

Red Light, Green Light

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by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

Alright, let's see, what's next- oh.

Huh.

I... completely forgot that this would still be here. Nearly forgot I gave one at all, to be honest. That was- what, six years ago now? Honestly, it's probably not even worth recording. But-

Oh, may as well. Statement of me, Grian, regarding... something that never happened.

I hope.

Original interview transcribed... May 8th, 2016- yeah, six years, wow. Well. Statement begins.

Notes

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Statement:



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[GRIAN]

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[GRIAN (STATEMENT)]

Before I start, I just want to say- I didn't *really* kill anyone. Okay?

I'm a- well, I *was* an architecture student. I was studying at London Met until... I suppose it was only about a month ago. Feels a lot longer than that, to be honest with you.

Everything was going fine. It was fine! You know, good grades, I had an alright group of friends, I'd done an internship and I was basically set for a job once I graduated. And I liked architecture! I really did! I really liked the balance you had to strike, between art and engineering. Like, you know, I almost went into structural engineering outright, but I was worried I'd get bored with it eventually.

That's always been a bit of a problem for me. I can't help it! I like some excitement in my life, and if I can't find it I just end up creating it. I've lost a couple friendships that way, and I changed my focus- oh, three or four times before I settled on architecture. And it held my interest for a long time! Relatively, at least.

It had just started to creep in again when spring break rolled around- the boredom, the monotony, the feeling that there were just so many more fun things I could be *doing*. And you know, I didn't really know what I would rather be doing, just that there had to be *something*. It was starting to make me get a little... I don't know, restless. Hungry. ...Not hungry. I don't know why I said that.

My university let out in early April. I was planning on staying with my friend Mumbo over the break, since I hadn't gotten to see him for a bit and I was looking forward to catching up. Besides, he's always a good target for shenanigans, and I was in dire need of those at the time. He just got hired here, actually- he's the one who told me about you lot in the first place.

So I packed a bag and hopped on a train, and headed up to where he was.

There were about twelve other people with me on the traincar. All sorts- you know, there were two married couples, a few tourists, a guy with a dog, a group of friends who seemed like they were heading on a trip together. I remember all of their faces really clearly. Would prefer to forget them, to be honest.

I remember the man who was sitting next to me most clearly. Very chatty fellow, and seemed to be traveling on his own, so before long we got to talking. He had a big scar down across his face and a lot of smaller ones, too, so when he introduced himself as Scar I figured he was joking. He just sort of shrugged and grinned and said that was what everybody called him. I asked him what he was doing in the UK, since so far as I could tell he was American, but I don't remember what he said.

I don't remember any of their names, other than Scar. I should probably feel worse about that than I do.

I feel like I remember noticing the train ride seemed to be taking longer than it normally did. I've gone to visit Mumbo of plenty of times, and it never takes longer than an hour, even with delays, but this time it was definitely pushing past that. I wasn't worried about it, though, not at the time. I just figured we'd get there eventually, and sort of started to fall asleep.

I woke up when the train derailed.

I was still half-asleep, so I don't remember exactly what happened. All I remember is that the train car shook horribly, came off the tracks, and tumbled off onto its side. Everybody was thrown out of their seats, me included- Scar grabbed me by the collar, since I wasn't awake enough to grab onto anything, and thank goodness he did. Once it stopped moving, two of the other passengers managed to pry one of the emergency exit doors open, and we all climbed out to find out what had happened.

We were in the middle of nowhere.

I mean, that's the only way I can describe it. There weren't even any train tracks. Everyone else was focused on the fact that the rest of the train was gone, but there weren't even any *tracks*. No trains had ever run here, wherever 'here' was. It looked like untouched wilderness. There was a little river running nearby, and flowers on the banks. It was like something had- had just *picked up* our traincar and dropped it here. We couldn't even see London in the distance, even though we definitely should have still been able to.

I checked my phone, but it wasn't working. Not just no signal, completely not working. Wouldn't even turn on.

Well, obviously something was... very, very wrong. It didn't take a genius to figure that out. One of the other passengers suggested we try and walk back to the last station, but that was harder than it should've been with no tracks to follow back. We eventually voted and decided to start just walking south, since that's the way we'd been coming from and it was easy enough to figure out from the sun- it was mid-afternoon at that point.

