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TOP
SECRET

**A REPORT TO THE EMPEROR REGARDING THE CULT OF
THE JEW KNOWN AS JESUS**

**COMPILED BY AGENTS OF THE EMPEROR'S OWN IMPERIAL BUREAU OF
INVESTIGATION**

**COMANDING AGENT
CENTURION WALTER THE FRANK**

**REPORTING AGENTS
SPECIAL AGENT DANAЕ SCULLUS
SPECIAL AGENT MULDOR FOXUS**

To His Royal Highness Nero, Emperor of Rome:

Greetings, Gracious Sire! As per your command, I, as a centurion in your loyal Praetorian Guard and Assistant Director of your loyal Imperial Bureau of Investigation have undertaken to investigate this new religion of Christianity and to calculate the character and motivations of its followers. To this end I have assigned a special unit of IBI, the X-Files, to investigate the life and teachings of the founder of this Christianity, the man known as Jesus of Nazareth.

The X-Files has long been assigned cases of this nature, that is cases that cannot be explained without references to the gods and has been of great use in guarding against treasonous conspiracies against the Empire and the person of the Emperor. The X-Files is at present staffed by the barbarian Muldor of Germania, known as the Fox, and the woman Danae Scullus.

Both agents, who have spilled the blood of the enemies of the Empire and shed their own in its service, are of the highest character and ability and their reports can be considered reliable. For the Emperor's convenience, informal summaries of their service are enclosed.

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Walter the Frank

DANAE SCULLUS

Danae Scullus has been an agent of the IBI for three years. She is thirty years old. Her service has been entirely spent in the X-Files where part of her duties has been to secretly evaluate the work of her partner, Muldor of Germania. Agent Scullus is the daughter of the late Admiral Scullus of Hibernia, who served the Empire so well in its battles with pirates. Her mother is of Roman nobility; in fact she is a cousin of the noble and much-mourned Claudius. She is single and seems disinclined towards marriage. Indeed it is a bit of a running joke around the bureau about her disastrous attempts at courtship, one of her would be suitors turned out to be a vampire, and two others proved to be insane mass-murderers (both of whom she captured), and yet another, a lawyer.

Agent Scullus is a medical doctor having studied under the Greeks in Athens at the insistence of her father (who strenuously opposed her entrance into the IBI). Due to her training at the hands of the Greeks she is superbly trained in Rhetoric and Philosophy, particularly Logic. Her specialty in the medical field is forensic medicine. She is well-trained in the unarmed combat styles of the East.

Her service in the Bureau has been exemplary. Her keen mind and rigorous logic has proved invaluable in her work, especially in contrast to her more hotheaded partner, and her training in medicine has enabled her unit to investigate matters that normally would require bringing in outside assistance in matters best left to the Bureau. She has been of particular use in cases involving women. Honest women trust her and dishonest women are unable to spin their feminine wiles around her.

MULDOR FOXUS OF GERMANIA

Muldor of Germania, called the Fox for his cleverness in the Coliseum, has been an agent of the IBI for seven years. His exact age is unknown but he is believed to be about thirty-five years old.

Agent Muldor was captured in Germania by your loyal legions and sold into slavery as a lumberjack in the North at the approximate age of twelve. At about seventeen years of age he was sold to a trainer of gladiators. From this age until ten years ago he fought as a gladiator until winning his freedom, undefeated both as a *cestus* and *gladius* in over one hundred matches. During his service as a gladiator his master insisted he be educated in the manner of the Greeks, believing that a strong mind leads to a strong body. He is particularly an expert on the religious beliefs of the peoples of the Empire. After winning his freedom he continued his studies being awarded his Doctor of Psychology shortly thereafter. After this he joined the Praetorian Guard and was assigned to the IBI and later the X-Files.

Agent Muldor believes that as a child (shortly before his capture) his younger sister was kidnapped by beings that live on far away stars. NB: agent Muldor subscribes to the atheistic philosophy that the stars and our own sun are not gods but rather burning balls of flames with many other worlds like our own surrounding them. Agent Muldor has dedicated his life to the rescue of his sister and avenging her kidnapping and death if she has been slain. Agent Muldor believes that his sister's kidnapping was part of larger conspiracy involving these alien beings and men on this world. He believes that this conspiracy is a plot against the entire world, both the Empire and beyond. Because of

this belief he has been a constant guard against any conspiracy against the Empire and has repeatedly exposed threats to both the Emperor and the Empire.

Agent Muldor has at times been a bit of a discipline problem, due to his temperament he at times tends to think before acting. He further tends to see everything in terms of his conspiracy theory, causing him to miss more simple and prosaic solutions to problems at times. Single, he is a notorious chaser of women, the more wanton the better. However, his loyalty and dedication can only be described as ferocious and total.

