

A reality-based transformation tale and contemporary odyssey involving dangerous psych-tech intrigue, a subtle tinge of sci-fi, a solid hit of deep romance and inner awakening – all entangled in an ancient shamanic power play.

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# HEART FORCE

*Pilot Episode (1 of 6)*

## **"Jade Phallus Heist"**

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by B Budd Smith & John Selby

(Inspired by the novels High Heart
and Higher Forces by John Selby)

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INT. STANFORD UNIV HALLWAY - NIGHT

Carrying a day pack, a slender YOUNG MAN (whose face we don't see) walks fast up to an iris-scan. It recognizes him and the door slides open -

INT. NEURO-PSYCH LAB [CONTINUOUS]

Lights are dimmed for the night, no one is in the large lab room. The young man walks silently past several MRI machines and a dozen desks with computers.

He pauses at a slightly-open interior office door. Rock music is playing. He looks inside - and quickly does something with his hands.

INT. OFFICE [CONTINUOUS]

Professor ROB HADLEY (57) is hunched over his computer writing furiously with total concentration. The young man comes up behind him - and aggressively presses a wet cloth over the professor's nose and mouth.

The professor struggles but quickly goes limp. The young man calmly takes a syringe out of his day pack and injects something into the professor's neck, then speaks with a slight accent:

YOUNG MAN  
Pues - you had your chance. Now  
it's adios amigo.

He turns and walks casually out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UC BERKELEY LECTURE HALL - DAY

*TWO YEARS LATER -*

JACK HADLEY (30, confident, energetic) is finishing up a lecture to around a hundred students. They listen attentively as he speaks playfully, laid-back - but still sounding professorial:

JACK  
(west-coast accent)  
So off you go, swaggin' into open  
spaces. I'll be down south in Baja  
for the holidays catching some non-  
(MORE)

JACK (cont'd)  
 tech sunsets. Be sure to check out  
 that amygdala research I posted you  
 know where - and hey, I've enjoyed  
 every moment here with ya - Happy  
 Holidays!

To various muted cheers and even some enthusiastic applause,  
 Jack makes a quick side-door exit.

EXT. UC BERKELEY CAMPUS [CONTINUOUS]

Jack comes fast out of the lecture hall. It's December, a  
 bit windy, looking like rain.

JACK  
 (to himself)  
 Finally - done with that.

A fellow teacher (LESLIE, 30s) approaches him - walks with  
 him down the path to the parking lot. Their pace is brisk  
 but not speedy. They speak quietly like friends.

LESLIE  
 Wait. Jack - we haven't talked  
 about, you know, vacation. Are you  
 coming over?

JACK  
 (abrupt)  
 I was going to call. I feel like  
 I'm gonna explode - I'm heading  
 south for a few weeks.

LESLIE  
 (beat) Is it okay to ask who're you  
 going with?

Jack stops walking, responds with a kinder tone.

JACK  
 Nothing like that - total solo,  
 grab a bit'a monk med time in Todos  
 Santos but hey, have a real good  
 holiday, drink a glass, take a toke  
 for me.

LESLIE  
 (honest)  
 Damn, I had my heart set on more of  
 what we did last week - but okay,  
 whatever. Oh, somebody said you're  
 shipping out to Google.

Jack reacts - shakes his head.

JACK  
Misinformation. Dumb. Not possible.

LESLIE  
What I mean, Jack , is that I might be heading there myself. I need to get out and do something real.

JACK  
Working for Google?

LESLIE  
They're a force of nature. They still mean to do good.

JACK  
Depends on how you define good.

LESLIE  
(a bit pissed)  
You do have an attitude on that.

JACK  
Yeah, got it from my dad, he got it from his dad - hey, t'would be lovely to hang with ya but really, Baja calls. I gotta run - party on!

She stares at him as he walks off - then smiles slightly, turns and walks back up toward campus.

EXT/INT. VW CAMPER [CONTINUOUS]

Jack walks across the Psych Department parking lot and climbs into his custom Volkswagen CAMPER.

He's jolted to find a casually-dressed man, LARRY BISH (50s, easy-going but brilliant) sitting quietly in the passenger seat waiting for him.

