
And her best friend? Erica. You
know their names.

Rage begins to fuel in Jake's cheeks at the sound of their
names. His fists tighten in his cuffs, eyes become red.

JAKE
There's a predator inside all of us
just waiting to get out. I released
mine on that day and I never felt
so alive in my entire life.
(beat)
And I would do it again.

ELI WILLIAMS
You have multiple life sentence
without the possibility of parole.
You won't have the opportunity to
do it again.

A devilish grin appears on Jake's face.

JAKE
Maybe, maybe not.
(beat)
You and I are a lot alike.

Eli's face turns to disgust. He's been able to compose
himself this whole time, but now he's had it.

ELI WILLIAMS
I am nothing like you.
(deadly stare)
You're a sadistic monster.

JAKE
There he is. Is that the aggression
you took with those two women?

ELI WILLIAMS
I made a mistake.

JAKE
Twice?

ELI WILLIAMS
You killed 23 women because you
hate them. I don't hate women.

JAKE
Sure you do.

ELI WILLIAMS
This interview is over.

Eli begins to pull his mic off, but stops when...

JAKE
(psychotic)
This interview is over when I say
it's over!

GUARD
Shut it, Landry!

Jake obeys.

ELI WILLIAMS
If you're not sorry or have no
remorse, then why did you agree to
this interview?

JAKE
To meet you. To pass the torch. You
can start with those two women who
named you in those allegations.

Eli shakes his head.

JAKE (CONT'D)
And then, you can knock...
(makes a gun shooting
noise with his mouth
while pointing his finger
like a gun)
Knock a few more out of here.

Jake leans forward never taking his eyes off Eli's. Eli
stares at Jake in disbelief. Is this really happening?

ELI WILLIAMS
You're a twisted little incel,
aren't you?

Suddenly, Jake LEAPS FORWARD FLYING ON TOP OF ELI KNOCKING
his chair backwards. Jake, on top of him, PULLS Eli's collar
to his face. They are nose to nose.

JAKE
(screaming)
Let the beast inside you out! It's
in there. Kill those bitches!

The guard PULLS Jake off of Eli. Corey and Marcus immediately
assist Eli helping him to his feet.

Eli, terrified, watches Jake being PULLED down the hallway SCREAMING obscenities the whole way down the corridor. Spit flying out of his mouth and he expresses demonic convulsions while being pulled away. And then...

Eli and Jake lock eyes and Jake reveals a wicked, sinister smile and waves back to Eli with his tongue.

5 INT. BLAIR STATE PRISON - HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER 5

Eli, Marcus, and Corey walk towards the exit of the prison carrying out their equipment.

MARCUS
You okay, Eli?

Eli, clearly unnerved, tries to shrug it off, but he's definitely been affected.

COREY
Yeah, you good?

Eli pauses for a moment, haunted, and stands in front of Marcus and Corey.

ELI WILLIAMS
I think I just interviewed the
devil.

They all stare for a moment at one another as we...

FADE TO BLACK.