Centurion Walter:

This new Christian faith which you have assigned your loyal agents Muldor and Scullus to investigate seems to be a direct derivation of the Jewish faith which has long existed in the Empire and until recently Rome itself. The Jews, although they refuse to worship the Emperor, as is his due, are an otherwise unremarkable nation. Their country is far from Rome and since the noble and much mourned Claudius expelled them from Rome they pose no threat to the Emperor and pay their taxes with more or less equanimity.

The most salient feature of the religion of the Jews is their belief in only one god instead of many. The Jews believe that they are the “chosen people” of this god, who will one day anoint for them a liberator, or as they call him in their language a “*messiah*” to free them from all earthly powers including presumably Rome. Because of this belief in their one god they refuse to honor the gods of Rome who hold them in thrall. However, as said, they are no threat to rebel unless someone who claims this title “Messiah” arises to lead them in battle. If this happens, what has happened to all who have opposed Rome will happen to them.

During our preliminary investigation (our operatives, “The Lone Archers” were invaluable during this investigation) of these Christians it was discovered that their leader was in Rome attempting to spread his faith. Instructions were sent immediately to arrest him and prepare him for questioning. NB: the following transcript and future reports will be recorded by the scribe you have assigned us.

**TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERROGATION OF THE CHRISTIAN
KNOWN AS SIMON PETER AS CONDUCTED BY AGENT MULDOR FOXUS
OF GERMANIA**

State your name, occupation, age and place of birth. *“I am Simon Peter of Bethsaida in Judea. I am a fisherman. I do not know my age.”* (Prisoner was elderly, gray-headed, and quite blind)

How long have you been in Rome? *“Several years.”*

You are a follower of the man known as Jesus of Nazareth? *“I am.”*

You are in fact the leader of the followers of this man Jesus? *“I am their servant.”*

What is your purpose in coming to Rome? *“To spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. To baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and the Holy Spirit.”*

What is this Good News? *“That Jesus Christ is Lord!”*

How is this Good News? Who is Jesus Christ? *“Jesus Christ is Lord, He is the Son of God, who came to take away the sins of the world.”*

Your Lord is the son of a god? *“He is Lord. As all will confess on bended knee one day. For he is the Son of God!”*

What god, Jupiter? *“No! The one God. The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”*

You believe in three gods then? *“I believe in one God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life. Amen!”*

Okay, you say this Jesus is going to take away the sins of the world, how is he going to do this? *“He has already taken them upon Himself, by dying upon a cross.”*

Your Lord is dead? He has been crucified? *“No, he did die on the cross, as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. But after three days he rose from the dead.”*

Why was your lord crucified? *“For our sins and our salvation.”*

No, why was his execution ordered? *“Those who did not believe in His testimony feared and hated Him and plotted His death, accusing Him of rebellion against Rome and blasphemy.”*

Your Lord was convicted of treason? *“Convicted by Roman law, the law of this world.”*

Did your Lord advocate rebellion against Rome? *“My Lord’s kingdom is not of this world.”*

I require a straight answer. Did He ever speak against the Emperor or refuse to pay taxes?

“My Lord said to render unto ‘Caesar what is Ceasars’ and to God what is Gods’.”

Very well. So your Lord, the Son of God was sacrificed for our sins and later rose from the dead? *“Yes.”*

A simple answer at last. How did you meet this Son of God? *“Many years ago I was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee in the Land of David. My brother, Andrew and I had been fishing all night without luck. As we came to shore, we saw Jesus standing on the beach and he bade us to cast our nets again. Andrew recognized Him as one some thought a prophet so we obeyed and we brought in more fish than our boat could hold. When we came to shore I fell at His feet and bade Him to leave me as I was a sinful man and I knew Him to be a man of God. He told me to arise and follow Him and he would make us fishers of men.”*

So you followed Him? *“Yes, I followed Him and saw such wonders as I had never dreamed of. The dead were given new life, demons were cast out, blind were given sight,*

the lame walked, and lepers were cleansed. But above all we heard the Good News of eternal life.”

And then he was crucified? *“Yes, but after three days he rose from the dead as he had prophesied and appeared to us.”*

His shade appeared to you? *“No, he appeared. The women went to anoint His body as it lay in His tomb according to custom while we men hid in our fear. They came to us with word that He had disappeared from the tomb. They told us that a man clothed in white appeared before them and told them that He had risen from the dead. We men found it as the women had said. After this He appeared to us many times before He rose to heaven where He sits at the right hand of the Father.”*

So, your God sent his Son, who is also God, to die for us, which He did and later rose from the dead? *“Yes, for us and for our salvation.”*

You speak of salvation. What is this salvation from? How do we obtain this salvation? *“It is salvation from the debt of your sins. For I tell you all have sinned, most of all myself. Yet neither you nor I need die in our sins. For God so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son; so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved by Him. He that believes in Him is not condemned. But He that does not believe is already condemned because he did not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Repent and be baptized, for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

So if we believe in this Jesus, repent of our sins, and are baptized we will become immortal like the gods? *“Do not just believe! The devil believes that God is one and he*

trembles. You must have faith! You must love God with all your heart, and all your mind and all your soul. You must love your neighbor as yourself. These are the great commandments of the Lord.”

