

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

by

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE IN APARTMENT - DAY

NICK REDMAN (35), nice looking in an unremarkable way, is wearing latex gloves as he types on his laptop computer. He pauses for a second, and then holds down the delete key with his index finger, removing everything from the page, except the title centered in bold caps. **"THE MIME DETECTIVE."**

He slumps back in his chair, interlocks his hands on top of his head, and frowns disapprovingly. He rolls his chair away from the desk, and gets up.

INT. WALK-IN CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Nick pulls the cord to the overhead fluorescent light. Everything is immaculately organized. Identical dark suits hang with white shirts and matching ties - all with tag labels, indicating the day of the week. He selects the Monday clothing combo, and turns off the light.

INT. PRIUS - MOVING - DAY

Nick is gripping the wheel tightly, and is being passed by every car behind him. He drives slower than a hundred year old man.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Good morning. It's Monday May, 23,
and the correct time is 9:00 a.m.

Nick checks his watch, and then pulls over to the curb to adjust the clock on the dashboard by one minute.

INT. HIGH-RISE OFFICE - DAY

ZACH (40), completely attired in black, is a high-voltage, literary agent who is wearing a groove in the carpet. Nick is sitting in a chair opposite a desk with his hands folded on his lap, watching Zach do laps around the room.

ZACH
You don't need the gloves in here,
Nick. I had the office disinfected
this morning before our meeting. I
feel you, bra.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Why am I here, Zach?

ZACH
I wanted to see you. How are you?
How's Lilian?

NICK
I'm fine. Lilian's...gone.

Nick is turning in his seat to both sides, trying to maintain visual contact with his agent.

ZACH
I know a hot Russian prostitute,
looking for US citizenship I can
direct your way. Hot, Nick. Real
hot!

NICK
Could you please sit down. You're
making me dizzy.

Zach sits at his desk, and props his legs on top of it. The soles of his shoes are pointed toward Nick's face.

ZACH
Okay. The real reason I wanted to
see you is because the Tantam Bell
people are on my ass. They've given
us an advance, and they want to
know what's happening with the mime
story. It's been a year, Nick.

NICK
I'm having a few problems with it.

ZACH
Send me whatever chapters you have,
and I'll try to help you work
through it.

NICK
There aren't any chapters.

Zach ejects out of his seat into a standing position with his arms akimbo.

ZACH
Why not?!

NICK
I'm brain dead. I can't get it going.

Zach starts pacing again.

ZACH
Nick, I'm not going to pump any sunshine up your skirt. This is a what have you done for me lately business we're in, and your publisher was not especially cordial to me over the phone. If you don't deliver this story, they're going to sue you, and that will make you Persona Non Grata with the publishing community. Comprendo?

NICK
Yeah.

ZACH
You're blocked; that's all. We'll get you out of L.A. for a while. Too many distractions here. I've got a place up in Big Sur. Quiet, quiet, quiet. Wait - even better. Paris! Go to Paris for some inspiration.

NICK
I don't travel.

ZACH
Nick, you look pale. Do you ever leave your apartment? Get out and get some sun. Get some exercise. Drink some Red Bull.

NICK
That's good advice, Zach. We about done?

ZACH
You have to get with the program, Nick. In this business, if you slow down, somebody steps on the back of your neck as they go past you. Produce and make money; that's the natural order of things. You with me? Paris, Nick! Ernest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Henry James, Nick Redman.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL BAR - BEVERLY HILLS - AFTERNOON

Lunch is almost over. TWO CUSTOMERS remain in the lounge. Nick sits at the bar directly in front of an attractive FEMALE BARTENDER (35). He folds his hands on the bar. She steps over to him, glances down at the gloves, and then up to his face.

ISABELLE

You're going to commit a crime, and you don't want to leave any prints.

NICK

Hilarious.

ISABELLE

I thought I might be seeing you soon.

NICK

I'm sorry I was rude to her again. I'm sorry she called you to vent her frustration about me. Please grant me absolution one final time.

ISABELLE

Nicky, Nicky. Why can't you be nice to your mother?

NICK

Maybe I didn't get enough oxygen while we were in the womb.

ISABELLE

There's an original excuse. Samuel Smith?

NICK

Sure.

She turns to the reach-in refrigerator behind her, and bends down for a beer bottle and chilled, Pilsner glass. She puts the glass down in front of her brother, and pours.

ISABELLE

So what's new?

NICK

Got an email from Lilian yesterday. She's living in a lesbian commune in Oregon, and said if it wasn't for me, she would have never realized she was gay.

(CONTINUED)

ISABELLE

Ouch!

NICK

Yeah. Let's change the subject.
How's your social life? Dating
anyone?

ISABELLE

Freaks and perverts. I attract them
like a magnet.

NICK

You look good.

ISABELLE

Thanks. I'm swimming everyday. You
getting any exercise?

NICK

Nah. I just sit in front of my
computer all day, and pray that a
story comes out before my publisher
sues me.

He drains the rest of his beer, and checks his watch.

NICK

Cash me out.

ISABELLE

What's the hurry?

NICK

I'm ready to go home.

ISABELLE

You know if you spent less time at
home and got out more, you might
improve your social skills with
women. Aren't you concerned about
ending up alone?

He slaps a "Benjamin" on the bar to pay the tab.

NICK

No. You can keep the change.

She picks up the bill, and is struck with amazement. She
takes his gloved hand.

(CONTINUED)

ISABELLE

You're very generous with your money, Nicky.

NICK

(shrugs)

I would suggest taking advantage of it while you can. I'm not going to have it much longer.

He stands up, but she continues to hold onto his hand.

NICK

What?

ISABELLE

I was just savoring the feeling of touching a man wearing latex.

NICK

You're a naughty girl, Isabelle. Too bad you're my sister.

He smiles, and then turns to go. She leans across the bar, and calls after him.

ISABELLE

Be nice to your mother.

EXT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Nick walks to the valet kiosk, and gives his ticket to SOMEONE inside. A minute later his car arrives, and a young, clean cut VALET hops out.

VALET

There you are, sir. Have a nice day.

Nick tips him, gets into the running car, and closes the door. Before he can fasten his seat belt, WHAM! A car smacks into him from behind, sending his head forward into the steering wheel. The valet jumps back from the car.

VALET (CONTD)

Jesus!

A nearly hysterical WOMAN gets out of the car that rammed Nick, and CLATTERS her HIGH HEELS on the driveway toward the Prius.

(CONTINUED)

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
(to valet)
Is he okay?! I couldn't stop!

Nick looks dazed. He puts a hand on his forehead.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN (CONTD)
(to Nick)
Sir, are you okay?! I'm so
sorry! It just kept going. Will
you say something, for God's sake?!

NICK
(groggy)
I'm okay, I think.

The woman opens her purse, and hands Nick a business card.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
I'm fully insured. I'll pay for any
expenses you have.

The valet looks at the back of the Prius.

VALET
(to Nick)
Would you like me to fill out an
accident report? There's a decent
size dent in the fender.

NICK
No. I just want to go home.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
Are you sure you're all right?

NICK
Yes, yes, I'm fine. Please step
away from the car.

He hands her card back, closes the door, and drives off.

HYSTERICAL WOMAN
Was he wearing gloves?

VALET
Yeah.

DREAM - EXT. RESTAURANT - PARIS - DAY

A SCRATCHY SOUNDING version of "La vie en Rose" by Edith Piaf is playing in the b.g. Nick and Isabelle are sitting at a bistro table on the Champs Elysee, holding hands. He's wearing a beret and red neckerchief around his neck, and she's got on a one-piece, Speedo, swimming cap, and a towel draped over her shoulders.