We started walking, but after about... I think about twenty minutes, the underbrush started to get thicker and thicker, and the trees, too, until it was a struggle just to walk through. Still no sign of any roads, or houses, or anything. I- I mean, you'd expect to see at least a cell tower, in the distance, or *something*. But there was nothing. It was just trees and bushes and vines getting thicker and thicker until we couldn't go any further. We just couldn't.

A few of the other passengers were getting scared at that point, I think. I remember- it was strange. I don't think I felt as bad for them as I normally would? Which sounds horrible. I'm not a mean person! I'm really not. But one of them started crying, and I remember just feeling sort of... annoyed. Like there was something *fun* we were supposed to get to, and this was just delaying it.

We weren't getting anything done just standing about there, so eventually I started walking along the barrier, trying to find a break in it. I didn't find any way out, but I did find... something else.

There was a little cabin, standing just a little ways from where the trees became impassible. It was obvious that nobody had lived there in a long, long time- part of the roof had fallen in, and all the windows were long since busted out- and there was a stain of... something on the door, but it was still the first sign of human habitation I'd seen, so I climbed the stairs, pushed the door open, and stepped inside.

Inside it smelled like... rust. Like old blood. Gallons and gallons of it, spilled and left to sit. It was everywhere. On the floor, splashed across the walls.

There were four skeletons, I think. Inside, at least. There might've been more who died outside the cabin. But there was one in the bedroom, one in a tiny adjoining bathroom, and the last two were on the floor of the kitchen, all tangled together. The bones had been there for a long time. There were, you know, little marks on some of them, where rats or birds had been at them. They'd all

killed each other. You could tell just by looking at them.

The two on the kitchen floor- there was a knife, between them. Still wrapped in one's hand, buried in the other's ribcage. And... I reached down, and picked it up.

I'm, you know, I'm not really sure why I did. Maybe I told myself it could be useful for cutting through some of the underbrush, but I think even then I knew that wasn't really why. I tucked it into my belt and pulled my sweater down to cover it, and left to go back to the group.

I didn't tell them about the cabin, or the skeletons, or the knife. I just told them I hadn't found any way out, and it seemed like the barricade went all the way around, so far as I could see. It wasn't a *lie*, exactly- from where the cabin was, I could see where the wall of trees curved around. So it was a fair guess that we were completely surrounded. But I also... hadn't looked very hard? I don't know why I hadn't. I should have wanted to get out as soon as possible, especially after what I'd found, but I just... didn't.

I just didn't feel... I don't know. I didn't want to *leave*. I wanted to stay. Something was going to happen. I knew it was. I didn't want to *miss* it!

We decided as a group that the best thing to do was head back the way we'd come, back to the train, and wait for somebody to come find us. They tell you that if you get lost in the wilderness, the most important thing to do is stay where you are, and even though it didn't make any sense, that was what had happened to us, somehow, so... we decided that would be the best thing to do. It was also starting to get towards evening, and the train car would be the best place to shelter.

When we got back to the riverbank, though, the turned-over train car was just... gone. You couldn't even see a spot where it had crushed the grass. It was like it had just vanished. Like the forest had just... swallowed it.

People started... panicking, and they started arguing. It was getting dark, by then, and we had no safe place to sleep, and I think the weirdness of it all was just getting under people's skin. I was just keeping close to Scar, since he was sort of the only person I felt like I knew, and I had to keep sticking my hands in my pockets, because they were all... twitchy.

Two of the other passengers, two of the friends who'd been in the big group, they got heated enough that they started shoving each other- I think they were blaming each other for choosing the train. And then one pushed the other down *really* hard, toward the river, and she fell, and her head hit the rocks with a loud *crack*.

Everybody went quiet. Very quiet. There was blood running into the water, and I remember looking at it, watching that ribbon of red disappear downstream, and thinking... Oh. That's what it wants. That's what we're supposed to do.

I don't know if anybody else figured it out at the very start. It might've just been me. But I was very aware of the knife in my belt, and I was thinking about the skeletons in the cabin. It was almost like a set of instructions, written out for us. For me.

We all sort of... drew back, a little bit. People started stepping away from each other, or gathering into little clumps of two or three, like nobody wanted to be too close to anybody else. I grabbed Scar by the wrist and pulled him back a few steps. I didn't want us to be too close to anybody else, either. I don't know why I decided I could trust him.