Okay, that should wrap it up. You are dismissed. *“Thank you for your time agent Muldor. And agent Scullus?”*

Yes? *“Your father in heaven loves you very much and you are not alone.”*

Uh, tell your God I said thanks. You are dismissed.

It was noticed during the interrogation that the prisoner showed no sign of being tortured. The chief jailer was questioned about this and admitted that the prescribed routine had not been carried out. He testified that he had joined the Christian faith the previous night after a lengthy conversation with the prisoner (indeed he had undergone the Christian ritual called baptism only shortly before we had arrived) and because of this he had not prepared the prisoner as instructed. However, as shown, the prisoner was most cooperative. Because of this and the unclear legal status of Christianity, punishment of the chief jailer is not contemplated and is advised against. NB: the chief jailer may be a useful tool in keeping tabs on these Christians in the future. The chief jailer was instructed to beat the prisoner (and actually do it this time) and release him.

In summation, this Simon Peter is for the most part, an unremarkable man. He is illiterate even in his own language although his Latin is excellent. The chief jailer informs us that he is a superb linguist and can speak to anyone in the jail in their own language, which includes barbarians from beyond even the Empire. His religious beliefs are undeveloped and somewhat contradictory. His schizophrenic three in one God is reminiscent of Janus. The sacrifice of a god for mankind is nothing new. Prometheus

comes to mind. We will of course investigate further the charge of treason brought against Jesus. Regarding his return from the dead and his miracles they are unimpressive fairy tales. In any case this Jesus is now a god of the dead and not the living.

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Muldor of Germania

Danae Scullus

To My Beloved Mother:

Greetings dearest mother. My apologies for not writing sooner but Rome is a demanding taskmaster. I will be unable to see you again before leaving for Judea, our mission requires haste and Nero is not known for his patience. Yes, as you asked we will be traveling by way of Crete. I do look forward to sailing the same waters where your husband, my father won such a glorious victory over the Thracian pirates. I know you miss him, as do I. Do you remember how Quintas Arrius would brag about how after his galley sank it was father who rallied the fleet to victory? I always thought it hilarious that an admiral in our fleet needed a Jewish galley slave to save him from drowning. What was that slave's name? It was Judah Ben something or other I think. Didn't he later become a famous chariot driver? Whatever.

Do not worry for my safety, these Christians in which you have such an interest are a meek lot and that lizard from Internal Affairs, Krychek that you warned me would be following us is of no account. Rather worry for yourself, Muldor (who sends his respect and affection) has informed me that he thinks you and Walter the Frank would be a fine match and intends to effect it when we return! I told him to tend to his temple harlots and leave you alone, to no effect I fear.

Your obedient daughter

Danae

PS Yes, your friend Peter is a kind man and I was glad to finally meet him (and I do appreciate his discretion), although I really don't understand what you see in his teachings. He tells me your God loves me.

From the personal journal of Muldor of Germania:

I write this from the deck of the Empire's newest and mightiest war galley, the Stella Maris. We are well into our voyage. The journey has been unremarkable so far. The crew is quite taken with Scullus. Her father's legendary skill is still spoken of with great admiration. Although, in truth I think her rare, red-haired beauty has something to do with their interest. The captain invited her to his quarters for dinner last night. She ignored my wise counsel (as usual) that it was a seduction ploy. His black eye and limp (of which the sailors and legionaries assigned to our galley are making much sport) and her ill-temper today tell me I was correct (as usual) and the fact he is alive tells me he was painfully unsuccessful.

Centurion Walter:

By the grace of the gods we have arrived in Crete. Our stay here will hopefully be brief.

We bring an unexpected success. While here in Crete, we heard that a prophet of the Christians and long time acquaintance of Simon Peter, one Paul of Tarsus was on

Crete. He turned out to be a prisoner being transferred to Rome. As he is a citizen of Rome we could not compel his testimony but he proved willing enough to speak to us.

**A TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERROGATION OF PAUL OF TARSUS, A
CHRISTIAN AND CITIZEN OF ROME AS CONDUCTED BY AGENT
MULDOR FOXUS OF GERMANIA**

Please state your name, occupation, age, and place of birth. *“I am Paul of Tarsus, I am a tent maker, I am fifty-two years old.”*

You are a Roman citizen? *“Yes, by birth.”*

Do you give this testimony freely and without coercion? *“I do.”*

You are a Christian? *“Yes, by the Grace of God.”*

By god, do you mean the Christian God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ? The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit? *“I do.”*

You are a Roman citizen yet you refuse to worship the gods of Rome, is that correct?

“Yes, I am the Emperor’s good servant, but God’s first.”