JACK  
(annoyed)  
So, breaking and entering - illegal trespass. Google have you out playing spy versus spy today?

Larry grins, not reacting.

LARRY

Door was unlocked. Hey, we're looking forward to your Ted talk.

JACK

Mom phoned last night, said she's working directly for you now.

LARRY

Danny's an asset. You would be too.

JACK

(reacting)

Larry, can't you take a no? Just ease up and let me be, will ya?

Larry looks at Jack with genuine concern.

LARRY

What's up with you recently Jack? I think it was Alan Watts who said that life is so damn serious, it'll kill you if you take it seriously.

JACK

And look what happened to him, dead at 57, same as my dad.

LARRY

Yeah. Jon being gone - still harsh on all of us. My therapist helped me through all that. Got his number if you want but really, it's been two years now. Time to give it up and let go.

JACK

I'll let go when the cops nail whoever killed him.

LARRY

Well yeah - and actually that's why I'm here. There's a new mood-tech treatment in the works based on your dad's research.

JACK

So?

LARRY

So as of this week we're hot after that IP. And get this - there's

(MORE)

LARRY (cont'd)  
 peripheral data pointing to who  
 maybe offed Jon, if anybody did.

Jack exhales loudly. Larry hands him a cell phone.

- CU on phone: Jack sees a telephoto HEAD SHOT of a young quite-striking woman (MAHALENA BERNHARDT, 30, Mayan/German).

CROSS-CUT:

INT. MUSEUM DISPLAY ROOM [CONTINUOUS]

Mahalena's photo image morph-cuts to a body-scan shot following the live Mahalena as she walks through a bunch of museum visitors in a Guatemalan-artifact exhibit.

Mahalena walks up to a life-size masterfully-carved ancient Mayan JADE PHALLUS on display.

She turns and looks around the room. As she looks again in the camera's direction, we morph back to:

INT. CAMPER AT BERKELEY [CONTINUOUS]

Jack is staring at the photo on the cell phone.

LARRY  
 That woman's brother was one of the seven grad-students identified passing through the iris check into your dad's lab that night Jon died.

JACK  
 So?

LARRY  
 So there's emerging evidence this same guy is down south somewhere doing illegal brain experiments parallel to your dad's.

Jack hands back the cell phone - stays silent.

LARRY (cont'd)  
 This woman - by chance I just got word she's over at the Marin Museum right now, maybe part of some visiting exhibit. You might zap over, spark a conversation, maybe learn where her brother's lab is. Finding him is vital to me,  
 (MORE)

LARRY (cont'd)  
important to Google - and maybe to  
you too.

JACK  
So you're spying on this woman,  
stalking her?

LARRY  
Hey, I'm just quietly reaching out  
with the photo. A guy who used to  
work for Google gave me that info,  
for a pretty penny. I'm being  
cautious - that's why I'm asking  
you for a first look, not my usual  
team.

JACK  
Well I'm not biting. I'm burnt and  
heading south.

LARRY  
(not giving up)  
Her name's Mahalena. Beautiful  
eyes. You gotta admit she's quite a  
magnificent specimen.

JACK  
Larry, that kind'a talk seriously  
dates you.

LARRY  
Come on, just get over there, chat  
her up. Then get back to me with  
info on her brother. I feel a flow  
here and you're my man. Do it for  
your dad.

Jack takes the phone and stares at the woman again.

The sound of a fine-tuned engine shifting masterfully in  
traffic cuts in -

INT. CAMPER ON FREEWAY - DAY

Jack is enjoying driving fast. He reaches and turns on a  
Spotify rock/blues station - over CREDITS a rough raw male  
blues tune cuts in:

BLUES/ROCK SINGER (V.O.)  
Well I met this woman the other  
night yes I did. She walked up to  
me in broad moonlight yes she did -  
(MORE)

BLUES/ROCK SINGER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 and she said, 'Didn't I know you in  
 another life? It seems to me that I  
 was once your wife. Won't you come  
 with me - I need you to come with  
 me - won't you come with me now...'

Jack looks perplexed/intrigued by the lyrics.

