

THE CALL OF THE VOID - 305

"The Zero Condition"

Written by

Michael Alan Herman
& Josie Eli Herman

EPISODE FIVE - THE ZERO CONDITION

SCENE ONE

INT. NOLA PRISON - DAY

SFX: Prison ambience. The buzz of a door opening.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Step up to the desk. Name?

TERA

Tera Grace Reinhart.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Up against the wall.

SFX: Camera clicks.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Personal effects in the tray. If we find additional person effects beyond this point, you will be charged with introduction to contraband, do you understand me?

TERA

Yes, sir.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

I need your index finger. Touch this pad here, and hold it against the fingerprint reader. We will do it multiple times. Date of birth?

TERA

October 27th. 1985.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Height.

TERA

5'9".

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Weight.

TERA

141?

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

I understand you're here for robbing a convenience store.

TERA

Yeah, I did that.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Step through the metal detector please.

SFX: Tera steps through the metal detector. It goes off with a beep.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

You have something on you.

TERA

I do.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

I'm sorry?

SFX: Tera pulls back her jacket. She arms the bomb.

TERA

I got enough explosives on me to blow this place to kingdom come.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Holy shit.

TERA

Hands up. Now, I got demands.

SFX: The correctional officer reaches for his radio.

TERA

Don't touch the radio. Hey, hey! HEY! Don't touch that or we're both gone. I got demands.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

What do you want?

TERA

First thing you gonna do is let my friends in. They're just outside the sally port. You got it? You push that buzzer now.

SFX: The door buzzes open.

TERA

You gonna like them.

SFX: Footsteps.

TERA

How we doing there, Ivy?

IVY

Oh, I'm doing good.

ZEKE

Damn door got stuck on the way in.

TERA

Hate it when that happens.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

This room is under surveillance. You see those cameras?

TERA

Oh great! They got us on the TV.

IVY

I got it.

SFX: TV smashes.

TERA

Now you're going to take me to room 601, you here me? And we're going to do it fast.
FAST!

SFX: Tera pins the correctional officer to the floor and he winces with fear.

TERA

I'm gonna blow us all up if we don't start walking. I'm pushing it in literally 2 seconds,
sir. One...

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Alright! Alright!

SFX: Door buzzes open.

TERA

Good. Ee're going to go for a little walk.

SFX: Footsteps as the two make their way down the hallway.

CORRECTIONAL OFFICER

Okay. It's through here.

TERA

You got the keys? Get down on your knees and slide 'em to me. Right now.

SFX: The correctional officer gets down on his knees and slides the keys across the floor to Tera.

TERA

See? Now, we're getting along.

SFX: Tera unlocks the prison door and opens it.

TERA

It's been a while, Prophet.

NECROMON

(Beat) Yes. It has.

OPENING SEQUENCE

SCENE TWO

INT. SOMMER'S KITCHEN - DAY

SFX: Topher walks into the kitchen.

SIMONE

How is she?

TOPHER

She got to sleep.

SIMONE

Are you okay?

TOPHER

Yeah. It's still affecting her. The Void. It's like It's been haunting her since last year. Last night was just a single moment of that.

SIMONE

The markings along her hands and arms...

SFX: Topher does the dishes.

TOPHER

It's leaving its mark on her. As it continues to consume.

SIMONE

What happens when she can't contain it anymore?

TOPHER

We don't let that happen.

SIMONE

Topher. When does something cross over from being a good thing to being evil? Is there a line for that? Because there is objective evil.

TOPHER

She's not evil. She's fought his darkness her whole life. She's still fighting it. That is the best testimony to being good there is.

SFX: Footsteps from around the corner. Martin Brody meows.

ETSY

Hey.

TOPHER

Hey.

ETSY

(Beat) You guys talking shit about the cat?

TOPHER

Oh. No. (Beat) Does anyone want gumbo?

ETSY

Sure.

SFX: Etsy sits down at the table. Topher begins to take out dishes.

ETSY

Hey, Simone.

SIMONE

Hey.

TOPHER

We were just talking about the case.

ETSY

How's it going?