So you affirm your loyalty to Rome? *“I do.”*

How did you come to be a Christian? *“I was a Pharisee; we were Jews who strove to live our lives complete obedience to the Law of God as handed down through Moses.*

When we heard of these Christians we thought them madmen or heretics. They said that the Messiah had arrived. They told not of a liberator that would free us from our conquerors but of the Son of God who would free us from our sins. They spoke not of the Law but of faith in God and love. They spoke of a man being the Son of God!

Blasphemy! So I led my brothers in war against these Christians. I was there when Stephen, the first to die for his faith was slain. I heard of other Christians in Damascus, so I obtained warrants for their arrest. As I journeyed to Damascus a great flash of light from the sky struck me to the ground blinding me. I heard a voice asking me, 'Saul, Saul why are you persecuting me?' I asked, 'Who are you sir?' The voice replied, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Now get up and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.' So helped by my companions I entered the city. In my grief at my wrongdoing I neither ate nor drank for three days until the Lord sent His servant Ananias who lay hands on me and I was healed of my sins and filled with the Holy Spirit. Since then I have journeyed constantly to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ."

Why are you a prisoner? *"Those who refuse to hear of Christ wish to destroy me. They have brought charges of treason against me as they did my Lord. As a citizen of Rome I reserve my right to appeal to Caesar."*

Do you deny these charges of treason? *"I do."*

Do deny that your Lord advocated treason against Rome? *"I do."*

Very well. We have no further questions, you are remanded to the custody of your jailer.

Thank you for your time. *"Thank you agent Muldor. Agent Scullus? Yes? "Your father in heaven loves you very much and you are not alone."* So I have heard, thanks.

After the formal questioning agent Scullus remained with the prisoner Paul to speak with him further and to see if he had any secrets that perhaps a kind voice would cause him to reveal.

After questioning Paul there is little to add to our previous testimony. We were surprised to find that Paul has maintained a lengthy correspondence with the teacher

Seneca and enthusiastically awaits their first meeting. Paul's explanation of the theology of the Christians added no new light. They believe that the Son part of their three in one God was sacrificed for all men. They believe that all men and women are equal; whether Roman, Greek, Jew, barbarian, Christian; slave or free. Obviously this would appeal to the poor. Further, their emphasis on the kingdom in which they expect to live after they die is appealing to the less educated. Because of this Christianity could if properly exploited be of use to the Empire in preventing rebellion and unrest. Further, it was the explicit command of Jesus to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit those in prison. So if large enough numbers were to join the Christians then the Emperor could reduce his generous grain giveaways in Rome.

As per your instructions, accusations of incest and cannibalism that have been brought against the Christians have been investigated. If what Paul told agent Scullus is correct (and these Christians are an open enough lot) both charges are unfounded. All Christians address each other as "brother" and "sister," even husbands and wives due to their belief in equality before their God; hence the misunderstanding. The accusation of cannibalism is also due to a misunderstanding. In their ceremonies, Christians re-enact the last meal of their Lord where he supposedly turned bread and wine into His Flesh and Blood and bade those in attendance to eat. In their ceremonies the Christians believe that their priests re-enact this last meal and they too change bread and wine into the Flesh and Blood of Jesus.

We shall next be journeying to the land of the Jews, Israel.

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Muldor of Germania

Danae Scullus

To My Beloved Mother

Our mission goes well. The crossing of Mare Nostrum has been without incident thus far.

I have entrusted this letter to this man Paul, like yourself a follower of the Christ. He is a most gentle man and devout in the service of your God. I am sure you have noticed that he is of a handsome appearance and just the right age for you. Alas, he tells me he wishes to remain single to better serve your God.

Paul and I have spoken a great length about your Jesus. I do not worship your god but if He inspires such as this Paul then surely he is a great god indeed.

Your obedient daughter

Danae

To His Highness Nero, Emperor of Rome:

Your suspicions about agent Scullus have proven partially correct, gracious Sire. Enclosed is a copy of a missive (removed, copied, and replaced with great difficulty) that she has sent to her mother via the Christian, Paul. Although obviously the Lady Scullus is a Christian just as obviously agent Scullus is not. It is still not known whether or not agent Muldor is aware of the religious beliefs of Lady Scullus. It is doubtful, both mother and daughter seem to be capable of great discretion.

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Krychek the Slav

Centurion Walter:

Great news! It seems God has a mother! During our questioning of the Christians it was assumed that they believed that their “Son of God” simply appeared, making His prophecies and performing His wonders.

This is not the case. According to a young man known as Timothy journeying with Paul of Tarsus (not a fellow prisoner, rather an acolyte of Paul) this Jesus was born of a woman, who though elderly is still alive.

We journey next to Ephesus.

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Muldor of Germania

Danae Scullus

From the personal journal of Muldor of Germania

The second leg of our voyage has been so far uneventful. The weather has been mild and the captain seems inclined to keep his distance from Scullus.

