

AGENTS OF THE EMPIRE

written by

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FADE IN

EXT. AKEEN CITY, PLANET GULON II - HIGH NOON

Camera opens to a vaguely Middle Eastern city. Sun-bleached brick slums dominate the majority of the frame, with impossibly high glass skyscrapers in the background. As the camera pans over the city, three militaristic troop transports fly past.

CUT TO:

EXT. SMALL MARKET, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

The ships land in the clearing of an abandoned open-air market in the slums. The ship doors open and soldiers with intimidating armored bodysuits storm out, heading down one of the cramped alleys.

CUT TO:

EXT. TENAMENT BUILDING, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

The soldiers come to a door, surrounding it "SWAT" style. They breach and the camera follows as they clear room by room. Empty.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW SAFEHOUSE, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

From a second story window across the street, DORUN watches the raid. He turns towards his companions in the sparse, dusty room. The camera pans to see EKELLE standing close, pensively watching the scene below. ELLIS sits nearby, hands clasped in front of him deep in thought. TARSIS is alert, leaned back against the wall watching through the slightly ajar door. The camera lands back on Dorun.

DORUN

We have to get off this planet.

TARSIS

We got out just in time.

ELLIS

Dorun, if they're raiding our safehouse it means-

DORUN

It means we have to get off this planet.

EKELLE

This is a setback, yes, but you can't just run.

TARSIS

Ekelles is right. If we run now we trash months of work setting up to cripple the Empires' control on Gulon Two.

EKELLE

The Empire that took my family. The Rebellion can help-

DORUN

The Empire has taken something from all of us. And we're not part of your Rebellion.

ELLIS

Do you know how much we'll be losing if we run now? Not even counting bribes, we'll be abandoning contacts its taken months to establish.

TARSIS

I'm finally making headway with my black market connections.

DORUN

None of which matters if we're dead. Look I don't want to run any more than you lot do, but we just got very lucky. It's only a matter of time before they connect the dots about us. I don't plan on being here when they do.

Dorun pulls a small handheld communicator out of his pocket.

DORUN (CONT'D)

Arianne, get the ship ready. We're leaving.

CUT TO:

INT. SHIP: WINDSWIFT; COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Cables, tools and hardware are strewn about the run-down cockpit of the Crew Freighter. ARIANNE's head pops out from under the console she was in the process of fixing.

Arianne curses as she tries to find the communicator amid the mess. Picking it up she attempts to sound calm and composed.

ARIANNE
Yes, Dorun. Right away.

She looks around at the mess.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
I'll get right on that...

DORUN
(From Communicator)
Have you been sleeping on the job?

ARIANNE
Excuse me? I haven't slept in days.
I barely got the ignition coil
working again and now the Nav
console keeps losing power.

DORUN
You better not be breaking my ship.

ARIANNE
I'm the only reason this junker can
even get off the ground.

ARIANNE flips several switches. A negative sounding "wump" responds.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
Or not.

She tries again. Same negative Wump

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
"Wump"? You're not supposed to
"Wump". When I start primary
ignition you go "Dee-Dee-Deep".

ARIANNE taps at the panel looking for the issue.

ARIANNE (CONT'D)
It can't be the Nav causing this.
We have enough fuel. Ignition coil
OK. Oh. Oh that's not good.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW SAFEHOUSE, AKEEN SLUMS - SAME TIME

EKELLE
You said you would help us!

DORUN
I said I *could* help you, there's a
difference.

ARIANNE
(From communicator)
Dorun, we have a problem. Something
is blocking engine startup.

Pause

ARIANNE (CON'T) (CONT'D)
All ships on the planet are
affected.

Worried look shared by DORUN/ELLIS

ELLIS
Imperial Inhibitor Tech.

DORUN
The situation is worse than I
thought.

EKELLE
What's going on?

ELLIS
The Empire has overridden control
of all ships on the planet.

DORUN
Only authorized Imperial ships are
able to fly.

EKELLE
That means-

DORUN
It means that the Empire knows all
about your revolt.

EKELLE

Thats... That's not possible.

DORUN

Our safehouse gets raided the same day all ships on the planet are grounded? The Empire is making their move.

ELLIS

What do we do?

DORUN

What I've been saying all along. We have to get off this planet.

(Roll Title Credits)

INT. AKEEN SLUMS SAFEHOUSE

DORUN

So we have a planet about to tear itself apart, a ship that can't fly, and a well armed enemy between us and freedom. What do we do.

Silence.

DORUN (CON'T) (CONT'D)

Well don't everyone speak at once.

TARSIS

Can we hack in and clear our ship for launch?

ELLIS

I have access codes that can get us into the Imperial network.