SIMONE

(Beat) I've been doing more research this morning. And it looks like these sites are developing all over the world. At first they are just areas where light and sound frequencies are decreasing then...people start to hallucinate or have experiences with past trauma.

TOPHER

Like Officer Mason yesterday at the old park.

SIMONE

Exactly. People on the internet are calling these areas the Darklands.

ETSY/TOPHER

The Darklands?

SIMONE

Unofficial title. There have also been a few more cryptid sightings near these areas.

TOPHER

This is global?

SIMONE

So far I've been able to track down sightings in Cardiff, Barcelona, Norfolk, Uusimaa, Ann Arbor, Kinshasa, and Milan.

TOPHER

Shit.

ETSY

The Void is growing stronger across the world. As It's growing inside me.

SFX: Simone's ringtone.

TOPHER

Is that you?

SIMONE

Yeah. I don't recognize the number...Hello?

ELI

(On phone) Hey. Is this Simone?

SIMONE

(Beat) Yeah.

ELI

(On phone) This is Eli.

SIMONE

Oh. Yeah. Hi. (To Topher) One second, I'm going to take this.

TOPHER

Sure.

ELI

(On phone) Where are you right now?

SFX: Footsteps as Simone leaves the room.

SIMONE

(Distant) I went home for the weekend. Is everything okay?

TOPHER

(Beat) And then there were two.

Agatha Christie. ETSY

Yeah. (Beat) You okay? TOPHER

Yeah. ETSY

SFX: Topher scoops gumbo into bowls.

Is that crawfish? ETSY

I actually get it from the same supplier who catches for Felix's. I had to do some detective work to find the guy. TOPHER

So, top secret crawfish. ETSY

Yeah. TOPHER

SFX: Topher sets the dishes on the table.

What happened to your hand? TOPHER

Oh. That's just...sorry, I broke the lightbulb in the guest room. ETSY

Oh. Okay. That's no problem. TOPHER

I'll get you another one today. ETSY

No. Don't worry about it; I'll fix it. TOPHER

I got it. You don't have to fix everything. ETSY

(Beat) Right. Yeah. TOPHER

SFX: Topher sits down.

TOPHER

How are the markings on your arms?

ETSY

They're okay. They've started to fade since last night.

TOPHER

That's good.

ETSY

Thank you for...helping me out of it.

TOPHER

Yeah. (Beat) I hate to make everything about Lovecraft.

ETSY

And yet...you will.

TOPHER

He wrote...so much about cosmic gods and forces that view our existence like we might view a colony of ants. And those stories always end in doom. The idea that human beings can't rise up and stand and be whole and...win. But I don't believe that. I know that we're stronger than any of those stories. Any of those monsters.

ETSY

Yeah. (Beat) Plus Lovecraft was also kind of a racist asshole, so...

TOPHER

Yeah.

SFX: Footsteps as Simone re-enters.

SIMONE

I have to go.

TOPHER

Go where?

SIMONE

Back to De Soto. Something happened. Someone...disappeared. They just...Eli said it was like she dissolved to ash in front of him.

What?
TOPHER

SFX: Simone grabs her bag and gathers her things from the table.

SIMONE
They shut down the program, but I need to talk to Fulton. I have a theory about what's happening.

Is it safe there?
TOPHER

SIMONE
If we don't figure this out, I'm not sure how safe it will be anywhere.

TOPHER
Okay. We'll keep trying to figure it out on this end.

Yeah.
SIMONE

Text me when you get there.
TOPHER

I will. (Beat) See you guys later.
SIMONE

Good luck, Simone.
ETSY

Thanks.
SIMONE

SFX: Door opens and closes.

SCENE THREE

EXT./INT. APOTHECARY SHOP - LATER

SFX: Street Jazz plays as Topher and Etsy walk the French Quarter of New Orleans.

TOPHER

What do you think it means? The girl in De Soto.

ETSY

The Void's power is reaching out farther.

TOPHER

The Void is making our planet Its home. Like Yuggoth for the Elder Ones.

ETSY

I don't know what that means.

TOPHER

Every monster has a weakness. We find the source. There has to be a way to...cut off the head of the beast, right? We just need to find the head.

ETSY

Unless it's a Hydra.