I grow worried about my partner. After speaking to Simon Peter she seemed more favorably inclined to these Christians but not their religion. Now that she has met Paul and read what he has given her (a letter he has entrusted her to take to the Christians in Ephesus and a scroll titled the Teaching of the Twelve Apostles) she seems more sympathetic to their beliefs. Could she become a Christian? No, not a woman of her noble birth and education. Still I worry about her in her time of mourning.

Tomorrow we arrive in Ephesus!

Centurion Skinner:

The following is a summary of our findings in Ephesus.

Upon arriving in Ephesus we presented ourselves to the governor of the city. We wasted no time and explained our mission and inquired as to where we could find any Christians in the city. We were referred to a small temple of the Christians on the outskirts the city. Upon arriving at the temple we posed as seekers of Christianity. We gave the letter of Paul to their chief priest to establish our credentials. He declined our offer of *The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles* saying he already had a copy. We later learned he, in fact was one of the authors!

When we attempted to give our cover story he waved his hand and said “Who you are, Muldor of Germania and Danae Scullus, has been revealed to me. You seek Mary, the mother of Jesus. I am John, her son, by the command of the Lord as he hung upon the cross.” When we asked how he knew of our names and mission, he laughed and said “I saw you long before you set foot on these shores, but I have seen greater sights than these, as will you.” Clearly the governor of Ephesus needs to tighten the security of his office. He then explained that Mary would be there soon from the marketplace.

When the woman Mary arrived she greeted us with a kiss and addressed agent Scullus as one would speak to a daughter. Mary was a common appearing woman, of great age, dressed all in black, with a magnificent mane of silver-gray hair that fell to almost her ankles. We attempted to explain our true mission but she waved her hand and

laughed and said “Ask what you will, it takes little for me to boast of my first son. Or my second.” This she said while squeezing the hand of the priest John. Cleverly, we had the sympathetic Agent Scullus speak for Rome. NB Mary is a citizen of Rome.

**A TRANSCRIPT OF THE INTERROGATION OF MARY OF NAZARETH, A
CHRISTIAN AND CITIZEN OF ROME REGARDING HER SON, JESUS THE
CHRIST AS CONDUCTED BY AGENT DANAE SCULLUS**

My lady, please state your name, age, occupation, and place of birth. *“There is no need for so much formality Danae. I am Mary of Nazareth in the Land of David; I am a widow in care of my son John. I do not know my exact age.”*

Are you a citizen of Rome? *“I am, by grant of Pontius Pilate.”*

Do you give your testimony freely and without coercion? *“Yes, of course.”*

Were you the mother of the one known as Jesus of Nazareth? *“Yes, I am she.”*

Do you claim that this Jesus is the Son of God and God himself? *“The Lord is our God, the Lord is One!”*

So you claim your god became man? *“He did, for us and our salvation.”*

How did you come to bear the Son of God? *“I was a young girl in the village of Nazareth in the land of David, when I caught the eye of one of the men of my village, Joseph, the most kind and gentle man God ever created. Joseph was a giant of a man, I have rarely seen even barbarians that could match him in stature, indeed my girlfriends used to joke that he was a son of Goliath and not of David. (NB David was an ancient Jewish king who slew a giant named Goliath who was threatening Israel) He was long a widower, much older than I, in truth his children from his first wife were all older than*

me, but he was well settled, the finest carpenter for many miles, a great lover of the Lord and quite handsome too. He spoke to my father and with my consent, for in his kindness Joseph would not marry me otherwise, our marriage was settled. Before our marriage I awoke one night to see a messenger of God clothed in white, shining like the sun, standing at the foot of my bed. He said to me, "Hail full of grace! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." I was struck with fear but the messenger said, "Fear not Mary, for you have found grace with God. Behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and shall bring forth a Son; and you shall call him Jesus. He shall be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give Him the throne of David His father, and he will reign in the house of Jacob. And of His kingdom shall have no end." I asked him, "How can this be since I know not man?" The messenger said; "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold Elizabeth, your relative has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God. And I spoke to him and said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." And then the messenger left me and I was greatly amazed."

So you believe that your God, the Holy Spirit, visited you and gave you this Son?

(Agent Muldor interrupted at this moment) Did he come in the form of a swan? Ouch!

"Danae! Please don't kick your partner! I will answer your question Agent Muldor. No, God did not come to me in the form of a swan, Zeus is not the God of Israel, he did not come in any form at all, as Plato described all to well, God is without form. And there is

no need for sarcasm or your “good cop, bad cop routine” I will answer your questions honestly.

I will talk to you anyway I please woman! Or I will show you the back of my hand!

“You will not strike me.”