JEAN SEBERG is walking up and down the boulevard with a stack of newspapers under her arm, selling The New York Herald Tribune (Archive scene from Godard's "Breathless"), and a MIME is performing on the sidewalk nearby.

ISABELLE

"Oh, Jake, we could have had such a damned good time together."

NICK

"Yes. Isn't it pretty to think so?"

ERNEST HEMINGWAY (60's), tan, with a gray beard appears at the table, and serves them cocktails from a tray.

NICK

(to Hemingway)

I'm blocked.

HEMINGWAY

Have an adventure. Then you'll have something to write about.

Nick hands him a "Benjamin."

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Nick is bare chested with a towel around his waist, shaving cream on his face, holding a razor. He rinses the razor, and looks up into the medicine cabinet mirror. His reflection has morphed into a MIME with long, thick sideburns and white face.

He's wearing a navy and white stripe jersey top, and is pantomiming the shaving process. Nick blinks a couple times, then reaches toward the image with his finger. The mirror goes completely blank.

NICK

Did something very strange just happen?

(CONTINUED)

MIME (O.S.)
No touching, Nick.

NICK
(looking around)
Who said that?!

Nick opens the medicine cabinet to look inside. He closes it, and the mime reappears in the mirror.

MIME
Touching is strictly off limits.
You don't touch me; I don't touch
you.

Nick looks like he's been shot with a stun gun.

NICK
This is a dream. I'm not awake yet.

MIME
You're awake.

NICK
The accident. I have a head injury.

MIME
Better sit down. It's not that,
either.

Nick starts to BREATHE IRREGULARLY. He turns and unstably CRASHES down on the TOILET SEAT. He rocks forward and back with his hands on his temples.

NICK
(to himself)
I left the hotel, picked up some
Korean barbecue, watched the
Dodgers lose, read, brushed my
teeth, went to sleep. Got up this
morning, showered, started to
shave, and there's a mime in the
mirror. There was a mime in my
dream, and there's a mime in my
story, even though I don't actually
have a story.

MIME
You're having a paranormal episode.

He stands up slowly, and stares into the mirror. The mime is now wearing a bedraggled hat with a carnation drooping from it.

(CONTINUED)

MIME (CONTD)
I'm an ethereal being.

NICK
You're a ghost?!

MIME
Ghost is so declassé. I prefer
phantom. I used to also like spook,
until the CIA started using it.

Nick walks toward the door, and flicks off the light switch on the wall. He stands silently in the dark for a few seconds, and turns the light back on.

NICK
I need everything to return to
normal.

He steps over to the mirror.

MIME
You probably have some questions.

NICK
I...I don't know what's happening.

MIME
Did you ever see the movie, "Oh
God?" It's a little like that. I
don't mean to suggest that I have
creator-like capacity, I just meant
the way George Burns revealed
himself to John Denver in the
bathroom.

NICK
(agitated)
What's happening to me?!

MIME
Calm down.

NICK
Don't tell me to calm down! People
don't calm down on command! I may
never calm down!

MIME
You're acting like a drama queen.

NICK

How should I act?! My reflection
has turned into a mime, who says
he's a ghost!

Nick's right eye starts to twitch. He covers it with his
left hand.

NICK

Now look what you've done. I'm
having a seizure!

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

The small waiting room is full of SENIOR CITIZENS. Nick is
at the frosted-glass, receptionist window. It slides open,
revealing an OCTOGENARIAN WOMAN, wearing earbuds attached to
an iPod.

NICK

Nick Redman to see Dr. Schlossman.

RECEPTIONIST

(loud)

Rick Bedman?

NICK

No. Nick - Redman. Perhaps if you
removed your earphones, you could
hear me better.

She takes the earphones off.

RECEPTIONIST

Sorry. What are you here for, Mr.
Bedman?

NICK

Redman. R-e-d-m-a-n, and...it's
personal.

RECEPTIONIST

I understand (winking). Dude piston
won't fire?

NICK

What?

RECEPTIONIST

Can't wake up, Captain Winkie?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Captain Winkie is not sleeping!

All of the old people in the waiting room look up from their magazines and MURMUR.

NICK (CONTD)
Please, I need to see the doctor.
It's urgent!

RECEPTIONIST
Have a seat, Mr. Bedman. The doctor
will be with you shortly.

Nick sits in the only available chair, and leafs through a monthly AARP magazine from the table next to him.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Nick is sitting on a metal chair with his back to the window. The ghost is sitting on the edge of the examining table on the other side of the room, dangling his crossed legs over the side. He's pantomiming a reflex test with an imaginary, rubber plexor.

NICK
There's not a mime over there. I
have a concussion, and I'm under a
lot of stress.

The mime looks up and smiles. Enter DR. SCHLOSSMAN (75), white hair, lab coat with a stethoscope wound around his neck that's tucked into his breast pocket.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Hello, Nick. How's it hangin'?

The mime is turning his head and COUGHING.

NICK
Not good, Doc.

DOCTOR SCHLOSSMAN
Erectile dysfunction?

NICK
No. I hit my head on the steering
wheel of my car yesterday, and now
I think I can communicate with the
ghost of a dead mime. I need you to
write me a script for something
that will bring me back to normal.

(CONTINUED)

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
You know, I've been practicing
medicine for nearly fifty years,
and I have never heard anyone say
something like that before.

NICK
You gotta help me, Doc.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Have a seat on the table, and we'll
take a look at you?

Nick sits next to the mime.

MIME
I'm here, if you need me.

NICK
You're the reason I'm here.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
What?

NICK
Nothing.

The doctor takes a penlight out of his pocket, and shines it
back-and-forth between Nick's eyes.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Follow the light with your eyes.

Next he shines the light directly into each eye.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
No ghosts in either eye. Stand up.

Nick follows his instruction.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN (CONTD)
How hard did you hit your head?

NICK
I don't know. Medium, I guess.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Hold your arms straight out to your
side. Raise your left leg. Put it
down. Now your right. Alternate
touching your nose with the index
finger of both your hands.

Nick performs the tasks successfully.

(CONTINUED)

DR. SCHLOSSMAN (CONTD)
No equilibrium problems. How's your vision?

NICK
Okay.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Slurred speech, headaches, ringing in the ears?

NICK
No.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Nausea, vomiting, loss of taste or smell?

NICK
No.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
I don't think you have a concussion.

NICK
(agitated)
Then why am I all of a sudden communicating with the dead?! I'm coming unglued!

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
Easy, son. Try to calm yourself.

MIME
You should listen to him. You're going to give yourself a heart attack.

He pantomimes having his heart beat rapidly against his hands. Then it stops, and he croaks.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN
I'll give you something that will take the edge off, but this isn't really my field.

DR. SCHLOSSMAN (CONT'D)
(chuckling)
Maybe you should have a priest perform an exorcism?

(CONTINUED)

NICK
This isn't funny!

INT. OFFICE IN APARTMENT - DAY

Nick's in front of his computer, grinding on the mime story. The ghost is hovering behind him, wearing white pants and a gray shirt with a scoop neck over his striped jersey.

MIME
That story's lame.

Nick spins around in his chair, looking wiggled out.

NICK
Why is this happening to me?!

MIME
What?

NICK
(animated)
This! You! Hallucinations! Ghosts!
I'm feeling crazier than a run over
dog!

MIME
Why are you in such a tizzy? These
events happen all the time.

NICK
We're not having an event! People
don't talk to ghosts, because there
are no ghosts! Dead is dead. When
the body stops functioning, that's
the ballgame. You live, you die,
you're dead, the end.

MIME
I would say our conversation is
poking a few holes in your theory.

NICK
We're not having a conversation!
This isn't really happening!