TOPHER

Then we crush Its heart. But there has always been a source to this. And when we've found it in the past...we've faced it. And we've beaten it. Sort of.

ETSY

Sort of.

TOPHER

Oh, the package did come in.

ETSY

What is it?

TOPHER

The Boston Chemical Archives. Hold on. I have to get something out before I open it.

SFX: Topher takes out an old, retro recorder.

ETSY

Oh. A tape recorder from the Cretaceous Period.

SFX: Topher clicks record.

TOPHER

This is, uh, Topher Sommers. It is August 7th and this is the unboxing of the Boston Chemical Archive compounds.

SFX: Topher cuts the box open with a box cutter.

ETSY

Wow.

TOPHER

Wow, what?

ETSY

What's going on over there?

TOPHER

Oh. I always do this when I get something new into the shop.

SFX: Etsy chuckles.

ETSY

Okay, yeah. Sure.

TOPHER

What? Okay, listen...my dad would record himself on these all the time. It's really useful. It's important to record these things. They're pieces of history.

SFX: Etsy slides the tape recorder across the table to herself.

ETSY

(Imitating Topher) Hi. I'm, uh... Topher Sommers. And uh...I think I'm really cool...because I have a tape recorder.

TOPHER

I don't sound like that.

ETSY

You absolutely sound like that, Summers. That is a flawless impression.

SFX: Topher laughs. Etsy slides the tape recorder closer to her mouth.

ETSY

The world needs more recordings of Topher Sommers unboxing things.

SFX: Topher and Etsy both laugh as the shop door opens and the door chime jingles.

TOPHER

Officer Mason.

MASON

Topher.

TOPHER

Is everything okay?

MASON

May I come in?

ETSY

I mean...you're already inside.

SFX: Mason walks to the desk.

MASON

What I am going to share is not public knowledge yet. I'm sure it will be soon, but I wanted you to be among the first to know. There was an incident at the NOLA Penitentiary at 6:00am this morning. Prison break.

TOPHER

Oh my God.

ETSY

Necromon.

MASON

Three of his former followers were behind the break.

ETSY

Shit.

TOPHER

What?

They followed me here

ETSY

Who?

TOPHER

You know of them?

MASON

I think so.

ETSY

SFX: Officer Mason opens a folder.

MASON

Tera Reinhart, Ivy Delcotta, and Ezekiel Bryers. They're part of a rag-tag terroristic group that formed from the remnants of the cult. They have a history of... arson, kidnapping, homicide...cannibalism.

(Beat) Woah.

TOPHER

Shit. And now Necromon is with them? That's great.

ETSY

We got to stay calm here, Delmen.

MASON

No. I have to leave before anyone gets hurt.

ETSY

MASON

These are people that know how to bring you back. What happens when you leave town and learn your friends back here are in trouble? We're doing everything we can to catch them before it comes to something like that. Is there anywhere else you could stay for a little while? Somewhere you can keep a low profile?

Why?

TOPHER

The cultists knew where you live, Topher.

ETSY

Oh. That's right.

TOPHER

ETSY

(Sigh) Shit.

MASON

Etsy. We all have a part to play here, alright. This isn't your fault. But you can be smart about keeping Topher and yourself safe. Alright?

ETSY

(Beat) Yeah.

SCENE FOUR

EXT. STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS - LATER

SFX: Street noises as Topher and Etsy walk back through the French Quarter.

TOPHER

I feel like everything collides in twos and threes for us.

ETSY

These people are insane.

TOPHER

What do they want from you?

ETSY

I think they're convinced slicing me open will unleash the full power of the Void to reign over the universe.

TOPHER

Wow. That's...dark. (Beat) Is that...what would happen? If...

ETSY

I don't know... But now that Necromon is with them...

TOPHER

Right.

ETSY

He has a hold over people. He can make people do what he wants. What The Void wants.

TOPHER

Cult mentality at its finest.

ETSY

Yeah.

TOPHER

Are you worried he could manipulate you in that way?

ETSY

I think the more emptiness inside a person, the more sway the darkness has over them.

SFX: They stop for a moment.

ETSY

So...if you're right. The only way we beat this is if we find the source.