One of the married couples stayed by the body- one of them checked her pulse, but she was dead when her head hit the rock. They tried to get us all to calm down and work together, or at least wait

for rescue in one place, but there was no way that was going to happen. People were scared, and panicky, and it was getting dark, and they didn't trust anyone except maybe the person standing next to them. And slowly, in little groups, they started to break away and go find places to hide.

There had been twelve of us at the start, and now there were eleven.

Scar asked me if we should find a place to hide out for the night, and I agreed with him. When we left the river, the couple was digging a grave for the dead girl. I remember thinking it was pointless, since before long none of us were going to be buried, and then I wasn't sure why I'd thought that. I guess I was still thinking about the skeletons.

Scar and I found a spot to camp out that was pretty sheltered, up against one of the barrier walls of trees. We fell asleep there, eventually. Part of me was thinking we would wake up back on the train, and it would have all been a dream, but we didn't. I should have been disappointed by that, but I wasn't. I think I was relieved.

I woke up because in the early hours of the morning, someone else died. I couldn't tell you who, or where, or how. I just knew. It was like a- like a bell rung inside my head. I hadn't noticed it with the first death, but then, that had happened right in front of my eyes. It didn't surprise me that I knew, exactly. It made sense, right? Of course we were supposed to know how many were left.

I couldn't... sleep again, after that. My hands were shaking so badly they hurt. I didn't feel tired, even though I couldn't have gotten more than a couple hours of bad sleep. I needed to get up and move and...

I found one of the other passengers. I think something wanted me to find him. He was on his own. He was awake, but he didn't notice me right away. He was just staring off into the forest. The knife was in my hands before I could even really think about it. It felt good there, in my hand, like something I'd been missing without even knowing it.

Do you know how easy it is to kill somebody? If they don't see you coming? It's really very easy.

I stepped up behind him and stabbed him in the neck. He didn't even scream, exactly. Just made a wet sort of noise and... slumped. He bled a lot. I didn't know there was going to be that much blood. It went everywhere, all over the knife and my hands and my sweater and my trousers. I remember feeling sort of annoyed by that, since I hadn't packed a change of clothes.

I'm still... not really sure why I did that. I mean, I always said it was because it's what I was supposed to do, and that's true, but between you and me, I think I just wanted to see what would happen. And the answer was a great big mess, mostly. It was almost a little disappointing. It was over too fast. I didn't even get to see the look on his face.

I still knew I was going to do it again. I wanted to do it again *right then*. I didn't want to set the knife down, because I knew if I did my hands would start shaking again, so I didn't.

The next one I found was sleeping, so I woke them up, first. I figured that would make it better. And I was right. It did.

I didn't- I'm not a *bad* person, okay? Before all this happened, I didn't- go around repressing a desire to murder everybody around me! I didn't want to kill anybody! I didn't even think about it! I still *don't*, really! The only reason I *haven't*, since, is because I don't *want* to! The only thing that's changed is now I keep *thinking* about it, and I have to keep *stopping* myself, and it's so *annoying*-

Sorry.

Eventually the sun started to rise, and I realized how much blood was on me. I'd sort of forgotten about it, in the middle of- yeah. I washed my hands off in the stream, and my face, but it was still all stained into my clothes.

I don't know why I went back to find Scar. I didn't really want to explain everything to him, and I could have just gone off on my own, but I just... didn't want to? I guess I thought maybe I'd be lonely, even though that's stupid. I knew what the win condition here was. What it had to be.

I got back just as he was waking up. I guess it would've been really easy to kill him, just then, but I didn't... want to. I told him about the cabin I'd found, and about the skeletons, and about the knife, and about how my hands kept itching.

He was very calm about it. He just seemed- unbothered, I suppose? He just nodded, and said, 'Okay! What are we going to do, then?'

I know this story makes me sound like a bad person. But what would you do, really, with no consequences?

I told him I thought there was only one way to get out of this... trap. Because it was a trap. But it was also a game. It had a win condition.

We just needed to kill everybody else, before they could kill us.

He nodded again, and then he said, 'But you and I are good, right? We're friends.'

And I said, 'Yeah, of course.' And I meant it, too. I didn't want to hurt him. I never really did.

