

COVERED

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FADE IN:

EXT. THE MOON - NIGHT (STOCK)

An astronaut in a white space suit walks the surface of the moon. He holds a temperature gauge in his right hand. A male voice crackles, with interference and feedback.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
What's your temperature Jacob?

JACOB
Trying to make this thing out. This
is a cold spot.

SUPER IN/OUT: "June 25, 1971."

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Jacob Miller. A name that has and
will always be honorably mentioned
by scholars, scientists,
researchers, and historians. An
adventurer of the unknown, and a
hero of this nation.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A seven-person production crew sits in front of a bank of television monitors. A TECHNICAL DIRECTOR with a headset stands behind the crew, arms folded.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
Fade up to C.

CLOSE ON A HAND pushing a small lever on the control deck.

CLOSE ON A TELEVISION MONITOR

The stock footage of the moon walk FADES into a shot of handsome, young, wavey-haired television host BRIAN MCMAHON. He continues narrating.

BRIAN MCMAHON (ON TV)
Hello, I'm Brian McMahon. Tonight
we are privileged to speak with Mr.
Miller. This is his first
television appearance since 1975.
Welcome.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Center up on Jacob. Cue Jacob.

The close up on Brian cuts to a single shot of JACOB MILLER.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Brian and Jacob sit in front of a STUDIO AUDIENCE with CAMERAMEN and their mobile cameras, FLOOR MANAGERS, a STUDIO DIRECTOR and other production CREW MEMBERS.

Jacob, 81, smiles proudly. He wears a tuxedo without the blazer. He adjusts his thick, coke bottle glasses and sits up straight.

BRIAN MCMAHON
Mr. Miller, I thank you.

Jacob chuckles.

JACOB
It's certainly been a long time.

BRIAN MCMAHON
Now that last clip, the 1971, that was your...?

Jacob holds up three fingers.

BRIAN MCMAHON (CONT'D)
Third walk on the moon?

Jacob nods with a grin.

JACOB
It's like any trip. After the first time, the magic's gone.

The studio audience LAUGHS.

JACOB (CONT'D)
Although, interestingly, that specific footage is what most everybody remembers.

BRIAN MCMAHON
That's right. You were taking the longest...

JACOB
Longest walk on the moon, that's it, yeah.

BRIAN MCMAHON
With a total duration of... ?

JACOB

I was on that rock for nine plus hours, give or take.

The audience erupts in APPLAUSE.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The Technical Director stands closer to the monitors.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Back to Jacob.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION MONITOR

The monitor image switches from a wide shot of the audience back to a two-shot of Jacob and Brian.

JACOB

Now that's moon time, so...

The studio audience LAUGHS. Jacob smiles.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Standby for commercial. Back to Brian.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Brian addresses the camera.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Jacob, excuse me, we're going to take a quick break. Stick around, don't miss a moment of this live interview with Jacob Miller. We'll be right back.

The audience APPLAUDS. A studio camera TRUCKS backward and away from the stage.

Brian removes an earpiece and turns to Jacob. His posture and voice relax.

BRIAN MCMAHON (CONT'D)

Fantastic stuff Mr. Miller, really. You're making my job easy.

JACOB

Hey, about time I reminded the world I'm still kickin'.

Brian puts on glasses and glances down at a script.

BRIAN MCMAHON

So just to prepare you, after this we'll go into an "old meets new" type discussion. Where's NASA today? How does the current political climate effect modern space travel? You get the idea.

JACOB

Absolutely, and do you think that will be a good time to bring up the government cover up?

Startled, Brian looks up from his script.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Excuse me?

Jacob chuckles.

JACOB

Well why else would I do the interview?

Jacob playfully punches Brian on the shoulder.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

A TECH listens through her headset.

BRIAN MCMAHON (V.O.)

Well, perhaps instead of that, we should broach safer topics, such as...

The Tech takes off her headset and turns to the Technical Director.

TECH

Tim, uh, we might have a -

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Standby guys, Camera A, are we good?

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

The Studio Director holds up his fingers for the countdown - "three, two, one..." He points to Brian.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Welcome. Now Jacob, I understand that it was your intention to become a space traveler since you were a boy. Your mother was once recorded as saying, "since Jacob was the tender age of four, he would..."

JACOB

(interrupts)

Excuse me, Brian. Weren't we going to discuss political topics?

The audience falls quiet. Brian flashes a fake television smile.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Time allowing Jacob, certainly. Now your sister, Judith, once said...

JACOB

I just don't want you TV types gettin' around my bit about the government cover up.

The audience chuckles, unsure.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

The control room is silent.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Standby to cut.

A tall, thin, curly-haired producer, MIKE BERNSTEIN, enters briskly. He covers the mouth piece of his cell phone.