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - DAY

Nick is lying on the couch, staring at the ceiling with his gloved hands folded on his chest. DR. FELTSPAR (60), distinguished with an academic air, is sitting behind a large desk with a pen and legal pad in front of him.

The mime is sitting on the window ledge, looking outside.

DR. FELTSPAR

So, Nick...Is it all right to call you that?

NICK

Yeah.

PSYCHIATRIST

Why are you wearing surgical gloves?

NICK

Germs.

The shrink makes a note of it.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're concerned about coming in contact with germs?

NICK

Yeah.

PSYCHIATRIST

Any other concerns?

NICK

(beat)

Flying, disorder and untidiness, heights, crowds, bees, thunder and lightening, ventriloquist dummies, and Dutch people.

The shrink writes furiously to get it all down.

PSYCHIATRIST

That's quite a list. Are you able to function?

NICK

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

PSYCHIATRIST

How do you get through the day?

NICK

I don't expose myself to those things.

PSYCHIATRIST

Oh.

NICK

I'm not here to talk about that stuff. I'm under a lot of pressure from my publisher to deliver my next book. I write detective novels. At least I did. Now I don't write anything, and I'll probably have to live in my Prius after I get sued for the advance money I spent. Anyway, I've recently started communicating with a dead mime. I think it's because my stupid story is about a mime.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're communicating with a dead mime?

NICK

Yeah. I mean I know it can't really be happening, but it seems like it's really happening.

PSYCHIATRIST

That's, unusual.

MIME

Actually, it's not.

NICK

(to mime)

It is unusual! It's extremely unusual! No one I know has ever spoken with a dead person!

NICK (CONTD)

(to shrink)

How many people have ever come into this office, saying they talk to a dead mime?

(CONTINUED)

PSYCHIATRIST

You're the first.

NICK

(to mime)

See!

MIME

How many people do you talk to,
Nick? You never leave your
apartment.

NICK

I don't want to debate this right
now, okay! I'm in therapy, okay! I
have problems!

PSYCHIATRIST

Who are you talking to?

NICK

The mime.

PSYCHIATRIST

Does your mime have a name?

NICK

(to mime)

The doctor wants to know what your
name is.

MIME

Henri. But I might change it to
Marcel.

NICK

(to mime)

When I was a kid, I wanted to
change my name to Holden Caulfield.

NICK (CONTD)

(to doctor)

His name is Henri, but he might
change it to, Marcel. You know, for
Marcel Marceau.

The shrink starts to laugh.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're making this up, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

No.

PSYCHIATRIST

Marcel Marceau, Holden Caufield.
You're trying to get a rise out of
me.

NICK

No I'm not. I'm nuts!

PSYCHIATRIST

Are you with "Candid Camera?"

The shrink stands up and skulks around the room, looking behind everything for a hidden camera. Nick sits up, watching him in disbelief. Henri follows the shrink around the room, pantomiming that he's filming the action.

PSYCHIATRIST (CONTD)

You guys are really good. How did
you get the camera in here?

NICK

(to shrink)

There's no camera.

NICK (CONTD)

(to Henri)

Will you stop?!

The shrink keeps looking around.

PSYCHIATRIST

When are you going to say it?

NICK

What?

PSYCHIATRIST

"Smile. You're on Candid
Camera?" When's this episode going
to air?

INT. PRIUS - MOVING - DAY

MIME

You made excellent progress in
there today.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Sure; make jokes while my life slips away.

MIME

What life, Nick? You turn straight women into lesbians, and you're a writer who's out of stories.

NICK

I'm not out! I've just hit a dry spell. And for the record, I've only turned one straight woman into a lesbian that I'm aware of.

INT./EXT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Nick is at the doorway, craning his neck to see if Henri is in the mirror. He goes inside, looks in the mirror, and behind the shower curtain. He doesn't see anyone.

NICK

I'm back!

He opens the wrapper of a new toothbrush, brushes methodically, and then throws it away. He leans forward toward the mirror and salutes his reflection.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

He bounces into the room, feeling on top of the world, but stops dead in his tracks when he sees Henri sitting at the table, pantomiming that he's leafing through a newspaper.

MIME

Morning.

NICK

Why are you still here?!

MIME

I thought we were pals. Didn't we have a good time together yesterday?

NICK

No.

He sits down at the table.

(CONTINUED)

NICK (CONTD)

Call me gloomy, but I just can't totally enjoy myself with people that are dead.

MIME

You'll get used to it. The more time we spend together, the more normal it will seem.

NICK

If I spent every day for the rest of my life with you, it wouldn't seem normal. You know why? Because you're dead.

MIME

You have a real issue with death. Everyone dies.

NICK

But they stay dead!

MIME

Not necessarily. There's dead, and there's dead.

NICK

Wrong. There's not dead, and there's dead. There's only dead. I want to know what you're doing here, and why you've landed in my apartment?

MIME

I have some unfinished business to take care of. My journey has been interrupted until I can make restitution.

NICK

Oh please. Your journey?

MIME

There are phases of the afterlife. You progress from one to another, based on how you lived.

NICK

Could this conversation possibly be more farfetched? Okay. Let's say all this mumbo-jumbo is true, even though I know it isn't. What does any of it have to do with me?

(CONTINUED)

MIME

I need your help.

NICK

How'd you even find me? I'm unlisted.

MIME

When you're given the chance to come back, "The Committee" selects a living person to assist you.

NICK

And with more than six and a half billion people on the planet, they chose me to help you?

MIME

It was the mime story. You're the only person writing one.

NICK

I'm not surprised to hear that.

MIME

I'll make you a deal. Help me fix two small transgressions I made while I was alive, and I'll give you a best seller story to write. Then I'll leave, and you'll never see me again.

NICK

I don't need your help. I have two extremely successful novels to my credit that were both critically acclaimed. Some said they heard whispers of a possible Booker Prize consideration for the last one.

MIME

You're a hack, and those books were moderately successful, at best.

NICK

I'm a commercialist.

MIME

You made that word up. The reality is you're in deep doo-doo, and the clock is ticking. I'm sitting on a story that will not only solve your problem, but it will land you on

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIME (cont'd)
top of the heap. You'll probably
get a movie deal out of it. What do
you say? All you have to do is help
a lost soul to his final resting
place.

NICK
Listen, Mr. Lost Soul. I'd like to
help, but I can't start acting like
I'm really communicating with the
dead, or I'll lose my fragile grip
on reality.

MIME
Think about it, Nick. We need each
other.

INT./EXT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Nick KNOCKS LIGHTLY on the DOOR.

MIME
Entrez.

Nick enters the room, and leans his hands on the sink in
front of the mirror.

NICK
How do I know you'll keep your word
about leaving, if I help you?

MIME
I want to be gone, more than you
want me to be gone. I'm heading to
the pearly gates.

Nick rolls his eyes.

NICK
What do I have to do?

MIME
We need to go to Paris for a while.
I know the perfect little studio we
can rent for a couple of weeks.
It's inexpensive, and located in
the center of the city for easy
access.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I don't fly.

MIME
Why not?

NICK
You know what planes do when
they're not flying?

MIME
Land, refuel?

NICK
Crash.

MIME
Then we can cruise to Calais, and
take the train from there.

NICK
Nope. No boats, either. They get
hijacked by Somali pirates, or
bacteria breaks out on board, or
they disappear in the Bermuda
Triangle.

MIME
Guess this means we're going to be
together til eternity.

INT. AIR FRANCE PLANE - NIGHT

A FEMALE FLIGHT ATTENDANT is going through the safety demonstration in the economy class cabin. Nick is sitting in a window seat, sweating profusely. He's mopping his forehead with a handkerchief in one hand, and holding the "barf bag" in the other.