TOPHER

Right.

ETSY

I might have an idea. All this time, the Void has been crossing over into this world. And I've always been on the defense. But if I crossed over into his dimension...The Dark Dimension. Where I first pulled It out....

TOPHER

That could be the source.

ETSY

It could be.

TOPHER

And you know how to cross over. Into Its world?

ETSY

There was only one time I ever did. I might need some help. To recreate conditions.

TOPHER

Lab conditions?

ETSY

Yeah.

TOPHER

Okay. Can we do it somewhere safe? Off the grid?

ETSY

Alright.

TOPHER

I mean, I can only think of one place.

SCENE FIVE

EXT. FARGO'S HOUSE BOAT - DAY

SFX: Fargo's house boat door swings open as disco music plays loudly from a speaker.

FARGO

So you've come to the sweet embrace of the River Monster.

ETSY

It's good to see you, Fargo.

FARGO

Etsy Delmen.

TOPHER

Thanks for doing this, Fargo.

SFX: Topher and Etsy shuffle luggage into the room.

FARGO

Welcome to living off the grid, my friends. Mi casa es su casa.

SFX: Martin Brody meows.

ETSY

Is it okay that we brought my cat?

FARGO

Yeah!

SFX: Martin Brody meows and Fargo meows back.

ETSY

This is a really nice place.

FARGO

You'd be surprised what you can do when you don't pay taxes.

TOPHER

You don't pay taxes?

FARGO

I don't have a social security number.

TOPHER

Fargo. That's tax fraud.

FARGO

You'd be surprised what you can do when you commit tax fraud.

SFX: Fargo lays down on her couch and plays with a slinky.

TOPHER

I should say our visit doesn't come without a big request.

ETSY

Is that a slinky?

FARGO

Uh-huh.

TOPHER

Do you know anything about making an isolation chamber?

ETSY

With zero frequencies. Or as close to that as we can get.

FARGO

Basically, no sound gets in, no sound gets out?

TOPHER

Right. And how busy are you this weekend?

FARGO

To construct such a beast, we'll need supplies and manpower. But my contacts will supply. What is this for?

ETSY

When I was a child I first reached into other dimensions through spending days in a highly constricted isolation chamber. We want to recreate those conditions. I need to fully cross into the dark dimension.

TOPHER

Before the dark tendrils of silence devour reality as we know and love it.

FARGO

Heard. Let's get this bastard going.

SCENE SIX

INT. MISSISSIPPI RESEARCH STATION - DAY

SFX: Distant muffled talking of students. A door opens and closes.

SIMONE

Professor Fulton.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Sommers.

SIMONE

I have an article here that you co-authored with my dad.

PROFESSOR FULTON

This isn't the time.

SIMONE

The Absolute Zero Condition. You published this in 1996.

SFX: Fulton gathers papers and books from his desk.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Your father and I were very abstract in our theories back in the 90s.

SIMONE

You theorized that at a certain point, reality would cease to exist if enough energy was removed from a system. It would be oblivion.

PROFESSOR FULTON

That sounds a little science-fiction, but in general, yes.

SIMONE

I believe the site reached absolute zero while Riley was inside.

PROFESSOR FULTON

What?

SIMONE

Reality ceased to exist around her.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Simone.

SIMONE

But the energy would have to move somewhere, right? Energy is never created nor destroyed. It's simply displaced. So where is the energy going?

PROFESSOR FULTON

Simone, I'm afraid I have to ask you to leave.

SIMONE

The energy would have to be moving somewhere.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Simone, a young girl died yesterday. We're shutting the program down.

SIMONE

I understand the program being shut down, Professor, but that won't stop this thing from spreading. If we find where the energy is going to...where it's being drained....perhaps we can reverse the effect.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Sommers!

SFX: Fulton slams his fist down on his desk.

PROFESSOR FULTON

I am legally responsible for the death of a young girl. This happened under my watch and it is my responsibility.

SIMONE

I understand that this is a difficult thing....

PROFESSOR FULTON

You share a lot in common with your father. But Victor knew when to stop.