EXT. MUSEUM PARKING LOT - DAY

The parking lot is seen through a video surveillance lens. It's now raining hard. Jack's suped-up camper splashes into the parking lot. The surveillance camera watches him along with several other arrivals.

EXTERIOR VIDEO MAN (V.O.)  
 This is boring, nothing at all  
 happening out here. How long is she  
 gonna just sit in there?

INT. MUSEUM LOBBY [CONTINUOUS]

The hidden body camera in the lobby is still focused on the same young woman as before (Mahalena, Mahee for short, 30, slender, alert). She is now sitting upright on a sofa.

INTERIOR VIDEO MAN (V.O.)  
 (whispering)  
 Yeah, boring but I wouldn't mind  
 getting my hands on a bit'a that.  
 Hey, just wondering - did Larry  
 Bish text you earlier today with a  
 photo?

EXTERNAL VIDEO MAN (V.O.)  
 No - why would he? We're all done  
 with Google.

INTERIOR VIDEO MAN (V.O.)  
 Yeah, I brushed him off. The pay on  
 this side is double. Just keep on  
 her, see what she's up to.

INT. MUSEUM LOBBY - NORMAL POV

A wall-clock shows 4:15. The museum is jam-packed. Jack enters, looks around, grabs a brochure. On the cover is a photo of the lifelike ceremonial jade-phallus artifact.

Jack glances up - finds a Mayan statue staring back at him. He unzips his jacket and closes his eyes, inhales deeply - and does a couple pleasurable neck rolls.

His eyes open and he glances around the room, checking out several young women. One of them catches his glance, smiles. He blinks, looks away - and finds himself looking at the profile of that same woman in Larry's photo. Mahalena is sitting alone in a far corner.

She turns her head and looks directly into Jack's eyes.

People come between them, she disappears - then bodies part and she's visible again, sitting with her eyes now closed, long dark hair loose around her shoulders -

She opens her eyes suddenly and looks again directly at Jack, with the slight smile of an intimate friend. She cocks her head inquisitively - and drops the smile.

The crowd moves. Jack loses sight of her again. He starts to push impulsively toward her - then surrenders to the flow of the visitors and goes on into the Guatemalan-display room.

INT. DISPLAY ROOM [CONTINUOUS]

Jack spies the jade carving positioned near a far wall. It's surrounded by about thirty people and a fat armed GUARD. A red cord keeps observers a few feet back.

Jack steps into an open space to see the thing close-up. Perched on its velvet stand, the piece is rotating slowly with tiny spotlights highlighting its organic curves.

As Jack stares at the life-size jade phallus, someone right beside him speaks in a low resonant female voice with a slight hard-to-identify mellifluous accent:

MAHALENA

(playful)

Ah, Nokalito, so you have come.

Jack glances ... it's the woman he noticed in the lobby.

JACK

(flustered)

Uhm, oh - it's you. I mean, do I know you?

MAHALENA

Who can say. I saw you walk in.

JACK  
Well hi. My name's Jack.

MAHALENA  
(lightly - smiling)  
So yet another Jack has come to  
gaze upon the holy genitalia of the  
long-lost Mayan autocracy.

JACK  
(smiles back)  
Uhm, yeah. Well put.

They stare intently at the jade piece as it turns.

MAHALENA (V.O.)  
In the highland Maya tradition from  
whence this hunk comes there are  
two teachings. The first is that we  
must always remember and even  
worship our ancestors. The second  
is that we must strive to let go of  
the past and embrace whatever is  
emerging. (beat) I do wonder what  
residual wisdom this piece might  
still be carrying.

JACK  
Yeah, I was just wondering who  
actually made it and, really - why?

MAHALENA  
Pues, a thousand years ago there  
was a well-balanced Maya society  
flourishing in the highlands. Then  
the inevitable winds of change blew  
away that balance. Raw male forces  
seized power - and they generated  
this gaping misogynist tool.

She pauses - puts both hands over her heart.

JACK  
It's perfectly sculpted. Imagine  
making that without power tools.

MAHALENA  
In my imagination I see innocent  
virgin girls - I cannot escape what  
was done to them. But perhaps I am  
sounding a bit too harsh. I believe  
in regaining the male-female  
(MORE)

MAHALENA (cont'd)  
balance, not honoring those who  
violated it.