He's concentrating intently on the attendant's every word. None of the other PASSENGERS are even looking in her direction. Henri is visible in the reflection of the window next to Nick. The demonstration ends, and Nick presses the attendant call button. The attendant walks over to Nick's row.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Is there anything you need, sir?

NICK
Yes. Did you say the oxygen masks
will drop down automatically if
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
there's a change in cabin pressure,
or do I have to do something to
release them?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(smiling)
They will drop down automatically.

NICK
You're positive.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Yes, sir.

NICK
Okay. I just wanted to make sure I
understood you correctly. I've
never been on an airplane before,
and I want to know exactly what to
do, in case.

She smiles, and leaves.

MIME
Relax, nothing's going to happen.
We'll be there before you know it.

NICK
It's going to take ten hours, and
I'm going to be aware of every
single minute.

A heavy set WOMAN sitting next to Nick looks up from her
tourist guidebook. She hears him MUMBLING.

WOMAN
I didn't think there was anyone
left on the planet that hadn't
flown on a plane. It's nothing.
Safer than driving on "The 405."

NICK
Excuse me, madame. But have I
inadvertently given you a gesture,
indicating I was interested in your
opinion?

WOMAN
(in a huff)
I was just trying to help. You
don't have to be rude!

(CONTINUED)

MIME

You're a sweetheart, Nick. The French are going to love you.

EXT. FRENCH APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

A taxi pulls away from the curb, dropping Nick and Henri on the sidewalk in front of an apartment building with a courtyard. It's the 7e arrondissement-old world Paris.

MIME

How bout this neighborhood?

NICK

(tired)

Yeah. Let's go inside. I'm cooked.

MIME

The silver button on the keypad releases the door.

NICK

Tight security.

INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

There are only two apartments on the floor.

MIME

Please take off the gloves.

NICK

Let me think about it for a second.
No.

MIME

The landlord's going to think you're a wack-job.

NICK

I probably am.

He presses the BUZZER.

The door is opened by BERNIE SMYTHE (40), 6'9" and 250 lbs.

BERNIE

Oui.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
I'm, Nick Redman. The new tenant.

BERNIE
Bernie Smythe.

He smiles and extends a bear claw-sized hand into the hallway for shaking. Nick holds up his gloved hands. Bernie's expression changes to alarm as he jerks his arm back inside.

BERNIE
Something wrong with your skin?

NICK
No.

Bernie looks quizzical.

BERNIE
Eh, come in.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Henri enter the main room of the studio. There's a large potted palm tree in front of one window, a desk and chair in front of another, and a loveseat. Nick is twisting his head around.

NICK
Where's the bed?

Bernie walks across the room toward two French doors, opens them, and pulls down the Murphy bed from the wall.

NICK
Is that thing safe to sleep on?

BERNIE
No fatalities so far. There are sheets and pillowcases in the hall closet.

He walks over to the breakfast counter that divides the main room from the kitchen, and picks up a half-full coffee mug.

NICK
Got any more of that?

BERNIE
Sure.

(CONTINUED)

He steps around the counter into the kitchen, takes a mug out of the pantry, and empties the remainder of a Euro-coffee pot into it. He sets it on the counter.

NICK

Thanks.

BERNIE

Have a seat.

Nick and Henri park it at the breakfast counter.

BERNIE (CONTD)

What are you doing in Paris?

NICK

Looking for some inspiration. I'm a writer.

BERNIE

There's another American artist living across the hall. She's a painter. Let's see if she's home. I'll introduce you.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Bernie, Nick and Henri are standing in front of the painters apartment. Bernie KNOCKS on the DOOR. No response.

BERNIE (CONTD)

Guess she's out. Stop over and introduce yourself. She's a little different, but she's good people.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick's exhausted. He goes to the linen closet in the hall and takes out some sheets and pillowcases. They don't match. He loads his arms with all the linen in the closet, carries it to the bed, and dumps it. He sorts it all by color in four piles. No matches for a complete set.

NICK

Great country.

He makes the bed with military precision, sets his wristwatch alarm, and cautiously gets in bed like someone climbing onto a horse for the first time. He's asleep instantly.

(CONTINUED)

A few hours later, he's awakened by several Euro-Police SIRENS, speeding by the building. He shoots up into a sitting position. Then, the DOOR to the apartment across the hall SQUEAKS open, and SLAMS shut. Finally, HEAVY METAL MUSIC BLASTS through his walls.

NICK (CONTD)

I should have never come here!

He throws the covers off, and gets out of bed. He staggers serpentine toward the bathroom, glancing a shoulder off the door frame on the way inside.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He switches on the light and stands in front of the mirror, rubbing his smarting shoulder. Another SIREN goes by. Henri pantomimes yawning and rubbing his eyes.

MIME

Morning already?

NICK

(flailing arms)

Listen to all this racket! It's the middle of the night, for God's sake!

MIME

Actually, it just seems later because...

NICK

Don't explain it to me!

He runs his hands through his hair.

NICK (CONTD)

I feel like a zombie.

MIME

In the colloquial sense, of course.

NICK

I'm not in the mood for any afterlife humor. I have to sleep. If I don't, my resistance gets low. Then I get sick. Then I'll have to go to a foreign hospital, or doctor. How will I explain what's wrong with me? I don't speak the language!

(CONTINUED)

MIME

You're getting all worked up for nothing. It's going to take you a few days to adjust to the time difference and shake off the jet lag. In the mean time, tomorrow we'll go next door, meet the painter, and politely ask her to turn her music down at night.

NICK

Okay.

MIME

Go back to bed, and try to get some sleep. It's been a long day.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Nick and Henri are standing in front of the neighbor's door. Nick RINGS the BELL. The door is opened by LUCY GRANGER (35), with caramel-colored skin and flaxen dreadlocks sprouting out of her head like a fern plant. She's wearing navy blue, mechanic's coveralls splotted with paint, a turned around baseball cap, and red, high-top Converse gym shoes.

LUCY

Oui.

NICK

Hi. I'm Nick, your new neighbor. Bernie told me to introduce myself. Could you please turn your fucking, Heavy Metal music down at night, so I can sleep?

She turns her hat around.

MIME

Solid first impression, Nick.

LUCY

You're from the States.

NICK

(nodding)

I know.

LUCY

(caffeine frenzy)

Me, too. I'm from Washington. The state, not the district. Bremerton,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LUCY (cont'd)

Washington. Ever heard of it? Fifty-five minutes from Seattle by ferry. Actually, I was born in Newport, went to grade school in Norfolk, and high school in San Diego. My dad was in the Navy. He's retired now. He's not my real dad; I'm adopted. He's a nice guy, but his wife is a shrew. She's the reason I came here. Well, I'm also a painter, so I'm really here because of that. I mean, where else would you want to be, if you're a painter. Italy maybe. Coffee?

Nick can only nod.

LUCY (CONTD)

Well come inside. I'm not serving it to you out here.

She turns, and limps toward the kitchen. The guys follow her inside.

INT. LUCY'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Small galley kitchen, with pots, pans and dirty dishes littered in the sink and all over the counter. Art supplies are strewn on top of the dining room table and on the floor in the main room.

There is a single square meter oasis of cleanliness, surrounding a hydraulic chair and easel supporting a canvas. There is also a loft-style bed about six feet off the ground. Her place is twice the size of Nick's.

NICK

How can anyone live like this?

He pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket, and holds it over his nose and mouth.

LUCY

I'm a slob. What's your deal? On vacation, having a midlife crisis, doing the expat-thing? Got a job, retired, looking for a rich old lady to sponge off? Here's your coffee. Did I say I was a painter? I have a show day after tomorrow. I get super cranked up before a show.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

No, duh.

He takes the cup from "The Madhatter" as she flits around the room.