MIKE

Tim, tell Brian to go with it. The sponsors are loving it.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Brian listens to whispers in his ear piece. His energy comes back.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Very well Jacob, let's get down to it.

(MORE)

BRIAN MCMAHON (CONT'D)

Many experts support removing funds
from the national space program.
They argue NASA has been too
inactive in recent years. Your
thoughts?

JACOB

Well, look. There's been alien life
on this planet for decades. They
landed with NASA's knowledge. They
are sophisticated and dangerous.
Frankly, folks, pray to whatever
God you have that we're still
alive. If these guys were hostile,
it'd be the end of us all. Of us
ALL.

Silence in the audience.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Silence. A cigarette drops out of Mike's gaping mouth.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Only a distant cough resonates in the space. Brian clears his
throat.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Well, um....hmm. How do uh...how do
you know?

JACOB

I'm an astronaut.

Long, drawn out silence.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Mike turns to Tim.

MIKE

That's true, he is an astronaut.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Brian is now engaged in the conversation.

BRIAN MCMAHON

What do they look like?

JACOB

Not like in the movies. They're not entirely different from us. They look like small men.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Um, small men? Like, human men?

JACOB

Yeah, well, kinda. Very strange looking.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Mike hangs up his cell phone.

MIKE

Okay, they're saying cut it.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

Brian continues the interview.

BRIAN MCMAHON

Perhaps you could describe them...more than that? Mr. Miller?

JACOB

Uh, let's see...

He holds his hand about five feet above the floor.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Yay, high.

Brian listens in his ear piece.

BRIAN MCMAHON

And that's all the time we have.
Thank you Mr. Miller. We hope you enjoy a long and peaceful life.

(turns to camera)

And remember, there are many different versions of the truth.
See you next time.

CLOSE ON STUDIO MONITOR

Jacob continues to speak, but his mic has been cut. His speech is mute while credits roll.

Brian laughs heartily as though they're having a light hearted conversation. STUDIO SECURITY men escort Jacob out the back of the stage.

EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - DAY

A 1985 black Cadillac pulls up slowly to a little house, with a freshly cut lawn, vinyl shingles, a stone chimney, and decorative landscaping. Jacob emerges from the driver's seat, struggling to stand. He walks up his porch with his black cane.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Short, elderly CYNTHIA MILLER sits on the couch and folds clothes and watches television. Her face is tense.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION SCREEN

Two political analysts discuss the Miller interview. TED COLE, mid-30s, fair skinned, and chinless, and BROOKE KNIGHT, a sexy blond in her late 20s.

BROOKE KNIGHT (ON TV)
I just found the manner with which
the studio handled it odd -
suddenly Brian's cutting the
show...

TED COLE (ON TV)
(laughs)
Are you implying Brian McMahon is
part of some big cover up? The man
reads lottery numbers.

BROOKE KNIGHT (ON TV)
(laughs)
Well, then they took Jacob out the
back. In a couple of minutes, the
whole thing was shut down.

BACK ON CYNTHIA

She picks up the remote and clicks off the TV.

Jacob enters. He and Cynthia lock eyes. Cynthia sets aside a stack of folded shirts and motions for Jacob to sit next to her. He sighs and crosses to the couch to sit.

Cynthia rubs his back as Jacob stares ahead.

CYNTHIA
I love you Jacob Miller.

Cynthia continues to rub him, looking him up and down.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
But you never once said anything to
me about "aliens."

JACOB
I've been too afraid to say
anything to anyone. This is
privileged information Cynthia,
even to you.

CYNTHIA
Why now? Why now that we're finally
relaxed? And Jacob, people are
gonna want evidence...

JACOB
I always thought the world deserved
to know. And I have evidence.

CYNTHIA
Well if you're right about it being
a cover up, don't you think you're
in danger now?

JACOB
I'm 81 years old Cynthia.

CYNTHIA
What about me?

JACOB
(looks at her)
You're old too.

Cynthia laughs nervously. Jacob laughs too.

CYNTHIA
Gee, thanks, Jake.

JACOB
You believe me, right?

CYNTHIA
(reluctant)
Sure.
(smiles falsely)
If you say you have evidence...

Jacob sits up, more alert.

JACOB
I do. It's in the...

CYNTHIA
(interrupts)
I have to pick up groceries. Do me
a favor. Take a nap. Please, for
the love of God, take a nap. Then
we'll talk more.

JACOB
Okay.

CYNTHIA
I'm worried about you.

JACOB
Don't be. I made up my mind.

EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The black Cadillac pulls away from the house.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - DAY

Jacob lies under a quilt on the couch. He uses the remote to turn on the TV.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

The two political analysts continue their banter.

TED COLE
Hey look, any way you slice it,
Jacob Miller's a great American,
and he ought to be left alone.

BROOKE KNIGHT
With or without aliens.

TED COLE
(laughs)
With or without aliens, that's right. Or "strange little men," as it were.

