

# Not Here

by

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## DESCRIPTION

Jeff Boss sends the President of the United States a podcast.

## CHARACTERS

- Jeff Boss
- Arm of the Government
- Collateral Damage
- Innocent Bystander
- Voice of Warning

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Sound cues throughout

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*JEFF BOSS at a table, with a notebook, a la Spalding Grey. A digital voice recorder and a cellphone are also on the table. Perhaps a table lamp, making the lighting constricted.*

*He is nervous, agitated. He looks overhead: faint but noticeable, the rotors of helicopters. The sound is not imagined.*

*He touches, then pulls away, from the voice recorder, as if it were hot to the touch. Finally, he turns on the voice recorder.*

BOSS

Mr. President I've already sent you one of my broadcasts already  
but I don't think you really listened to it not really

*BOSS pulls a letter from the back of the notebook, but before he says anything more, he looks overhead again.*

BOSS

Can you hear them the helicopters they pass themselves off as news copters the morning tunnel traffic etcetera but they're not I know this focus focus

*BOSS punches the pause button, but it's too late since it's recorded what he said.*

BOSS

Damn keep going keep going

*He unpauses it. The helicopter sound does not go away but continues, subsonic, as an underscore, coming in and out as the helicopters change position.*

*BOSS opens the letter.*

BOSS

Your response this rag it's a form letter form letter and that's not your real signature I'm pretty sure you robo-signed a bill from Europe so you can robo-sign from anywhere like operating a drone "Thank you for your communication" "I listened to it with interest" I don't think you did Mr. President I don't think you did either listen to it or with interest

*A police siren approaches and passes. BOSS waits, gathers himself.*

BOSS

Focus

*Another police siren approaches and passes, trying to catch up to the previous cruiser. BOSS turns a page in his notebook. He turns pages as he needs to.*

*Helicopters still in the background.*

BOSS

It's [date of performance] Mr. President this is my second communication to you I think your staff didn't really let you hear my first one which is why I'm sending you this second one because I think time is running short is running out I really do for all of us for me and for all of us and that includes you and yours I was walking through Port Authority the other day half a dozen soldiers in camo lined up on either side with pistols and rifles and for what some of the NYPD cops also had rifles and for what I didn't feel any safer with all of these weapons around all this testosterone in their fingers do you really think this scares the terrorists no because it's not about the terrorists it's about making all of us terrorized and keeping us in line because that's what governments do like to do that you like to do I have to say with regret because that's the kind of president you've turned into a scaremonger with an appetite for

*Something that sounds like a footfall. BOSS stops to listen. A second footfall. Then nothing.*

*Helicopters still in the background.*

BOSS

You've become a horrible president I say that with great respect I mean great regret and yes respect I guess not only about making promises and not keeping them but being worse than the person who came before you which is not easy I mean that non-elected one we carried on our backs for eight years you still don't think voting machines can be hacked and from a distance it's just like the way those drone operators kill at a distance you brought back military commissions and never closed Gitmo Gitmo so Marine and never rolled back all of the invasions of the fourth fifth sixth eighth amendments in the Patriot Act warrantless wiretaps still going on NSA Verizon

*The cellphone vibrates. BOSS looks at it, puzzled, but does not pick it up. It buzzes and buzzes until it stops.*

BOSS

Torture you're still doing torture it's still going on and you want the power to put Americans in Gitmo forever Gitmo if you think if you think they did something you didn't like that you didn't like ever hear of habeas corpus mister constitutional scholar but now to you habeas corpus is like we've got your body and who's to tell us we can't have it not the Supreme Court that's for sure it's not just the liberties stuff you should be ashamed of I mean you've turned the White House and Justice Department and the Department of Hopeless Security into these machines these engines for making us slaves without putting any chains around us

*The phone buzzes again. Two more footfalls. Helicopters still in the background.*