LUCY

So, are you the strong-silent type? Don't talk much, don't need much from anyone. Quietly secure in the knowledge of who you are.

NICK

No.

LUCY

Which question were you answering?

NICK

The one about being secure.

She looks at her watch.

LUCY

Yikes! Gotta get back to work. Take the cup with you. Keep it as a house warming gift. We should get together some time. You know - talk.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

MIME

I kind of liked her.

NICK

She should be in rehab.

MONTAGE:

Nick and Henri, sitting outside a cafe on the Champs Elysee, sipping coffee, while Nick types on his laptop.

Nick, taking pictures of two Japanese girls with their camera from the top of the Eiffel Tower. Henri hovers behind them, making horns with his fingers.

Nick and Henri, shopping for food at an outdoor market.

INT. NICK'S STUDIO - DAY

They have just returned from the market. Nick's got grocery bags in both arms. He sets them down on the desk, and stares at the BLINKING LIGHT on the answering machine. Henri floats over to his side. There's tension.

NICK

Zach's the only one with this number.

MIME

Better play it.

Nick presses the play button.

ZACH (V.O.)

(on machine)

Nick, Zach. Bad news, bro. Tantum Bell wants the mime manuscript on their desk two weeks from today, or they're going to take you to court for the advance money. I told you it was a rough biz. Get inspired over there, and write like a maniac! You can do this! Send whatever chapters you have to my phone, and I'll try to buy you some time. Ciao.

NICK

I'm two weeks away from living in my car, and rummaging through trash cans for meals.

MIME

Open your computer. We better get started.

Nick sits at the desk, and turns on his laptop.

NICK

Okay, Henri, the dead mime. My fate's in your hands. Let's hear what you got.

MIME

First, you need some background for your story: In January of "99," the euro was launched as an electronic currency used by banks, foreign exchange dealers, and stock markets. Then three years later to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIME (cont'd)
the day, it became a cash currency
to twelve EU member nations.

NICK
Maybe I could qualify for
assistance, if I'm living in a
"green car."

MIME
Concentrate. In February of 2001, a
month after the Euro hit the
streets, a radical, Muslim,
fundamentalist group broke into the
main Banque de France in Paris and
stole two sets of Euro banknote
plates. It was a daring holdup in
broad daylight.

NICK
I don't remember hearing about
that.

MIME
Nobody did. The story was
suppressed. Authorities knew the
public would panic, if they heard a
terrorist group had the plates, and
the rest of the world would
instantly devalue the new currency
down to nothing.

NICK
What happened?

MIME
The EU tactical teams rounded up
the radicals, and the court gave
them unprecedented life-in-prison
sentences.

NICK
It's sort of interesting, but my
publisher is expecting a detective
story with a mime in it.

MIME
(nodding)
One set of plates was never
recovered, and have recently
resurfaced on the Black Market.

NICK

That's such a cool term. "Black Market."

MIME

A new, extremist sect of terrorists are trying to acquire the plates. If they succeed, it will give them unlimited funding. Planes will be dropping out of the sky on a regular basis. They will be able to buy resources and technology for an atomic bomb. But perhaps equally as devastating, is the chance to plunge the EU economy into a state of hyperinflation by printing an unlimited amount of currency. It might drag down most of the world's economies with it.

NICK

That's great stuff! It's exciting, and relevant. Maybe I could have my detective wear a mime disguise as he pursues the terrorists. That should cover me. This is genius. He's going to save the world!

MIME

We're going to save it, Nick. You and me. This is one of the reasons I've come back, and this is why I need your help. We're going to capture the terrorists, and our adventure will be your story. I know who's in charge of buying the plates, and I know where he lives. All we have to do is follow him until he makes the buy, learn where he hides them, and then notify the authorities.

NICK

I thought you made the story up! Do you ever read the newspapers back in ghostland? These guys will lop off our heads with a curved sword if they catch us spying on them.

MIME

You'll have to be careful. I still need you for one more job after this.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

You would think, saving the world would be enough to get one measly best seller?

MIME

Do you want to talk, or do you want to write? The set up for the story is an American detective comes to Paris on vacation, to visit an old friend. A transfer student that lived at his parent's house during high school. They were like brothers, but lost touch with each other when the French friend moved back home. They reconnected on Facebook.

NICK

How do you know about Facebook?

MIME

We're required to do research before coming back. A lot happened while I was away.

NICK

How long were you gone?

MIME

Twenty years all together. Two years in prison, and then I was dead for eighteen years.

NICK

Prison?

MIME

Bank robbery.

NICK

Oh, Jesus, no!

MIME

No one was supposed to get hurt. We were only going to use the plates to barter for political prisoners. I created a diversion outside the bank with another mime. I didn't have a weapon.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I want to go back to L.A., now! The deal's off. Living in my car is better than going to jail for aiding a terrorist.

MIME

Nick, I'm not a terrorist anymore. I'm dead. I need you to help me stop these new militants before it's too late. Do you understand what's at stake?

NICK

I can't believe your committee selected me to help you. Do they know what I'm like? I just want to stay in my apartment, and not be bothered by anyone. Is that so much to ask?

MIME

I think they know what they're doing.

NICK

Do you have any special powers we can use against these guys?

MIME

I can pass through solid objects like walls and doors.

NICK

That's it?! No super-strength, or X-Ray vision?

MIME

No.

NICK

We're in trouble, pal. How is a guy who turns straight women into lesbians, and a ghost with no super powers going to save the world?

MIME

We have the element of surprise on our side.

NICK

What a relief? For a second there, I thought we were in trouble.

(CONTINUED)

There's a POUNDING on the DOOR. Nick swivels around and looks in the direction of the sound.

NICK (CONTD)
Who's that?!

LUCY (O.S.)
More paintings! I need more paintings!

NICK
It's "Caffeine Girl."

Nick gets up, and opens the door.

NICK (CONTD)
Hey. I'm kind of busy right now.

LUCY
(agitated)
I don't have enough paintings!

NICK
Excuse me?

LUCY
Paintings! Paintings! I need more paintings!

Henri appears behind Nick.

MIME
Her eyes are like pinwheels.

NICK
(to Lucy)
Eh, you want to come in, or something?

LUCY
(feebly)
Please help me.

Nick sniffs at the air.

NICK
Something's burning!

LUCY'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

He tracks the stench to the coffeemaker and unplugs it. The empty glass pot is scorched black. Lucy limps in.

LUCY
Is something bad happening?

NICK
Your coffee pot's totaled.

LUCY
I need more paintings!

NICK
Please stop saying that. Listen, is there anyone you can call to clean this place? I'll pay for it. I can't live next door, knowing it's such a pigsty in here.

He reaches for two oven mitts that are hanging from hooks, and starts organizing the dishes from the kitchen into a concentrated area.

LUCY
Come with me tonight! Please! I can't go alone!

NICK
Slow down before you blow your motherboard. You drink too much coffee!

She drops onto the floor into a ball, and burst into tears.

LUCY
(blubbering)
I don't have enough paintings.

NICK
(to Henri)
Can you believe this routine?

MIME
Do something.

NICK
What's the French version of 9-1-1?

(CONTINUED)

MIME

9-1-1.

NICK

Oh, so it's a universal number?

Lucy looks up.

LUCY

(sobbing)

Who are you talking to?

NICK

Hey. Don't worry about who I'm talking to, Speed Queen.

MIME

Get a cold washcloth, and put it on the back of her neck.

NICK

I'm not touching anything in here without a radiation suit.

MIME

Then get her some water out of the frig.

Lucy sits up. Nick takes out a liter bottle of Evian from the frig, and hands it to her.

LUCY

Please come with me tonight. I can't go alone.

MIME

Go with her. She needs your help.