SIMONE

(Beat) My father...knew that science goes to the end. That is our responsibility. When there is a problem, when there is a crisis. We step up to protect. If we don't follow through...what are we doing here?

PROFESSOR FULTON

The university will want us out of here in the next few days. You have packing to do.

SIMONE

That's it?

PROFESSOR FULTON

That's it. I'm sorry.

SIMONE

(Beat) We're better than this.

SFX: Simone rushes out of the room and the door slams shut behind her.

SCENE SEVEN

INT. MISSISSIPPI RESEARCH STATION - STUDENT LOUNGE - LATER

SFX: Footsteps down a hallway.

SIMONE

Eli.

ELI

Simone? Hey. When did you get back?

SIMONE

An hour ago.

ELI

You saw the email from Fulton. He's shutting everything down. All the research, everything.

I just came from his office. SIMONE

Are you okay? You seem... ELI

I'm calculating. SIMONE

Calculating what? ELI

I have an alternative idea. SIMONE

Okay. ELI

Are you free right now? SIMONE

I mean, yeah. They just shut down the program. ELI

I could use your help with something. SIMONE

SFX: Simone walks ahead.

Are you following me? SIMONE

I guess I am. ELI

SCENE EIGHT

INT. MISSISSIPPI RESEARCH STATION - SIMONE'S DORM - LATER

SFX: Simone's door opens and the two walk in.

ELI

Your dorm is a lot nicer than mine.

SIMONE

They're exactly the same.

ELI

You have a lava lamp.

SIMONE

All of the work we've done as students on this intensive. We need that information to calculate where the energy is being displaced.

ELI

But all that information is being held by Fulton. Locked in his office in the facility.

SIMONE

It is.

ELI

So...

SIMONE

Do you agree with me that there's no other way we can calculate the energy displacement unless we have that information?

ELI

Of course.

SIMONE

And the only way we can get that information at this point is if we broke into Fulton's office.

ELI

Probably. (Beat) Oh.

SIMONE

If we wait any longer than tonight, we might lose our opportunity.

ELI

Just to be clear...you want us to break into Fulton's office?

SIMONE

(Beat) Yes, Eli.

ELI

You're like the last person I'd imagine breaking and entering.

SIMONE

This is for science!

ELI

Okay.

SIMONE

So. Do you know anything about breaking into a building?

ELI

My sister got me a lock picking kit for Hanukkah one year.

SIMONE

Why did your sister buy you a lock picking kit?

ELI

Honestly, I don't know.

SIMONE

Do you have it with you?

ELI

I mean...no. But I think I could use a wire hanger.

SIMONE

Alright. It should be said that we could be expelled from Princeton if we're caught.

SFX: Simone opens a closet door and takes out a wire hanger.

ELI

Most likely.

SIMONE

And we'll never work in our fields again.

ELI

Cool.

SIMONE

So we wait until Fulton leaves and we're sure no one is in the research building.

ELI

Great. I feel really good about our life choices.

SCENE NINE

EXT/INT. MISSISSIPPI RESEARCH STATION - NIGHT

SFX: The forest at night.

SIMONE

Do you have the wire hanger?

ELI

Yeah. What time is it?

SIMONE

9:17.

ELI

And there's nobody in the building?

SIMONE

No.

ELI

Okay.

SIMONE

Are you ready?

ELI

Ready.

SIMONE

Time for your lock picking skills.

ELI

By Grabthar's Hammer...

SIMONE

What?

ELI

Nevermind. Okay....Here. We. Go.

SFX: Lock picking.

ELI

Huh. Okay. Well, the lock picking kit was like a beginner's kit, so...

SIMONE

What?

ELI

The keypad. I can probably over-ride the keypad. I saw this on MacGyver once. It could take me a few minutes...Huh. This is actually...Okay, I might need a screw driver...

SFX: Suddenly, a window is smashed.

ELI

Oh. Shit.

SFX: A security alarm goes off.

SIMONE

I broke the window. Can we reach inside and unlock the door?

ELI

We set the alarm off.

SIMONE

Yeah. We have to hurry.

SFX: They unlock the door from the broken window, open the door, and step inside.

SIMONE

Let's go.

SFX: They run down the hallway.