BACK ON JACOB

He scoffs and turns off the TV. He drops the remote to the ground and closes his eyes.

EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - DAY

CLOSE ON a clean, black pair of shoes that walk up the porch and to the front door.

INT. CONTROL ROOM LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jacob opens his eyes slowly. He cocks an eyebrow, listening for sounds. After a moment, he hears a loud KNOCK at the front door.

Jacob grabs a double-barrel shotgun hidden under the couch.

INT. COUNTRY COTTAGE - DAY

Jacob slowly approaches the front door. Another KNOCK. He aims the shotgun with one hand. With the other, he throws the door open and quickly aims with both hands.

Two young people, FLORENCE MORSE, a thin young lady with black framed glasses, and JIM MAYSACK, tall with a cleanly trimmed beard, hit the deck.

JIM

Oh my God, Mr. Miller, please, put
the gun down!

JACOB

You here to kill me?

FLORENCE

No, goodness, no! Mr. Miller, we're
representatives of NASA, sent by
the government...

JACOB

I knew it!

FLORENCE

...to help you keep your profile
low after the tele-conference!

JACOB

...stand up.

The two young people stand, both with a nervous and nerdy energy. Jacob keeps his shotgun steady.

JIM
May we come in?

JACOB
Pfff. You know what's funny? By the looks on your faces, I'd almost believe they never told you.

JIM
Mr. Miller, with all due respect, I can assure you that NASA in no way tracks extra-terrestrials.

FLORENCE
And frankly, you being who you are, these statements may cause hysteria. And in the process, cause you harm, so we've devised...

JACOB
(interrupts)
You've been lied to kids. Take it from me.

FLORENCE
Mr. Miller, we're not here to discuss...

Jacob cocks his gun.

JACOB
I am. Get in my basement.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Florence and Jim, frightened, walk down the stairs to the basement with Jacob a few paces behind. He still has his gun, but it is no longer aimed. As they proceed down the steps, they see:

Three short Mexicans - ANTONIO RODRIGUEZ, his brother HECTOR RODRIGUEZ, and IGNATIO DUARTE huddle around a television. They play Pac-Man on an old Atari and drink beer. They CHEER each other on in Spanish. When they notice Jim and Florence, they leap up and scramble to pull green cards out of their wallets.

Jim and Florence look back at Jacob, who smiles confidently. After a moment of confusing silence, Jim extends a hand to the Mexicans.

JIM
Gentlemen, Jim Maysack...

Jacob interrupts and jumps in front of Jim.

JACOB
Jesus almighty, don't touch them!

JIM
Aw, Mr. Miller, that's unkind. And racist.

JACOB
These are the aliens you twit!

Jim and Florence both look confused.

FLORENCE
Um. No. These are just three Mexicans.

JACOB
To hell they are - they're NEW Mexicans. From the spacecraft that landed in New Mexico.

Silence.

JIM
Everything's suddenly confusing.

The door at the top of the basement opens. Cynthia flicks on the lights and walks down with a bag of groceries. When she sees Jacob with a gun she drops her bags and gasps in horror.

CYNTHIA
(screams)
Jacob! What's happening?

JACOB
Don't worry honey, just that evidence I was talking about earlier.

FLORENCE
Ma'am, I'm afraid your husband doesn't know the difference between aliens and Mexican-Americans. They are legally American, yes?

JACOB
No, they're aliens!

CYNTHIA
Jacob. Stop it.

Jacob's enthusiasm deflates instantly.

JACOB
Cynthia, you've got to believe
me...

CYNTHIA
These are my sister's cousin-in-laws from Mexico. Remember? They could stay in the basement if they helped redo the roof and re-tile the bathroom?

Jacob scowls in his confusion.

JACOB
But I...aliens...they were...this
is...New Mexico...

CYNTHIA
(in Spanish w/ subtitles)
Ignatio, Hector, Antonio - please.
Accept our apologies.

HECTOR
Si.

ANTONIO
Esta bien.

IGNATIO
Trabajo?

Florence and Jim have a quiet aside.

FLORENCE
Can we go please?

EXT. COUNTRY COTTAGE PORCH - DAY

Jim and Florence gently close the door. They pause for a moment and both burst out laughing.

FLORENCE
What an insane old man! He really did lose his mind!

JIM
(still laughing)
Oh man, thank God he doesn't know
about the real aliens.

The two put on sunglasses simultaneously. Florence speaks into a receiver.

FLORENCE
Don't worry guys, we're covered.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Antonio, Hector, and Ignatio continue playing the Atari.

HECTOR
(in Spanish w/ subtitles)
Man, they are so lucky our asses
aren't hostile.

IGNATIO
Si.

Antonio lashes his tongue out like a lizard to fetch a beer from the mini-fridge.

FADE OUT.

THE END