NICK

Why is every one suddenly hitting on me for favors. Am I Mother Theresa? I need to write. I'm going to be homeless in two weeks!

MIME

You know why the world is so fucked up?

NICK

No, tell me, Mr. Potty Mouth.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Because the people in it are fucked up. She's a fellow human being who needs your help.

NICK

(to Henri)

All right, I'll go with her!

NICK (CONTD)

(to Lucy)

What time do I need to be ready?

LUCY

Seven.

NICK

Try not to schizz out between now and then.

INT. LEFT BANK ART GALLERY FOYER - NIGHT

Lucy, Nick, and Henri are inside the lobby.

MIME

You don't need the gloves in here. You're not going to catch anything.

Nick extracts a pair of thin, black leather, dress gloves from his jacket, and slips them on over the latex.

NICK

Wouldn't want to embarrass you in the land of your forefathers.

LUCY

What?

NICK

Nothing.

LUCY

Nice gloves.

Nick gives Henri a fake smile.

MIME

You're an incredible weirdo.

LUCY

Here come the owners.

(CONTINUED)

They're greeted by a Middle Eastern COUPLE, AMIN and Jamila (60's), who are dressed formally, and look very sophisticated. Amin extends his hand to Nick, and then his wife offers her cheek for kissing.

AMIN

(to Lucy and Nick)

Would you care for a glass of
Champagne before things get
started?

LUCY

That might be a good idea. I'm
really nervous.

NICK

Thanks.

They walk over to the reception area, and Amin pours
Champagne into four flute glasses.

MIME

I have an uneasy feeling about
these people. I think they're
Muslims.

NICK

(out of the side of his
mouth)

Let's not profile.

MIME

Just make a note of it.

Lucy looks at Nick when she hears him muttering. Then she
looks to Amin.

LUCY

Could we do a final walk through
before everyone arrives?

AMIN

Of course.

They disappear.

JAMILA

How do you and Lucy know one
another?

NICK

(nervous)

Eh, we're neighbors.

JAMILA

Do you like her paintings?

NICK

I've never seen them.

JAMILA

We adore her work. This is the third time she has shown with us.

NICK

Does she have enough paintings to show?

JAMILA

She always worries about that. Her work is so divine, she could show with two paintings.

MIME

So divine. This chit-chat is making me nauseous. Ask her if she's planted any IED's in here.

NICK

May I ask you a personal question?

JAMILLA

That would depend on the question, I think.

NICK

We're you and your husband born in France?

JAMILA

Why do you ask?

NICK

Just curious. I don't mean to pry.

JAMILA

Our parents immigrated from Algeria when we were young.

MIME

Bingo! They're part of a cell. Ask her how long she and Amin trained before coming here.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

A wonderful exhibition, and a PACKED HOUSE. Nick is fixating on a very intense painting, with his hands stuffed in his pockets. Henri is beside him, and Lucy is behind them.

NICK

The fact that they're probably Muslims, doesn't mean they're terrorists.

MIME

Doesn't mean they're not, either.

NICK

(pointing at a painting)
Look at this. It makes "Starry Starry Night" seem well-adjusted.

MIME

Why do you have to judge it?

LUCY

That's my "crazy" one.

She makes air quotation marks when she says CRAZY.

NICK

(to Henri)
Told ya.

LUCY

It was the last one I did, before I flipped.

NICK

(to Lucy)
You're sort of an alpha-babe, aren't you?

They both smile, and she slips an arm through one of Nick's. There's a new vibe working.

LUCY

I couldn't have done this tonight without your support. Can I take you out for dinner after we close?

NICK

It's not necessary.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
Yes, it is. It's the least I can
do.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - 2:00 A.M.

Nick and Lucy are in front of their respective doors.
They're avoiding direct eye contact with each other. The
earlier vibe is gone.

MIME
I'll leave you two lovebirds alone.

He passes through the door.

NICK
It was a nice evening. Thanks for
dinner.

LUCY
Thanks again for helping me.

NICK
Good night.

Nick goes inside his studio.

INT. NICK'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

A minute later, there's a SOFT KNOCK on the DOOR.

LUCY (O.S.)
I'm locked out.

Nick shakes his head. He opens the door and lets her in.

NICK
Dump everything out of your purse?

LUCY
I just went through it. My keys
aren't in there.

NICK
Dump.

She turns her purse upside down on the breakfast counter. No
keys.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Can I spend the night? I'll call a locksmith in the morning.

NICK

Sure.

He goes to the closet and gets her a hanger for her dress, a T-shirt for her to sleep in, and a hermetically sealed toothbrush from his stash.

NICK

You can use the bathroom first. Try not to destroy it.

LUCY

I'll be careful.

He hangs up his suit, and pulls the bed down from the wall. Lucy comes out of the bathroom and stares at the bed.

LUCY

Should I get in?

NICK

Unless you want to give the loveseat a shot.

She looks over at the small loveseat, and then scrambles into the bed and under the covers. Nick takes his turn in the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

MIME

I hope you're going to be careful. We don't need any complications while we're over here. We have a lot to accomplish in two weeks.

NICK

I'm just giving her a place to sleep.

MIME

What would Freud say about the keys?

NICK

Why don't you ask, if you bump into him?

Nick comes out of the bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Could you turn off the light? I'm
feeling a little self-conscious.

He flicks off the light on his way to bed, gets in, and
flips over on his side, looking at the palm tree. Then he
turns over on his other side and stares at her back. A
minute later he taps her lightly on the back with his index
finger. She turns over, and they're eyeball to eyeball.

NICK

I sleep left handed.

LUCY

You want this side of the bed?

NICK

If you wouldn't mind.

She arches-up like a quilt-covered praying mantis and
attempts to pass over him. He scrunches down into the bed
and slides under her moving in the opposite direction. The
quilt tangles around their legs and torsos in the process
and knots them together in the missionary position.

LUCY

I'm stuck.

NICK

Hold on.

He wriggles his arms free, puts them around her body, and
rolls them back the other way. Now he's on top.

LUCY

Hi.

NICK

Hi.

LUCY

This is a little awkward, isn't it?
Are you wearing gloves?

NICK

Yeah.

LUCY

You wear gloves to bed?

NICK

No, not usually.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Are you wearing them because I'm here?! Are you afraid I'll infect you with Typhus, if you come in contact with me?! Get off!

She pushes him off her, and gets out of bed.

LUCY (CONTD)

I'm sleeping on the loveseat!

She snatches a pillow from under his head, and grabs the quilt, leaving him with only the sheet.

NICK

Hey!

She wraps the quilt around her like a papoose, and lies down on the loveseat. Her legs hang over one of the arms.

Nick props himself up on his elbows.

NICK

You're going to wake up with scoliosis.

There's no response.

NICK (CONTD)

Suit yourself.

INT. STUDIO MAIN ROOM - DAY

Nick is typing on his laptop. Henri is looking over his shoulder.

MIME

Describe how seamlessly these people blend into French civilization. They're practically invisible.

NICK

Where do they come from, and how do they slip into the country?

MIME

My cell came from Cameroon, in West Africa. We were native French speakers from a French culture. That couple from the gallery are also from a French speaking country.

(CONTINUED)

Nick types furiously.

NICK
So, you trained in Africa?

MIME
Two years. Then we settled into the suburbs around Paris, got jobs, and were contacted by a handler.

NICK
It sounds like an intelligence operation.

MIME
Terrorists are perceived as being stupid and unorganized. They are neither. They also have infinite patience.

INT. STUDIO - 2:00 A.M.

Henri is looking out the window across the courtyard. He sees a moving dim light that illuminates the silhouette of a MAN holding something by the handles.

MIME
Nick, wake up. I think it's happening.

NICK
(groggy)
Huh? What's happening?