ELI

Should we turn a light on?

SIMONE

Probably not.

It's dark in here.

ELI

Watch your step.

SIMONE

SFX: They arrive at the door and pull the handle.

His office is locked.

SIMONE

So was the other door.

ELI

Yeah, but there's no window next to this one.

SIMONE

The lock on this one looks less complicated. I can use a credit card.

ELI

A credit card?

SIMONE

Do you have a card on you?

ELI

I have a library card.

SIMONE

That'll work.

ELI

SFX: Simone shuffles through her pocket and takes out a card.

Thank you.

ELI

SFX: Eli saws the locked door with the card.

How'd you learn how to do this?

SIMONE

My sister.

ELI

SIMONE

What is wrong with your sister?

SFX: The door pops open.

ELI

Got it.

SIMONE

Okay. Quick.

SFX: They shuffle into the office and shut the door behind them. Simone sits at Fulton's computer desk.

SIMONE

The information will probably be on his computer.

ELI

Right.

SFX: Typing.

SIMONE

It's going to take me a little bit of time to dig through his files.

ELI

He's been doing a lot of calculations. Are you seeing these white boards? Hold on...

SIMONE

What?

ELI

These aren't for De Soto. They're for a different site. He just started looking into this.

SIMONE

There are sites all over the globe now.

ELI

Yeah but this site's increasing. Not decreasing.

SIMONE

(Beat) What?

ELI

It's energy exchange. This site is increasing.

Energy is going to this site. SIMONE

Yeah. ELI

Where is this? SIMONE

He has coordinates. ELI

Where? SIMONE

38.5844° North, by 83.2721° West. ELI

I'm looking it up now. SIMONE

SFX: Typing.

Right there. (Beat) Simone? What? ELI

Is that right? SIMONE

Why? What's wrong? It's someplace in Ohio. ELI

It's a very specific place in Ohio. There's a lab there. SIMONE

What lab? ELI

(Beat) JM Labs. SIMONE

What is JM Labs? ELI

I have to call my brother. SIMONE

ELI

What is JM Labs?

SFX: A door swings open suddenly.

PROFESSOR FULTON

Simone. Eli. (Beat) Why are you in my office?

DRAMATIC MUSIC RISE UP.

SCENE TEN

EXT. SOMEWHERE ALONG THE MISSISSIPPI - NIGHT

SFX: The rush of a river at night.

ZEKE

What's he doing?

TERA

Probably thinking, Zeke, if you'd shut up for more than a minute and let him.

IVY

Does he seem different to you?

TERA

You got something to say against the Prophet, Ivy? Cause I can slit your throat right now and you don't have to be a part of this, how's that sound?

IVY

All I'm saying is if we're sitting around here waiting all night for the prophet to tell us what our next move is...might be a while before we see that Darkness reign.

ZEKE

Maybe he's just making a plan.

IVY

He's been hiding away in a cell for a year. You'd think he'd have one by now.

NECROMON

Silence! Your bickering is a thorn in my side. (Beat) Come to me. Each of you.

SFX: Footsteps through the rushing water.

NECROMON

Kneel upon the riverbed. Let the waters surround you. What do you feel?

IVY

The passing of ages.

ZEKE

The silencing of every voice.

TERA

The darkness. Flowing threw my veins.

NECROMON

We have been but like children. Trusting like sheep in the den of the wolf...Close your eyes. And open your spirits to the greater truth. Above all we have known. There is...ecstasy. In blood. The world must be turned and we are the Chosen set apart to turn it.

IVY

I feel it. I feel the world turning.

NECROMON

No longer do we bow. We rise in glory. We the remnants. We the saints who have endured every pain of this earth. Only we remain.

TERA

And the Void...will do great and terrible things through the priestess.

NECROMON

Not through her! (Beat) My children. Look upon my flesh. Touch the marks upon my skin. Every inch. Scarred. The truth has been revealed to me now. The fullness of truth. We have been gathered to bring about the destiny of ashes. For It grows within her but she in her folly fights against it. It calls from within her and yet she remains deaf. When she is gone It will see...that I am It's faithful servant. (Beat) The priestess must die.

CLOSING SEQUENCE