I won't? *“Your warrior's code of honor would never allow you to harm a woman or child. You will not strike me any more than you would your friend and partner Danae. Or tell her of your great love for her.”* (At this point Agent Muldor turned a very bright red and left the room)

My apologies My Lady, that was quite unnecessary. So you were a virgin when your God gave you this Son? *“Quite all right Danae, and the answers is yes, I was, and am. And please call me Mary.”*

What came next? *“I found myself with child. I told Joseph all that had happened, but he did not believe me and left in tears at what he thought was my unfaithfulness. I feared I would be stoned as an adulteress but the next day Joseph came to me and told me that a messenger of the Lord had appeared and told him all that had happened. He took me into his home until the day he died. After this I went to visit my cousin Elizabeth. As the messenger of the Lord had said she was with child. I greeted her and she replied with these words “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” And I remained with her about three months, until the birth of her son, John (NB not Mary's adopted son) and returned home. After this a decree from Rome came*

that a census be taken. My husband Joseph was of the House of David so we went to Bethlehem to be registered. It was there that I gave birth to my Son.”

And after the birth of your Son? “I gave birth to my Son in a stable because there was no room for us at the inn; it was full of all the people who had come to Bethlehem to be counted. That night shepherds came to us telling us that a messenger of the Lord had appeared before them telling them of the birth of my Son. They fell before Him, worshipping him and giving him praise and after several days magi from the east arrived bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and they too worshipped Him and we were amazed. But a messenger of the Lord appeared to my husband in a dream telling him that we must flee from Herod who would seek to destroy our Son. We fled to Egypt, along the way we heard that Herod had ordered the death of every male in Bethlehem under two years old.”

You mean Herod, the late king of the Jews? “I mean Herod, the blasphemer and murderer struck down by God because of his sins. Herod was no son of David!”

Okay, touchy point, understandable. How long did you stay in Egypt? “Two years. We returned to Nazareth when we learned of the death of Herod through a dream of Joseph’s.”

After this you lived in Nazareth? “Yes.”

Did you realize that your Son was this God and Son of God? “I understood as through a glass, darkly. When we brought Jesus to the Temple as an infant according to the Law of Moses the priest told me that someday a sword would pierce my heart. One time we were in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and on the way back we discovered Jesus was missing. We searched for three days before we found him in the Temple listening to the

teachers and asking questions. I asked Him, 'Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.' He said to us "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my father's business?' I did not then understand these things but I kept them in my heart."

Jesus lived under your roof until he became a man? "Yes, He was the most wonderful child, obedient in all things, always helping Joseph in his shop, although in truth I think Joseph despaired of ever making a carpenter out of him. As a teenager He would even help about the house!"

A teenage boy helping keep house? "Incredible isn't it?"

Utterly amazing. When did Jesus leave your home? "Until well after he became a man, until after Joseph died."

How did your husband die? "I was at home when Joseph's eldest son bade me to come quickly, that Joseph had fallen at work. I hurried to where Joseph and his sons were working. Joseph had been stricken by the heat of the sun and had fallen through the roof of the house they had been building. He could not speak, but Joseph and I had never needed words between us. Jesus moved to lay His hands upon Joseph, I believe he meant to heal him, but Joseph stayed his hand and I held my husband until he fell asleep." (At

this time we were forced to pause while the woman Mary regained her composure)

I am sorry for your loss Mary, I did not mean to bring up your grief. "Thank you, but I will see my husband and my Son again one day. This is my hope and my comfort."

It was after this your Son left home? "Yes, it was after this that Jesus met with His cousin John, Elizabeth's son at the river Jordan. John had become a great preacher, although in truth I believe Elizabeth had hoped he would become a doctor, preaching to

all the repentance of sin and baptizing in the Jordan. Jesus went to him to be baptized although I tell you there was no sin in Him. When John baptized Him the Spirit of the Lord came down to Him like a dove and the heavens opened and a voice like the voice of God said 'This is my Son in whom I am well pleased.' It was after this I began to understand and it was after this my Son began to travel and preach and work His wonders and I followed Him."

Travel? Preach? Work wonders? Please elaborate. *"He traveled throughout Galilee. He preached the Good News of salvation by the forgiveness of sins. He preached of love and faith in God. He performed great wonders; healing the lame, giving sight to the blind, and raising the dead."*

Your Son raised the dead? *"Yes, before my eyes I saw a man three days in the tomb walk. I saw him bring back from the dead the daughter of one of your centurions with only a word."*

He brought the daughter of a Roman back from the dead? *"My Son came to save all that would believe in Him, not just Jews but Romans and Greeks and barbarians. And for all He died."*

How did he die? *"He was crucified, before my very eyes. Of all the men only my son John remained with us women. My Son's last words to me were, 'Woman behold your son' and to John He said 'Behold your mother.' Then He said, 'It is finished' and fell asleep."* (At this point Mary began to weep and we ended the questioning)

While agent Scullus comforted the woman. I, your loyal scribe questioned her son John. He added little but did confirm what he witnessed of what the woman had said. His account of Jesus' appearance after supposedly rising from the dead is identical to that

of the other Christians. He further confirmed the nature of the last meal of Jesus and what Christians believe about it.

I must end on an unfortunate note. We endured a storm the night before we landed and the ship's rudder was badly damaged. Your loyal captain has informed us that it will be at least two weeks before the damage can be repaired.