MIME
Get up. You need to see this.

Nick, ungracefully climbs out of bed, and knocks his KNEE into the CHAIR at the desk. He reaches toward the lamp.

MIME (CONTD)
Leave it off.

Nick leans closer to the window pane. The light stops moving, and is now on the ground. The man is digging a hole with a shovel.

MIME (CONTD)
Meet Abdul-Azim. He was the mastermind behind the Banque de France break-in.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Maybe we shouldn't stand so close
to the window.

ABDUL-AZIM puts the shovel down, and lowers something into the hole. Then he fills it in with dirt. Nick drops down on the floor on all fours.

MIME

He can't see you. You're on the
third floor in a building across
the courtyard.

NICK

I'm not taking any chances. Meet me
in the bathroom. We need to talk.

Nick crawls on his belly like a reptile into the bathroom. Henri passes through the wall.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

NICK

Look, Henri.

MIME

Listen.

NICK

What?

MIME

Americans have an irritating habit
of saying "look" to emphasize
something verbal, when they should
be saying "listen."

NICK

Abdul the Butcher is burying
chopped up body parts, or a nuke in
his backyard, and you're lecturing
me about the inadequacies of
American grammar?

MIME

What did you want to tell me?

NICK

This job is too big for me. I'm
just a regular guy. I'm not even
regular. Let's call the cops, or
Interpol.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

We're not in the position to notify the authorities yet. No crime has been committed. We have to get some evidence on him.

NICK

Float over to his yard and dig up whatever he buried.

MIME

I can't. I'm not allowed to touch anything while I'm here.

NICK

I know I'm going to regret asking, but why not?

MIME

There's a cosmic balance. If I affect anything while I'm here, it could set off a chain reaction of events. If the present changes, so will the future. You wouldn't want that to happen, would you?

NICK

I guess not.

MIME

We have to follow him, and catch him doing something. You could make him the antagonist in your story. He's the perfect villain.

NICK

What happens if you touch something while you're here?

MIME

I'll be stuck permanently between this world and the next.

NICK

Strict rule.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - MORNING

Nick and Henri are sitting in armchairs. Nick is holding a newspaper in front of his face for cover. Henri spots their subject, (50) dark complected, nattily attired, carrying a black briefcase.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Okay, there he is. We'll give him some distance at first, and then close the gap.

MONTAGE:

The guys trail him out of the building, down the street, into a metro station, down the stairs to the platform, and into a CROWDED TRAIN CAR.

INT. METRO - CONTINUOUS

MIME

Sit behind him. I'll watch him from the front. Make some notes about his mannerisms.

NICK

Good idea.

They exit the metro a few stations later, and walk a short distance on the Champs-Elysees. The subject enters a *bureau de change*.

EXT. CHAMPS-ELYSEES - 9:00 A.M.

NICK

The currency business. That's a perfect front for my character.

MIME

Take a picture of this place with the address. Start documenting everything we see.

Nick takes a camera out of his backpack, and photographs the building.

NICK

In my first book, "Hard Boiled Shamus," my detective followed a suspect around Fargo, North Dakota dressed as a Sioux Indian. No one ever spotted him.

MIME

You know something? That's exactly what you should do.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Really?

MIME

I know just the place, Detective.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

The guys are coming out of a costume store. Nick's carrying two large shopping bags.

INT. NICK'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Nick is standing behind the big palm tree plant, dressed completely in camouflage. He's looking out the window through binoculars. Henri is behind him.

MIME

See anything?

NICK

A woman is hanging up sheets.

MIME

People don't hang their laundry at night! She's covering up the crime scene. I think we should get Lucy to help us. An extra set of eyes, and a second vantage point would reduce your risk.

NICK

She's pissed at me.

MIME

The gloves?

Nick puts down the binoculars and turns around.

NICK

You were spying on us.

MIME

The bathroom door was ajar. I couldn't help hearing a few things.

He resumes looking out the window.

MIME (CONTD)

If she helps us, you guys could pick him up at different points,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIME (CONTD) (cont'd)
and communicate back and forth by
cellphone. Plus, there's probably
going to be more players to watch.

NICK
She's not going to help.

MIME
Finesse her.

NICK
Why don't I just tell her she owes
me one for going with her to her
show, and letting her sleep here
when she locked her dumb ass out of
the apartment?

MIME
You don't know anything about
women, do you?

NICK
No.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Nick and Henri are in front of Lucy's door. Nick RINGS the
BELL. She opens the door, looking the same as her first
appearance.

LUCY
Well, "Glove Boy."

MIME
(to Nick)
Be nice. Pretend you're selling
encyclopedias.

NICK
They don't do that anymore.

LUCY
Who doesn't do what anymore?

NICK
Hey, sorry about the other night.

LUCY
What can I do for you?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I'm spying on my neighbor across the courtyard, and I need your help.

MIME

I said finesse her.

LUCY

Not only are you weird, you're a degenerate.

NICK

He buried something in his garden the other night at 2:00 a.m.

LUCY

You're making this up.

NICK

I'm totally serious. He lowered something by the handle into a hole he dug, and then covered it up with dirt.

LUCY

Maybe he was burying a pet.

NICK

Or maybe money. He's in the currency business.

LUCY

How'd you arrive at that conclusion, Sherlock?

NICK

I followed him to work yesterday. He operates a *bureau de change* on the Champs Ellysee.

LUCY

Show me the apartment.

They go into Nick's studio.

INT. NICK'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

The three of them walk to the window. Nick points to the yard.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

See those sheets? A woman hung them up last night.

LUCY

Last night?

NICK

There's something not right going on back there. Help me find out what it is, and I'll mention you when I write my best seller about it.

LUCY

What would I have to do?

MIME

I think we got her.

NICK

Just help me follow him. We'll establish two vantage points. Maybe one of us will see something the other one missed.

LUCY

One condition.

NICK

What?

LUCY

The gloves have to go. They creep me out.

NICK

Not gonna happen, Sister.

LUCY

Those are my terms.

MIME

(to Nick)

Tell her if she cleans her apartment, and picks herself up, you'll lose the gloves.

NICK

(to Henri)

I'll be vulnerable.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Nick, don't you think it's about time you started acting less eccentric?

NICK

(to Lucy)

Okay. I'll give up the gloves, if you stop living like a pig.

Lucy thinks about it for a moment, spits on her hand, and extends it toward Nick.

LUCY

Shake on it.

NICK

You must be delirious.

EXT. CHAMPS-ELYSEES - DAY

Nick, Lucy, and Henri are a few doors down from the *bureau de change*. Nick is dressed as a French sailor. He's not wearing gloves. Lucy is wearing a skirt and blouse, and is sporting a jet black, Cleopatra hair style.

NICK

He works this place by himself. Let's wait until he closes for lunch, and then you follow him.

LUCY

What are you going to do?

NICK

I want to take some pictures through his window. We'll put them on my computer, and see if we notice anything unusual.

LUCY

Check.

NICK

Check?

LUCY

I'm trying to get into it.

At noon the subject hangs a cardboard clock set at 1:30 on the inside of the door. He locks up and walks down the street, away from where the spies are lurking.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Okay. Call me with your position
when he stops somewhere.

She gives her subject a head start, and then follows him
down the boulevard. Nick is randomly clicking pictures of
the shop through the front window. Henri is behind him.

MIME

What are you looking for?

NICK

I don't know. I saw it done in a
movie once.

A few minutes later his PHONE RINGS.

LUCY

Yankee One, this is Yankee Two.
Subject bought a sandwich, and he's
heading into Parc Monceau. It's the
rue Rembrandt entrance. Over.

NICK

On my way. Should I pick up some
sandwiches?

LUCY

Yeah! I'm starving.