DORUN

Too suspicious. They'll have cruisers patrolling, we'll be shot down before we get into orbit.

EKELLE

I have to warn the others.

TARSIS

I say we go in blasters blazing.

ELLIS
[Condescending] Tarsis, [Lecturing]
we won't get far if we just start
shooting. We still have those
Imperial uniforms from the Ikketar
job. We could get into the
Restricted Zone without firing a
shot.

TARSIS
[Sarcastic] Ellis, The last time we
used those uniforms I nearly got
blasted at the first checkpoint!

ELLIS
Well if you hadn't called him a
drunken Telosin maybe it wouldn't
have blown our cover!

EKELLE
We can still save the rebellion but
we have to act now!

DORUN
OI!

Everyone's attention snaps to DORUN

DORUN (CONT'D)
I've made my decision. And we're
doing it your way.

ELLIS
Uh. Who's way?

DORUN
All of yours.

TARSIS
Huh?

DORUN
We won't get far if we try and
shoot our way in, but the uniforms
will only get us past low security
areas, so Tarsis, I guarantee you
get to shoot something today.

Tarsis looks pleased.

EKELLE
But the rebel-

DORUN
(interuppting)
-The rebellion can help us help
them. I assume whatever plan you
had for this uprising includes
having flyable ships?

Ekelles reluctantly nods.

DORUN (CONT'D)
Then taking down that Inhibitor
helps us both.

TARSIS
So... what are we gonna do?

DORUN
Ekelles, contact the rebellion. Tell
them it's a trap and that if they
want to be useful to meet us North
of the Bazaar in one hour. We're
going back to the ship to get
ready.

ELLIS
Ready for what, exactly?

DORUN
The Empire's made their move, it's
time we made ours.

TARSIS
There's an intergalactic army
between us and that Inhibitor.

EKELLE
The rebellion doesn't trust you.

ELLIS
We have no time to prepare for this
plan.

DORUN
(confident)
Perfect.

INT. SHIP: WINDSWIFT; MAIN ROOM
The main room is cramped, lived-in, with a small cluttered
table on one side and a cylindrical console on the other.
Open to see Dorun dressed in an officers uniform. He looks
slightly uncomfortable. Ellis beside him is dressed in
Imperial soldiers armor. They size each other up.

ELLIS
You look terrible.

DORUN
These uniforms never did fit me.

Enter Tarsis, also in soldier uniform. He is heavily armed, comically so.

ELLIS
You must be joking.

TARSIS
What?

DORUN
One gun, Tarsis. You'll raise suspicion.

ELLIS
He'll raise hell.

Tarsis sniffs, but accepts. He pulls out a number of odd devices. laying out equipment on the table.

TARSIS
(Petuently)
Fine, but I am bringing these. Camo energy shield, sensor disruption grenade, and *this*.

Tarsis pulls out an UNKNOWN GRENADE

ELLIS
What is it?

TARSIS
(with a child's wonder)
I have no idea. I got it off a arms dealer back on Ungvar IV.

ELLIS
And he didn't tell you what it was?

TARSIS
He... didn't get the chance.

ELLIS
You stole it.

Tarsis sputters thinking of a lie

DORUN
He stole it.

ELLIS (CONT'D)
He stole it.

Enter Ekelle with KURDEER.

DORUN (CONT'D)
How did you get on my ship? How did
you even know where my ship was?

EKELLE
Perhaps you should give the
Resistance more credit.

DORUN
(To KURDEER)
We'll see. I don't like strangers
on my ship.

KURDEER
I am Kurdeer.

DORUN
Well Kurdeer you can call me Dor-

KURDEER
(interrupting)
You are Dorun Pepsis Ryzer, owner
of the cargo freighter *Windswift*
and the legitimate commodity
trading business you run from it.
Of course, that's just a front for
the blackmarket and mercenary
operation you run.

DORUN
(to Ekelle)
You know my middle name. Ellis
doesn't even know my middle name.
Perhaps I *should* give your little
rebellion more credit.

KURDEER
We know much, Captain Pepsis-

DORUN
I'm no captain. Call me Dorun.

KURDEER
As you wish, Dorun. Although now
that I see this ship, I do not
think *Windswift* is an appropriate
name.

DORUN
She's faster than she looks!

KURDEER

I doubt that. Regardless, Ekelle has convinced me to meet with you.

TARSIS

Too late, the Empires already sprung their trap.

DORUN

I assume that our safehouse wasn't the only one raided?

KURDEER

Many of our comrades have been captured. What's more concerning is our grounded ships. Ekelle says you can help us.

DORUN

We can help each other.

