

"JERI RIG"

Pilot "Damned If You Do"

Written by

Sarah Bullion

An MIT washout and prolific cat burglar is blackmailed into spearheading ops for an eccentric tech-billionaire's Anonymous-esque eco-terrorist cell. Does she want to go to jail or does she want to save the world?

me@sarahbullion.com  
(310) 420-8670

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. KAFFEE CIVET - SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

JERI LYN HAMPTON, 19, is wiry, with a penetrating gaze. She works another mind-numbing shift hawking burnt corporate coffee to the ZOMBIE HORDE of consumerism lurching in.

Out the window CARS BUZZ around the parking lot belching smoke and BAD ROCK. A GROUNDS KEEPER sprays pesticide along the building. TEENAGERS throw leaves at him.

Under Jeri's abstract cat-logo-emblazoned apron she wears a "God is Dead" T-shirt.

She grits her teeth and empties a trash can spilling over with First World Waste -- straws, paper cups, plastic bottles, all headed for the landfill. The recycling bin is filled with food.

The shelves that choke the cafe are lined with crap no one wants or needs and there's so much bullshit and insincerity around her, Jeri just wants to scream, "Wake up, sheeple!"

A gaggle of T'WEENS, noses buried in their phones, bowl Jeri over her trash bag. Trash scatters but Jeri, surprisingly, does a deft roll and bounces back to her feet.

TWEEN BEE

Watch it, servant.

Her little friends CACKLE, Jeri GRUMBLES. Is it somehow louder in here?

Jeri pulls out any recycling she can and puts it in the neglected recycling bin.

She pulls out a couple of magazines.

CLOSE UP:

- TIME MAGAZINE. The cover story is about the 10 greatest man-made threats to the world today: potable water, carbon emissions, collapse of the fish stock, etc.

- TEK HED MAGAZINE features a story on Dante Keogh, 50s, enigmatic, Elon Musk type titled: "DANTE KEOGH - FROM WUNDERKIND TO TECH TOP DOG - WHAT'S THE BILLIONAIRE'S NEXT MOVE?"

Jeri's manager, MATT, (late 20's, Company Man) crouches next to her.

The crawl on the muted TV mounted above him cycles news of atrocity after crisis: category 5 tornado, riots, school shootings, oil spills... Bummer.

MATT

(hissing)

Could you move any slower? F'reals.

JERI

Sorry, Matt. Just tryin'--

MATT

Save it. You know, I've been pulling for you but I'm not so sure you're Kaffee Civet material. Take over The Monster. You're obviously above taking out the trash.

Matt jerks a thumb over his shoulder to the steaming grind of cranking out the half-caff-frappé-trocities to the people who wouldn't know a good cup of coffee if she threw it on them.

Just beyond Matt's thumb strides in a tall drink of water in a Stanford sweatshirt, HUNTER (19, strapping), and a couple of equally TOOTHY CO-EDS. Hunter and Jeri lock eyes.

JERI

Shit.

MATT

Language! Finish this and get behind the counter.

Jeri tucks her head and says a quick prayer to no one. Doesn't work.

HUNTER (O.S.)

(down his nose)

Jeri? Hey, it's Jeri Lyn Hampton, the girl who beat me out for valedictorian by one point.

JERI

They gave it to you anyway.

HUNTER

'Cause you refused it. Thought you were at MIT studying, like Astrology.

Hunter's cohorts SNICKER.

JERI

Astrophysics. Yeah, well...

HUNTER

You busted, didn't you!? Basic! I knew you were all hype. Looks like you landed on your feet anyway.

Jeri is still crouched with the trash. More SNICKERING.

HUNTER (CONT'D)

Well, great to see you #1. I don't know why I haven't seen you here before. We come here all. The. Time.

JERI

(mumbling)  
Figures.

HUNTER

What's that?

JERI

Fantastic.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON:

The Monster - a belching, oppressive machine - the espresso hub. The coffee beans swirl as the sound of the GRINDER drowns out everything else.

Jeri's making what passes for liquid inertia. A customer, BECKY ("38," UCSF professor's trophy wife) SNAPS her fingers in Jeri's face rousting her from her steam cloud of resentment.

BECKY

Excuse me! That's mine. I'm Becky. You're doing it wrong.

JERI

What?

BECKY

Wrong! You're doing it wrong!

JERI

I'm not done yet...

BECKY

My god, it's not rocket science.  
Two squirts. First, before you put  
the milk in. It's ruined. Make  
another one.

Nearby, Matt's mouth turns down into the unmistakable frown of societal disappointment. Jeri is failing at Life.