We'd started with twelve passengers, including the two of us. Four were already dead. That left eight. Six, minus us. And they were all scattered, too. Four down, six to go. That was *easy*. I said it out loud- 'oh, this is going to be easy'- and then felt sort of terrible at myself, but Scar just laughed.

It didn't even take that long. It was almost too easy with two people, but getting to talk to somebody else made up for it. It was *fun*. Isn't that horrible? I don't think I've ever had so much fun in my life. It was like I'd found something that had been missing from my life. Like I'd finally pinned down the source of the boredom that always kept me from being entirely satisfied with anything I did.

I don't really want to go through all of them. I don't even remember all the details of all of them. I just remember the blood, and the screaming. The dog bit me, after I killed its owner, so hard I bled. Scar had to hit it on the head to pry it off of me.

One of the last two left killed his friend before we even got there. He was actually the hardest to deal with, because he'd gone a little crazy. I don't know if he had- room in his head to be scared, you know? But the challenge of that was fun, too. It was *all* fun, all of it, right up until- well.

It was all fun right up until it was just me and Scar, with the knife between us, and the game still hadn't been won.

Like I said, I never wanted to hurt him. I *liked* him! He was fun to be around, and to mess with. But there were two of us left, and-

And I was starting to hear something.

It was quiet, at first. Almost like whispering. Like when you're in a room in a house where there's

a party happening, and even if you're on the other side of the house you can still sort of hear the noise of people talking, even if you can't make out a word that's being said? Like that.

It didn't stay quiet for long, though. The longer Scar and I sat there, delaying, stalling, the louder it got, until you could tell it was voices. Some of them were sad, but most were just... *angry*. They were shouting at us, screaming at us. I had to cover my ears. I don't know if Scar couldn't hear them, or if they were just louder for me. It would make sense, if they were. But they were so loud I couldn't *think*.

They just kept going and going and *going*. *Blood. Blood. Blood. Death. Death. Death. Fight. Fight. Fight.*

They were so loud and overlapped so much it was hard to distinguish individual voices, but I can tell you for certain there were more than ten of them. Lots more.

I didn't want to do it with the knife. It didn't seem fair, even though I knew it would be over faster and right then all I wanted was to get it over with. It had been fun when it wasn't real and there weren't any consequences and it wasn't anybody I *knew*. I told him that, but he just laughed and told me not to worry about it.

He said he'd be fine, anyways. He sounded very sure about that, which I thought was funny.

In the end, I tossed the knife into the river, and we fought without it. It- it wasn't fun. That part wasn't fun at all. But I still couldn't stop laughing. I don't know why. I didn't like it.

I thought he might beat me, at first. But he didn't.

I won.

And then I woke up.

I was sitting on the train. I was... there was nobody else in the car. Just me. I guess they must have all gotten off. While- you know, while I was sleeping. The intercom came on- it startled me so badly I jumped- and said my stop was next, just before the train started slowing down.

My hands were shaking.

I got off, and Mumbo was there to meet me at the station. He said there must have been some sort of weird delay, because my train had been almost an hour late. And then he asked me why I looked so rattled. I wasn't really paying attention, though. I was-

Mostly I was thinking about how much I wanted to shove him onto the train tracks.

I didn't. I mean, of course I didn't. He's my best friend! I would never! I don't know why I even *thought* it. But ever since then it's been a whole *thing*. I can't *concentrate*. I had to- I officially dropped out of university, um, last week. I'm looking for jobs, now, I guess.

When I got back to Mumbo's house, the first thing I did was take a shower. I knew there wouldn't be any blood on me anymore- there hadn't been any in the first place, I mean. But I still felt... I still wanted a shower.

[Click]

[Click]

[GRIAN]

Ugh.

It looks like Etho did actually do some follow-up research on this one, for once, but honestly we don't even need it. None of this ever happened. What happened was, I fell asleep on a train, had a rather vivid dream starring the other passengers I'd met, and woke up at my destination. That's all.

That's *all*.

For one thing, Scar is *very clearly* alive. I met him again when I got hired here, and he recognized me and waved at me the way you would to a friendly acquaintance you happened to meet once, not someone who committed several murders with you and then *killed* you. We've been working together for more than a year now, and he's never mentioned it once.