Dorun motions for everyone to gather around the cylindrical console. After punching a few buttons a 3D hologram appears suspended from the base of the console. The hologram shows 3D blueprints of a large facility. Different sections highlight in a loop, notes pointing to different rooms/sections.

DORUN (CONT'D)

This is the Governor's Fortress. Since the Empire took control, this facility has become the center of government administration for the entire planet. If the Inhibitor is going to be anywhere, it will be here.

EKELLE

That complex is huge. The Inhibitor could be anywhere in there.

DORUN

An inhibitor that can stop ships planet-wide is going to be large. Very large. Also, it would have to be installed quite recently or we would have seen the signs.

ELLIS

Has there been any large construction efforts near the Fortress?

DORUN

I don't know. We could only get blueprints from the initial construction.

TARSIS

So we don't know about any changes since it was built. Great.

KURDEER

But we do. We have been watching the Fortress for some time. On the west side, here **[points to blueprint]**, an extension to the spaceport is underway.

EKELLE

Security is high there. Too high for simple construction.

DORUN

That's it. I think I might be impressed after all.

TARSIS

So how do we get in?

DORUN

(To Kurdeer)

You're not going to like this.

Kurdeer eyes Dorun suspiciously.

[Commerical Break]

INT. CREW FREIGHTER: MAIN ROOM

Establishing shot of the Windswift in a crowded public shipyard. Cut to inside the main room of the ship.

KURDEER

(hostile)

You want us to do what!?

EKELLE

You really don't have any respect for us.

DORUN

It's the only way.

EKELLE

It's lunacy.

DORUN
It will work!

KURDEER
Let me get this straight. You want
to us to march up to the Restricted
Zone checkpoint and *get arrested*?

DORUN
Well, I'll be the one arresting
you, but yeah that's the jist.

KURDEER
Who do you think you are?

DORUN
The only one on this planet that
can get your ships off the ground.

A long beat. Kurdeer and Ekelle share a look.

EKELLE
We'll do it.

KURDEER
What? Ekelle! He can't be trusted!

Kurdeer pulls Ekelle aside. A hushed, heated conversation
ensues, words indistinguishable. Body language shows Ekelle
getting the upper hand. It's obvious they're "together".

Kurdeer acquiesces, turns back to group.

KURDEER (CONT'D)
(begrudgingly)
Fine. We will be at the Bazaar. If
this is some trick-

DORUN
It's not a trick. (To Ekelle) Thank
you.

EKELLE
Tell me, truthfully. Will this
work?

DORUN
It has to.

EXT. GULON II - RESTRICTED ZONE CHECKPOINT

Dorun, Ellis, and Tarsis meet Ekelle and Kurdeer in a large bazaar. Despite fully stocked stalls, the bazaar is abandoned.

TARSIS
Where is everyone?

ELLIS
People smell trouble. Only fools
would be out here when the Empire
cracks down.

TARSIS
Including us?

ELLIS
Especially us.

DORUN
Ekelle, Kurdeer. I see you're here
but where are your rebel friends?

EKELLE
You only see them when you want to
see them.

Ekelle motions with her hand. Around the group several poorly dressed rebels appear from nowhere.

DORUN
Very good. My officer alias should
get us through the checkpoint. With
any luck we'll walk right through.

ELLIS
And if we don't have any luck?

Dorun gives Ellis a look.

DORUN
We improvise. Tarsis, show them how
it's done.

Tarsis takes on the demeanor of a drill sergeant.

TARSIS
MOVE IT YOU SLOVENLY LOT. I HAVEN'T
SEEN A SADDER DISPLAY OF SLUMRATS
IN MY ENTIRE LIFE. MOVE IT!

The rebel group is surprised, some taking offence.

TARSIS (CONT'D)
 (conspiratorially)
 This won't work if it looks like
 you're going to jump me, put your
 heads down and play the part... AND
 IF I SEE SO MUCH AS A FINGER OUT OF
 PLACE I'LL PERSONALLY RIP YOUR
 THROAT OUT.

ELLIS
 (privately to Dorun)
 He enjoys this a bit too much...

The group, led by the Imperial-disguised crew march towards the checkpoint. The heavily entrenched area features several imperial soldiers and very large gates. The gates are closed, guards dot the various watchtowers surrounding the area. A main guardhouse sit behind fortified heavy weaponry.

TARSIS
 HALT!

An imperial trooper rushes towards the crew. He salutes Dorun.

CHECKPOINT GUARD
 Sir! Apologies sir, we do not have
 your arrival on the order sheet,
 Officer ___?

DORUN
 (haughty, a bit forced)
 Never mind, soldier. I assume our
 transport is ready.