SPQR

Muldor of Germania

Danae Scullus

To His Highness Nero, Emperor:

Sire, as your loyal agent I am reporting the following conversation between Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus and agent Scullus that I observed during our enforced stay in Ephesus.

“A pleasant evening to you Mary.” said agent Scullus, “A pleasant evening to you as well Danae, won't you please be seated and join me?” replied Mary. “Are you sure it not to be an interruption? I notice you sit under this tree every evening after you leave your prayers at the temple.” asked Scullus solicitously. “Quite all right, I assure you, I sit here to be with my Son and my Lord and I am quite sure He has heard enough from me over the years.” replied Mary with the warmest of laughs. Scullus answered “Very well, I will join you.” as she plopped down unceremoniously beside her. “I again feel the need to apologize for my partner,” said Scullus, “He can be quite uncouth at times.” “There is no need, I am sure he felt he was only doing his job.” replied Mary, “You know he cares about you very much.” “My dear Mary, he is my partner and my good friend, nothing more.” said Scullus. Mary smiled and said, “My best friend was

named Joseph.” They sat together for a time before Mary broke the silence with “You know Danae a question cannot be answered unless asked.” Scullus laughed and said, “I am not used to being seen through so easily.” “So ask what you will Danae” insisted Mary. “Alas, I do not know the question I want to ask.” said Scullus ruefully. “Your question is the same as everyone else’s, you want to know how to have faith.” instructed Mary, “Your ears have heard and perhaps your mind believes but not your heart. And faith comes from the heart.” “I don’t understand so how I can believe? You claim to have seen the things you speak of, the rest of us have not been so blessed.” replied Scullus. “One believes in order to understand not the other way around, remember that one. And my Son once said blessed are those who have not seen and believed.” said Mary gently. “But you seek faith and you shall have it, do you know how to receive it?” she continued. “No, how?” asked Scullus. “I shall borrow a page from your Socrates. You have heard that God sent His only Son to die for the sins of the world have you not?” asked Mary. “Yes, I have.” answered Scullus. “You have heard from my own lips that Jesus was without sin. Have you not?” “Yes, I have.” said Scullus again. “So do you believe that you, I, or any person deserves to have the perfect, blameless Son of God sacrificed for us so that we may receive eternal life?” Mary asked. “No, I would suppose not.” Scullus thoughtfully answered. “So tell me Danae if God were to do such a thing it could only be a gratuitous act of love could it not?” Mary stated as well as asked. “Some of the Greeks speak of the unknown God over all the gods, this supreme God is complete in Himself, so He could never be forced or even need to perform any act, so any act of this God by definition would be gratuitous. And yes, to die for another is an act of love greater than any other, so yes, your point is logical.” replied Scullus after a time. “So if

God grants us salvation as an undeserved and unasked for gift would He not grant the ability to respond to this gift?" asked Mary. "It would seem to so follow." agreed Scullus. "Would He not have to? How else could we know of this salvation?" questioned Mary. "True, but I have heard of your Son and what you say makes sense but I and others still do not yet believe." argued Scullus. "Again, remember that we believe that we may understand, we do not understand to believe. And some who saw all that I have seen did not believe either." replied Mary. "Again I tell you, my Son's death and our salvation was an act of love. Love comes from the heart. Open your heart Danae; open it to love, open it as all who have come to follow Jesus and all who ever will have. God sent His Son as an act of love, Jesus died for us as an act of love, open your heart to love and to be loved, open your heart to my Son, open it as did your mother and father did before you and let it be filled with the Holy Spirit." Mary concluded gently. Agent Scullus leaped to her feet with a fury, "How dare you speak of my mother and father woman? My mother is of noble birth and my father was the greatest admiral the Empire has ever seen! How dare you?" Mary rose to her feet with a practiced ease despite her age and reached up and cupped Scullus' face in her hands and said with the greatest tenderness, "These things I know my daughter Danae. I also know that your mother is a Christian and that your father on his dying bed joined her in baptism. You feel guilt because you never reconciled with him, but I tell you there was never a day in your life that he did not love you and feel pride that you were his daughter. I look into your eyes and see that you think your mother or Christian spies somehow revealed these things to me but I tell you your father rests in eternal glory. What do you think Peter and Paul meant when they told you your father in heaven loved you and that you were not alone?"

Agent Scullus staggered back with look of horror and clasped her hand to her mouth and turned and fell to her knees, "I thought they were talking about your God the Father," she sobbed. Mary knelt in front of her, pulled close and said "Indeed, God the Father is in heaven and he does love you, but he knew of your pain over your quarrels with your father and sent His poor servants to you with a message of comfort. And God knows of the pain you are to face, that is why He has not left us alone, that is why He has sent us His Holy Spirit, His Scriptures and His Church, turn to them and they will guide you and comfort you." "What is this pain to come?" Scullus whispered. Mary again took Scullus' face in her hands and said to her "I tell you three things that have been revealed to me. A sword that has pierced my heart but once will strike you twice, like myself you will know two great loves, and God will never abandon you." "Well, at least I understand that last one," Scullus half-laughed half-sobbed. Mary laughed and the two of them spoke of trifles until they fell asleep under the stars.