Becky turns to the napkin dispenser and pulls out sheet after sheet. She spits her gum into the wad and throws the whole thing into the trash.

Hunter and his crew pass to leave. Hunter catches Jeri's eye, winks, and shoves a five in the tip jar.

Jeri seethes and makes Becky a new drink quickly.

JERI

(reads cup)

Sorry... Becky.

Becky is wearing a tacky BEE BROOCH. Over her shoulder a news report plays on the muted TV.

CLOSE UP: A shot of a field of dead bees and empty hives.

SUBTITLES: "BEE COLONY COLLAPSE IMMINENT - THREAT OF  
WORLDWIDE FAMINE"

Jeri fixates on Becky's brooch.

JERI (CONT'D)

Say, you keep bees?

BECKY

What? Shut up. Just make my  
beverage. No cinnamon.

JERI

On its way. Becky.

BECKY

Don't put a lid on it for  
Chrissakes!

Jeri puts the cup down with sarcastically exaggerated care.

BECKY (CONT'D)

It's hot!

JERI

It is.

As satisfied as she gets, Becky huffs out. Jeri watches her through the window.

INT./EXT. KAFFEE CIVET - SAME

On a bench nearby, the T'weens HACK their way through a shared vape pen, practicing how to look relaxed.

Becky and her bee pendant get into the Benz in the handicapped space (no placard) in front of the cafe.

JERI

(under her breath)

Asshole.

CLOSE ON: License plate "MRS DR 1" as Becky pulls away.

EXT. BECKY'S NORTH BEACH HOME - NIGHT

Jeri, dressed in black, strapped with a utility vest and chewing gum enthusiastically, is nearly invisible in the shadows.

She checks the address on a scrap of paper, and assesses the home:

What's hidden in the shadows, what's exposed? What's the best point of ingress? Is there a window open? Which is the easiest to jimmy open?

Satisfied, Jeri dances through the shadows to the side of the house. She rubs some dirt on her hands and starts free climb the building. She's incredibly nimble and quick.

A CAR passes by and very nearly exposes Jeri in its headlights. She flattens and waits. The car DISAPPEARS and Jeri continues climbing.

Her focus is nails and her color is high, but not from exertion, from excitement. Pleasure. Her adrenaline is firing and her blood is flowing.

Jeri gets to a small window and jimmy's the lock easily. Through the window we see a pretty standard alarm sensor.

She digs through a pocketful of jerry-rigged circuit boards and plucks one out.

She takes a tiny amount of gum from her mouth, dabs it on the circuit board and slides it along the sensor until it's flush.

It sticks. Voila. Bypassed. Jeri slides the window open.

INT. BECKY'S NORTH BEACH HOME - BEDROOM - SAME

Jeri's eyes shine. She lets herself in and finds a room of the nouveau-riche -- cheesy, expensive. Waste drips over the discarded soda cans, paper coffee cups, fur coats, perfume both noxious and expensive, bottles of water.

The house is quiet but a FAN oscillates impotently in the corner. The THERMOSTAT behind it READS 75 degrees. Jeri shakes her head. Becky doesn't care.

Jeri easily finds Becky's jewelry, gaudy and clotted with conflict gems. The bee brooch is just sitting there waiting for her. Jeri obliges and tucks the brooch away.

From downstairs Jeri hears a persistent BEEPING, then a SUCCESSION OF BEEPS -- disarming the alarm. Becky's home!

Jeri grins and leisurely pokes around a little more until she hears STEPS on the stairs and a SHADOW creeps down the hall.

Jeri pulls the circuit board off the sensor, pulls her gum out of her mouth and smooshes it under a side table, then calmly and quietly lets herself out the way she came.

INT. JERI'S ROOMS - NIGHT

Jeri enters her cluttered rooms in the basement of a brownstone in the Haight Panhandle.

There are books scattered from various philosophies: Philosophy, Quantum Physics, Astrophysics, Electrical Engineering; manuals about everything from origami to small engine repair; posters from PETA, technical magazines about alternative energy, etc.

On her messy work bench at one end of the room, Jeri has exactly three pictures.

CLOSE UP:

- a photo of her brother and her when they're just kids about 7 and 17 years old

- a photo of her brother, full Special Forces military dress, replete with a chest full of medals and a 1000 yd. stare
- and a photo of her father, wind-blown and pensive.

Relaxed and smoking a hand-rolled cigarette, Jeri opens a drawer revealing a cache of burgled trinkets. She tucks the bee brooch among them and closes the drawer securely.

SMASH CUT TO:

OPENING TITLES