I've never been able to track down any of the other travelers from that day, admittedly, but- I mean, come on, if twelve people went missing from the same train and were later found murdered, it would have made news. And I've *looked*. For the first few months after it happened, I was checking the newspapers every day. There's never been anything.

I will admit that I *did* have issues with violent thoughts for quite a while following this whole... incident. I wasn't able to hold a job for longer than a month or two because I just couldn't concentrate on anything besides- well, I don't need to get into all the grim details. We've just had plenty of that. I did try going to a psychiatrist, obviously, and they put me on medication for awhile, but it didn't help. The issue wasn't with my brain chemistry.

But then I got hired here, and that's all died down considerably since then. So it's *fine*.

(Pause)

I do... wonder. Sometimes I think about those skeletons in the cabin, that looked like they'd been there for years, and I think about... venus flytraps. You know, they ease open when they're hungry, and then when some food wanders in, they snap shut, and then they stay shut, digesting, for ages, until they finally get hungry again.

Maybe the reason those bodies were never found is because they're nowhere they can be found.

(Pause, then quickly) But, of course, there are no bodies, because *nobody died*, because *nothing ever happened*.

...I think that's quite enough for this morning. I'm going to go... do something else. Talk to somebody. I don't know.

[Click]

Supplemental 1:

[Click]

*(a short period of silence and faint static)
(eventually, a door opens)*

[MUMBO]

And here I was, spending all my time trying to convince myself I *shouldn't* be experiencing envy towards your tape recorders, only to walk in on you staring at one like you're going to marry it. Or maybe murder it?

[GRIAN]

(with less enthusiasm than usual) Oh. Hi, Mumbo.

[MUMBO]

Yikes.

Last time you looked like that, you dropped out of uni. ...Hey, wait, are you planning on quitting? Abandoning me to the dusty files and boxes? That'd be awfully rude of you, you know.

[GRIAN]

NO!

No? No, I'm not quitting. Why'd you ask? Anyway, Scar'd still be right there. Perfectly tormentable.

Mm. I don't want to kill you. Nice, that.

[MUMBO]

Riiiiight. Of course. Well, it's lunchtime, and you promised me that falafel place down the road, so come on.

[GRIAN]

Oh, right, I was going to- I'm coming, I'm coming! Only if you're paying, though.

[MUMBO]

That was absolutely *not* our agreement-

[Click]

Supplemental 2:

[Click]

[SCAR]

Sometimes I wonder if Grian knows.

I mean, obviously he doesn't. He *completely misses* the jokes I make about my, uh, condition, and that's as good as just flat out saying he's got no idea what I'm talking about, with him.

But still, the way he looks at me sometimes. It was worse back when he first joined the Institute, but even now, sometimes I still catch him staring at me like he's, ha, seen a ghost. I've never caught him doing that to *Mumbo*. Even after Mumbo got potatoed! No ghosts there, just all the starch a mustache could ever need.

And, the thing is, he *shouldn't* know. Nobody's ever remembered my deaths, as far as I know, which is actually mighty convenient for avoiding awkward questions like "Why'd you ignore the sign that says DANGER on it?" or "Weren't you just bleeding?" or "Why did you shove half the merchandise on that shelf into your bag while you were being stabbed?"

But the way he looked at me when he first walked into the Institute... It was almost, *almost* like he was trying really hard to figure out why my brains weren't still splattered on some spooky murder rocks.

(*pause*)

Either way, I'm sure not gonna be the one who mentions it first!

[Click]

End Notes

WOOOO 3RD LIFE TIME :)

quick note for clarification: nobody besides grian or scar is meant to be any particular person from 3rd life, mostly because scott cleo ren etc all have established places in the au already that would contradict if they had gotten murdered several years before the series starts. so everybody else involved here is just nameless and terribly unfortunate travelers.

i don't know if anyone was wondering what grian was up to before becoming the archivist in this au, but now you know! he was like one bad day from straight up becoming a slaughter avatar! he's fine now tho that all cleared up when he started this new job for some reason. fortunate!

i'm very proud of this statement! it's the longest one so far by more than a thousand words, and i've been excited for it for quite some time. if you enjoyed it... maybe leave a comment?

and additionally, if you want some more work from this au from another excellent writer, the two fics so far in [statement begins](#) by classics_above_classics are very very good!

Works inspired by this one

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!