JACK  
I'll smoke to that. So what else  
does the brochure say?

MAHALENA  
Tradition tells us that Caban, the  
Atitlan god of the volcano, judged  
the priests' sacrificial behavior  
as unacceptable. One day in 1018 he  
blew his holy top. Lava spewed to  
the high heavens and all was lost -  
except for this piece. It was re-  
discovered in 1939, then stored  
away during the war. Now it is  
again being brought to the fore.

She glances quickly around the room as if on high alert.

JACK  
So was this particular carving ever  
used in a Mayan ceremony - were  
there female victims involved?

MAHALENA  
(somewhat joking)  
You are now asking, at least from  
your own cultural perspective, a  
rather pornographic question.

She looks over at the guard who is talking with tourists.  
When she looks back, her expression is quite serious.

MAHALENA (cont'd)  
Whenever we perceive anyone as a  
helpless victim, we disrupt the  
deeper integrity of that person.  
But yes. An innocent virgin would  
ceremoniously receive the jade -  
and then yield her heart. The gods  
would be grateful and support the  
priests - but I cannot imagine a  
god who would demand such a gross  
violation of the feminine spirit.

They both stare at the slowly-spinning artifact.

MAHALENA (V.O.)  
However, this piece does fascinate  
me. Even right now it might be  
(MORE)

MAHALENA (V.O.) (cont'd)  
radiating a more integrated male  
presence and purpose.

She glances at her watch.

JACK  
So - uhm. Are you yourself from the  
lake where they found this?

Her expression softens.

MAHALENA  
I was born and raised on Lago  
Atitlan. Since then I have been,  
how do you say it, around.

A LOUD COMMOTION jolts the hush of the display room. Over by  
the guard a YOUNG WOMAN is perhaps having an epileptic fit.

Jack turns and watches the guard make a move toward the  
staggering woman but too late - she collapses down hard onto  
the floor, her short dress flying up revealing yellow  
underwear.

Jack turns his head back to the jade piece - he catches the  
Guatemalan woman pushing against the red cord.

Her left hand reaches into her purse and emerges with a  
duplicate of the artifact. Her right hand quickly grabs the  
original as her left sets the replacement on the pedestal.

The woman is still convulsing on the floor. Mahalena slips  
the stolen piece into her purse. She looks around the room  
to make sure no one has seen what she's done - and catches  
Jack staring right at her.

MAHALENA (cont'd)  
(quietly urgent)  
Por favor, stay calm, come outside  
with me and I will explain.

The woman on the floor is now recovering as the distracted  
guard tries to pull her dress down over her underwear.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MUSEUM [CONTINUOUS]

POV surveillance camera - Mahalena and Jack walk fast to a  
beat-up SPORTS CAR parked at the curb.

Jack's phone rings. He sees it's Larry phoning - and turns  
off his phone.

MAHALENA

We need to depart immediately.

JACK

And if I refuse?

MAHALENA

Please. This is important.

They stare each other down a moment - then Jack nods.

As they get in and drive off, we HEAR the surveillance team:

EXTERIOR VIDEO MAN (V.O.)

What's going on in there, did she do anything before she left?

INTERIOR VIDEO MAN (V.O.)

(hesitates)

Uhm, no, not that I saw.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PRIVATE PATIO - DAY

DANIELLE HADLEY (DANNY for short, 50s, well-groomed) is sitting with a friend on a covered private patio under an outdoor heater. Beyond them are several vintner buildings and a large Napa Valley vineyard.

A steady rain is falling as the two middle-aged women sip wine and nibble. A cell phone rings - Danny answers.

INT. OFFICE COMPLEX - GOOGLE [CONTINUOUS]

Larry is on his phone, looking out a window at the rain.

LARRY

(curt)

Danny. Sorry to interrupt your afternoon up there but I need you to phone Jack. Don't mention me, just chat a bit, use your detective edge - find out where he is, who he's with and what he's doing. I don't want to push him myself.

DANNY

This is slightly strange, Larry - why Jacky?