Krychek the Slav

From the personal journal of Muldor of Germania

Our time with the Christians of Ephesus is passing pleasantly enough. The Christians have invited the crew and legionaries assigned to our galley to stay in our homes and they have allowed the galley slaves to sleep in their temple, a converted barn. They share all their goods in common and take great care to see that the widows and orphans are cared for.

They start their day by gathering in their temple to sing holy songs written by an ancient Jewish king. After this they go about their business; some working on their farm, some at other places. After they return in the evening they again gather to sing their holy

songs. We, the crew, legionaries, and the slaves join them at these times. On the first day of the week they do not work but rather spend the day in their temple singing, reading from their holy writings, and re-enacting the last meal of their god. Their rituals are open to all except for this meal which is limited to those of their faith. I must say these gatherings are a moving experience, indeed, I witnessed my partner moved to tears by the beauty of their songs yesterday. In addition, on two nights a week they and many from the surrounding community gather together to play a game of chance they call Bingo. Although the games are open to all (I enjoy it myself enormously) for the most part the players consist of very grumpy older women.

As they refuse gold (little do they know that the captain intends to leave them a chestfull) in payment for their hospitality, the crew, the legionaries, and the slaves are clearing a nearby wooded area for cultivation by the Christians.

To My Beloved Mother:

I cannot believe these words as I write them. But my heart is bursting with joy. It has been a long time coming, but as Paul spoke, the scales have fallen from my eyes. For I have heard the Good News of Jesus Christ and what my ears have heard and my heart believes, my tongue cannot deny. I do not know when or how, but in these last two weeks what I have long known has become clear. I have heard the words of Christ preached and I cannot but proclaim what I have heard, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" Oh mother, the joy of Christ of which you always spoke, now I know.

I must give much credit to dearest Mary. When she looked at me it was with your eyes, when she held me it was with your arms. When she spoke of her husband, I saw you

speak of my father. That which was unclear before is now seen in the clearest light. God is love! I shall see you again soon mother, after we complete our assignment. For tomorrow I am to be baptized!

Your Obedient Daughter

Danae

From the personal journal of Muldor of Germania

I am still stunned by the events of this day. I was there, I saw what transpired and still I cannot believe.

Today, the first day of the week, the Christians gathered together to worship their god. When the time came for all who wished to be baptized before their ceremonies in the temple began, the priest John called forth all who would be make allegiance to Jesus and be baptized. I was thunderstruck when the captain of our ship with his crew and the centurion and all his legionaries stepped forward. I was even more amazed when they announced to the galley slaves that they were purchasing their freedom and that thenceforth they were free men. Then a leader among the slaves, a mighty Ethiopian who towered over all the others announced that they too sought baptism! It was if they had all gone mad at once. But then more! For as the crew was being baptized one of them, Krychek, a Slav broke from their ranks and announced that he was an Internal Affairs agent with the bureau and knowing of their plans for baptism had sent word directly to the Emperor Nero. He begged the forgiveness of all present and drew a dagger from his robes and attempted to drive it into his chest. Two of the quick-witted members of the

crew wrestled him to the ground and disarmed him. As he lay weeping John, the priest knelt beside him and asked him why he had done such a thing. The Slav told him that it had been his assignment to follow myself and Scullus and report our actions directly to the Emperor and that he had intended to go through with baptism and pose as a Christian but could not because he knew it would be a great sin. John asked him if he repented of his foul deeds. The Slav affirmed and John pulled him to his feet and asked him if he believed what he had heard, that Jesus Christ was Lord. Krychek affirmed that he did and John baptized him.

But most stunning; my friend and partner Danae Scullus was among the baptized. I never knew.

Centurion Skinner:

By now you are aware that excepting agent Muldor, agent Scullus and the entire complement of the Stella Maris have become Christians. Despite this, indeed because of it, we continue our mission. Next we will journey to Judea to see the land of Jesus. Mary, the mother of Jesus will, over the objections of the priest John, accompany us. She carries with her a mysterious goblet that she insists she personally must return to the land of her birth

As for myself, I, your loyal scribe did not join the Christians here at Ephesus. I joined them long ago in Rome, for it has been many years since I first heard of the Good News of Jesus Christ and believed, many years since my sins have been washed away in baptism. It was I, I confess that informed agent Muldor's operatives of the whereabouts

of Simon Peter at his instruction and I call upon you, noble Walter of the Franks, my commander and friend to meditate upon the words of this report, and the scriptures and the teachings of the Church. There is but one true lord, one true faith, and one true baptism. The glory of Christ awaits, you my friend, in love I ask you to join us.

Tomorrow we sail for Jerusalem!

AMDG

Muldor of Germania

Danae Scullus