BOSS

You and the non-elected guy before you just tell us to go shopping so that we can make the economy go north again that is just stupid when you don't do anything to put a muzzle on the Goldman Sucks and Citigropes and Bank of Charge 'Em Five Bucks To Use Their Debit Cards and put the wolves next door to your office who are only going to take care of their wolf buddies and when some people finally just can't take anymore how the game is just rigged against them and decide to do something pretty inoffensive like take over a public park and say the 99 percent is mad as hell and won't take it anymore and why should we and instead of respect from you for making sure the Constitution still works mister constitutional scholar by really testing it out they get torture done back to them by thugs paid for by public money our money in our name and there's no big vomit in the society about how they got smashed for speaking their minds because the stage set by you and the non-elected guy in front of you makes it okay the default option to use violence against something you don't like like Libya who gave you the right to start another war you should've been impeached and Afghanistan is like you have to prove to somebody that you're tough by making a lot of young men and women die on your watch that was the thing with Bin Laden wasn't it that you could say I can kill with the best of 'em this from the president who got the peace prize but who doesn't have the first idea of what a peaceful world would look like or to make it come home to roost I bet you got a hard-on

*BOSS stops, looks abashed. He pauses the recorder. He gets up to pace—his pacing is circumscribed, as if he were in a small room—or thinks he's in a small room.*

*A footfall. Helicopters. Cellphone buzzes. He puts his fingertips on the phone.*

BOSS

It's a burn phone no one's supposed to

*He pulls back his fingers, as if singed.*

BOSS

Well of course they're doing it you idiot

*BOSS sits back down, checks his notes, and unpauses the recorder.*

BOSS

Sorry I shouldn't have said that about the hard-on

*He pauses the recorder again. He chides himself silently but agitatedly for speaking this way.*

*He unpauses the recorder.*

BOSS

Because this is not about making it personal or slander ad  
hominem

*Cellphone buzzes.*

BOSS

I don't think I have much time

*He watches the phone until it stops.*

BOSS

Regime change about Libya I was saying something I don't understand why we can't have it here because you're building a regime here that really should be changed that we should change but people are stupid about this they squeal about socialism and government control but they don't seem to mind being controlled by corporations this myth of the free market and business savvy and private is better really look at the poor the homeless the hungry the jobless the regime has taken such good care of us they give us Black Friday black all right like the death of sanity and reason and still people won't give it up the kool-aid Cyber Monday One-Day-Sale and then trample one of their own to death like the joke from the Catskills where one woman says how rotten the

meals are and the other woman says yes and such small portions too amusing ourselves to death there is better there is better there is better

*BOSS pauses the recorder again. This time he looks forlorn, forsaken. He paces again, looks up at the helicopter sound. Two footfalls. He unpauses the recorder.*

BOSS

I am a patriot but not a patriot of the state a patriot of the heart not the flag-waving and bodily pain and punishment kind of patriot but a patriot of the it could be so much better so much better for everyone and my heart is my heart is my heart looks at actions your actions the actions of people you have trusted and shouldn't have and sees the road not taken and feels this really deep emptiness about how it could've been and wasn't and we fooled ourselves by placing all this hope in you even though you asked for it begged us to do it because we should never put hope in anyone hope is foolish we need to build a fire and keep your feet to it until they're fried and make sure that the game gets rigged our way for once and not be such suckers for stupidities like first black president and

*BOSS stops, immensely sad. ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT steps into view, aims a high-powered rifle at BOSS.*

BOSS

I could continue the list but you know what you haven't done I don't think there's any time left for you to do it right you've already wasted time and money and bodies it has cost us a lot and I don't think we should pay you anything like respect any more

*ARM OF THE GOVERNMENT fires. The gun's report is amplified to a painful level. The bullet smashes into BOSS' back and through his heart.*

*The bullet continues through BOSS' body to hit COLLATERAL DAMAGE in the audience. The impact flings COLLATERAL DAMAGE against INNOCENT BYSTANDER, who screams, pushes away and back from COLLATERAL DAMAGE's corpse, crawling over any audience member in the way.*

*VOICE OF WARNING comes into the theatre, quickly surveys the scene.*

*Helicopter sounds rise. Police sirens rise. The cell phone buzzes on the desk.*

VOICE OF WARNING

You've gotta get out of here now. Get out! Get out! Now! Now!

*Smash to blackout. VOICE OF WARNING continues in the darkness.*

VOICE OF WARNING

Get out now! Get out now! Get out now! Get out now!

*VOICE cuts get off—garrotted. Other sounds continue for a second or two more, then cut out.*