Ellis and Tarsis share a look. "Really, that's your Officer voice?"

CHECKPOINT GUARD
 Uhh... sorry sir... uhh... let me
 check with the Duty Officer.

Dorun shares a look with Ellis/Tarsis

DORUN
 Very well.

The soldier puts his hand to his ear communicator and calls it in.

CHECKPOINT GUARD
 (To communicator)
 Officer here... looking for
 transport...
 (MORE)

CHECKPOINT GUARD (CONT'D)
didn't give me his name. (to
Dorun) One moment sir, the officer
is on his way.

A rotund officer steps out of the main guardhouse. Red cheeks
snarl as he tucks his top into his trousers and marches
towards the group. Dorun turns quietly to Ellis.

DORUN
(quietly)
We have a problem. He outranks me.

Ellis doesn't have time to react as the officer reaches the
group.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
What the hell is this?

Dorun snaps to attention.

DORUN
Sir. Junior Dominant Reese Karsor
reporting.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Junior Dominant Reese Karsor what
the hell are you doing at my
checkpoint? And why the hell do you
have these stinking slumrats with
you?

Dorun looks at the rebels, seeing flashes of anger from the
group he puts his hand on the officer's arm.

DORUN
(quietly, respectfully)
Perhaps sir, it would be best if we
chatted in private.

The officer casts a look of disgust across the rebels

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Come.

The Officer leads Dorun his private office in the main
guardhouse. The office is well furnished. Hand-sized native
statues stand on a cabinet on one of the walls. As the
officer leans on his main desk, Dorun goes to the statues.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CONT'D)
Well?

DORUN
These are original Gulonese ritual
statues, aren't they?

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Cut the crap, Junior Dominant.

Dorun leans back against the cabinet.

DORUN
Sir, my orders are to publicly
arrest and transport those
informants.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Informants?

DORUN
Yes sir, rebels considered assets
by the Intelligence Division.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
If they're "assets" why arrest
them?

DORUN
My guess, sir, is to maintain their
cover.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Just like Intelligence to waste my
time.

DORUN
Yes sir.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
So you've come to my checkpoint
with a dozen rebels on some
halfbaked plan to arrest them?

DORUN
Thats... Exactly right, sir.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Wasted effort. These Gulon's are
cattle. I was posted at Hyrus
Seven. Now *they* were something.

DORUN
I heard about Hyrus Seven. Violent.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
These fringe planets are all the same. You just need to get the natives under the heel of your boot. Then you squeeze.

Dorun shakes off the disgust. Checkpoint Officer frowns, smelling weakness. He shifts off the desk he was leaning against and moves slightly closer to Dorun.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CONT'D)
(menacingly)
Where are you stationed out of, Junior Dominant?

DORUN
(hesitant)
Central Planets... mostly... This is my first tour on the Outer Rim.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
You soft Centralites. That's what I hate. I've been out here for years.

DORUN
Yes... Sir-

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
I'm not finished! You Centralites are all the same. Cozy posts on safe planets, only coming out here to sniff out a promotion. I'm bringing civilization to these savages. What have you done?

DORUN
I'm just following orders, sir.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
Well I'm giving you an order to get out of my sight!

DORUN
Sir... I'd be happy to, as soon as you give us a troop transport.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER
(exploding)
WHAT? You think I'm going to give you one of MY transports?

The officer gets closer to Dorun.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CON'T) (CONT'D)
You impetuant little man. Do you
have any idea who I am?

The officer is getting closer. A closeup shot shows Dorun's hand groping for one of the statues, his eyes remaining on the Officer. The officer is breathing down Dorun's neck.

CHECKPOINT OFFICER (CON'T) (CONT'D)
I'll have you buried Junior
Dominant, you hear me, buried!

Dorun swings the statue across the head of the Officer. He's unconscious before he hits the ground. Dorun rushes to the door, listening to see if anyone outside heard. Satisfied, he goes to the console on the main desk, authorizing a transport. Dorun moves to the Officer, taking a keycard and a communicator. He takes a moment to compose himself.

DORUN
Looks like you'll be the one
buried.

Dorun leaves the office, closing the door before returning to the group.

DORUN (CONT'D)
The transport is being readied now.
(To guard) Oh, private, your
officer says he's not to be
disturbed. He didn't seem to be in
a very good mood, so I suggest you
listen.

The guard is well aware of his Officer's temper.

CHECKPOINT GUARD
Yes sir.

The guard leaves and returns to his post. As the large gate doors open, Dorun turns to the group.

ELLIS
(quietly)
What happened?

DORUN
(quietly)
I improvised.

Behind the gates a landing port for small ships sits with a number of troop transports. One is being prepped for launch. The group approaches the ship.

DORUN (CON'T) (CONT'D)
We don't have much time. You still
know how to fly those things right?

Dorun motions to the transport.

ELLIS
Well I'm no ace pilot like Arianne,
but I can fly it.

DORUN
You'll have to. We'll need this
transport to get back our ship.

ELLIS
And the pilot already assigned to
fly it?

DORUN
He'll have to be removed.

ELLIS
How are we supposed to do that?

DORUN
You mean how are you supposed to do
it. Figure it out.

Ellis blanches, but covers it quickly. Tarsis directs the
rebels into the rear section, closing the doors. Dorun, Ellis
and Tarsis get in the front.

INT. TROOP TRANSPORT COCKPIT

The cockpit features four seats two by two. The pilot is in
the left front seat, Ellis takes the seat beside him, Dorun
and Tarsis sit in the backseats.

PILOT
Destination?

DORUN
Governor's Fortress.

PILOT
Ay ay.

The ship takes off. Well into the flight, Ellis looks back at
Dorun, his expression "do I have to?". Dorun replies with a
"Get on with it" expression. Tarsis frowns with a "what are
you two talking about?" expression. Ellis turns to the Pilot.

ELLIS

Ah... We... We need you to wait for
us once we land.

PILOT

What are you talking about? That's
not protocol.

Dorun shoots Ellis with a "Not good enough" expression. Ellis considers his options. He moves to speak again, but stops before saying anything. He grows frustrated, then realizes what he's going to do. He looks to Dorun, then the Pilot.

ELLIS

(To Pilot)

Sorry about this.

PILOT

What?

Ellis punches the Pilot hard. The transport lurches, in the back the rebels fall over with the unexpected change in course. The Pilot tries to grab Ellis, who attempts to strike the pilot again. The Pilot fends off the attack, getting a decent hold on Ellis and pulls him down. From his viewpoint, Ellis sees an "Eject" lever. Ellis breaks from the Pilots grip, strikes again, then puts both hands on the lever. The pilot looks down, realizing what Ellis is going to do. He looks back up to Ellis, giving him a pleading look.

Ellis pulls the lever. The Pilots chair explodes laterally from his side of the ship. The other seats are unaffected. The room roars as air rushes in the cockpit. Ellis struggles to get the ship back under control. He finally gets the ship back on course and puts on the comm helmet.

CUT TO:

INT. FLIGHT CONTROL CENTER, GOVERNORS FORTRESS

Flight Control on Gulon II has always been lacking, but the last several weeks have been particular bad with long days and few breaks. Flight Control isn't a hard job, mostly tedious, so the message that a Troop Transport has just had an ejection event sparks mild interest in an otherwise exhausted Flight Controller.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Transport Three-Seven-Two this is
Flight Control. We just detected an
ejection event on your ship, please
respond.

[For the remainder of the conversation, the camera cuts to Flight Control and Transport Cockpit]

Ellis is startled, not exactly sure what to do.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (CONT'D)

I say again, we've detected someone ejecting from your ship. Please respond.

ELLIS

Uh.. This is transport Three-Seven-Two... Everything is fine here, I don't know what you're talking about.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Transport Three-Seven-Two your ship has clearly logged an ejection event. You're also showing significant yaw drag.

ELLIS

No, no ejection here. Your sensors must be off.

The Flight Controller scoffs.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Our sensors are working just fine. You-

ELLIS

Look I don't know what to tell you. I would know if someone ejected.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Your ship must be logging bad flight data.

Ellis struggles at the controls, the ejection hole has produced significant drag.

ELLIS

If you say so, she's running smooth on my end.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER

Transport Three-Seven-Two you're hereby ordered to Shipyard B-Seven-Alpha for immediate diagnostics and repair.

ELLIS
Right after I finish this mission.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Sir when Flight Control gives you
an order, you follow it
immediately.

ELLIS
Sorry maam, I've got work to do.

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
Why I have never- Transport Three-
Seven-Two I will have you written
up so fast-

ELLIS
You know what, write me up. You
people are always-

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
You People?

ELLIS
Yeah. You People. You think you can
just tell me whatever you want me
to do and I'll do it. Well guess
what Lady-

FLIGHT CONTROLLER
(incensed)
Oh you do *not* refer to me as Lady.

ELLIS
I just did!

Tarsis leans to Dorun as Ellis continues to tell the Flight
Controller off.

TARSIS
He enjoys this a bit too much...

ELLIS
So deal with it.

To punctuate his point, Ellis pulls off the helmet
communicator and tosses out the ejection hole.

DORUN
What the hell was that?

ELLIS
Improvising.