EXT. PARC MONCEAU - DAY

Lucy's sitting on a bench opposite her subject. There's a
large, bronze statue of a soldier on top of a horse between
them. She's surveying the grounds through binoculars. Nick's
holding a bag with sandwiches and two small bottles of water
when he arrives. He and Henri sit down next to her.

NICK

Chicken, or ham?

She puts the glasses down.

LUCY

Chicken.

NICK

Let me see the glasses.

He checks out the subject, munches on his sandwich, and
listens to Lucy describe how beautiful the park is.

Nick's P.O.V.

(CONTINUED)

A MAN with dark skin, dressed in a suit comes into his focus, and sits down on the bench directly behind the subject.

LUCY
(with her mouth full)
Any napkins?

NICK
In the bag.

He puts the glasses down and looks at her.

NICK
Some guy just sat down directly
behind him.

He takes the napkin off her lap and wipes the corner of her mouth. Then he spreads the napkin over her lap, and pats it.

LUCY
There's an empty bench right next
to his.

NICK
Why would you sit directly behind
someone, instead of off to the side
of them? I'm going to walk past
them to try and hear if they're
talking to each other.

He strolls nonchalantly around the statue and circles back to their bench.

LUCY
Anything?

NICK
No, but they have identical
briefcases.

MIME
It's a switch.

NICK
It might be prudent of us to get
out of here.

LUCY
Don't you want to see if something
happens?

MIME

What would the hard boiled shamus
do in this situation?

NICK

(beat-to Lucy)

Pose for some pictures by the
statue. I'll focus the camera on
you and the briefcase. If anything
happens, we'll have pictures of it.

MIME

Now you're talking.

She moves into position and poses provocatively. He discretely removes a telephoto lens from his pack and attaches it to the camera. Then he slowly raises it to his eye, focusing on Lucy and the briefcase to the left of the neighbor. His hands are trembling.

The neighbor drops part of his newspaper, and as he bends down to retrieve it, he surreptitiously sets his briefcase on the ground next to the end of the bench, and pushes it behind him.

Nick CLICKS the CAMERA several times, and begins to SWEAT PROFUSELY. He motions Lucy back and reaches out for her hands, pulling her down onto his lap so they're face-to-face.

LUCY

You're sweaty.

NICK

I think I'm having a stroke.

She dabs the perspiration from his forehead with one of the thin paper napkins.

LUCY

Did you see anything?

NICK

He set his briefcase on the ground
next to the bench, and then pushed
it behind him.

LUCY

What are these guys up to?!

NICK

I don't know, but at the risk of
sounding chicken-hearted again, we

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
should consider the consequences if
they catch us spying on them.

His right eye starts to twitch.

LUCY
What's wrong with your eye?

He closes it, and puts a hand over it.

NICK
I have a seizure whenever I'm
concerned about being killed in a
foreign country.

LUCY
Do you have any other tics?

NICK
None that I'm aware of.

LUCY
How long have you had this?

NICK
Lucy, could we please schedule the
neurological interview for another
time?! These characters might be
passing plutonium back and forth!

NICK (CONTD)
(whispers)
They switched them.

She spins off his lap to see both men walking away.

LUCY
(whispering breathlessly)
Quick! Let's follow them! I'll take
the new guy!

NICK
Wait.

LUCY
They're getting away!

NICK
Look, I've just experienced a
lifetime of exhilaration. Feel free
to do whatever you want.

MIME

You're acting like the old, boring Nick. Where's the new, exciting Nick?

NICK

(to Henri)

We don't know what's going on here. I don't want to get shipped home in a box, wearing a toe tag.

MIME

I don't think they would kill you in a public place.

NICK

I don't think, is not an especially reassuring phrase in this context! Just because you don't have anything to lose.

LUCY

Are you aware that you talk out loud to yourself? I've heard you do it several times.

NICK

I want to go back to California and lie down in a fetal position for a while.

She grabs him by the shoulders and shakes him back and forth.

LUCY

This is the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me! I feel like going in the bushes and having sex right now!

He removes her hands.

NICK

I'll wait here for you.

LUCY

Tell me that didn't turn you on. It was unbelievable!

NICK

Look.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Listen.

NICK

Listen. You're very attractive, especially with your new short haircut. But my libido doesn't get aroused when I'm scared. If we were sitting in front of a fire...

LUCY

Sex, Nick! Do you like girls?

MIME

Tell her about Lilian.

NICK

(to Henri)

Don't help me, all right?

LUCY

You're doing it again. Do you have some kind of neurological condition?

NICK

No, and I like girls. Although, they generally don't like me after a while.

LUCY

It's because you're so weird. I bet I could cure you of that talking to yourself stuff. Sleep over tonight. You'll be a new person tomorrow.

MIME

Might be good for you. Clear the pipes.

Lucy stands up, takes Nick's hands, and jerks him to his feet.

LUCY

Come on.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Lucy and Nick are in front of her door.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
See you tonight. Come over anytime.

She plants a smothering kiss on his mouth before going inside.

INT. NICK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Nick's in front of the mirror.

MIME
Nervous?

NICK
I'm fine. I've done this lots of times, just not in a while.

MIME
Do you have any questions?
Remember, I'm French. It's not a sign of weakness to ask for help.

NICK
I'm going. Please don't spy on me.

MIME
Check.

INT. LUCY'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

She's has an orange towel wrapped around her torso and a purple one around her head. She looks like a partially opened roll of Lifesavers.

LUCY
D'you bring some condoms?

NICK
Two.

She opens a drawer in her dresser, and pulls out a long strip of condoms, and ties it around her neck and shoulder like a bandolero. She kills the lights.

LUCY
Let's get ready to rumble!

NICK
Oh, god.

INT. LUCY'S BED - NIGHT

The relationship is consummated. They're sitting up next to each other with their backs against the pillows. She has the "Wow Look" on her face.

LUCY
That was incredible! Was it
incredible for you?

NICK
Yes.

LUCY
Just yes?! Only yes?!

NICK
Yes, it was incredible for me, too.

LUCY
Let's talk! Tell me something
personal that you've never told
anyone before.

NICK
I'm not good with warm and fuzzy
stuff.

LUCY
You're no fun. Tell you what; I'll
go first. Since I was a kid, I've
had a recurring nightmare that I'm
having open heart surgery performed
on me by a clown. There's no
surgical team; he's by himself. He
opens me up, takes out my heart
with his hands, and leaves. He
never comes back. I try to scream
for him, but I can't produce a
sound. Then the heart monitor
starts to beep, and I flatline on
the table. I always wake up
drenched in sweat.

NICK
That's a weird dream.

LUCY
Your turn.

NICK
I'd really rather not.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

I'll go again. My adoptive mother broke my leg with a baseball bat when I was ten. That's why I walk like a gimp.

NICK

Was it an accident?

LUCY

No. She was an abusive drunk. Give me something.

There's a momentary silence, then he blurts out something.

NICK

I'm a hack writer with minimum talent. If I don't produce a book in two weeks, my publisher is going to sue me, and I'll be broke. I have no other skills to support myself, and I'm an eccentric, self absorbed, jerk that has been dumped by every woman I've ever been involved with.

LUCY

You did it.

NICK

(slight surprise)

Yeah.

INT. NICK'S BATHROOM - NEXT MORNING

MIME

I suppose you're going to regale me with exaggerations of your sexual prowess?

NICK

Something unexpected happened last night.

MIME

I hope you didn't try on her underwear.

NICK

I lowered my defenses.

EXT. CHAMPS ELYSEE - NOON

Nick and Henri tail their subject in HEAVY PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC down the boulevard, to the same sandwich shop, and into Parc Monceau. Everyone takes the same benches as last time. Nick is disguised as a mailman.

A few minutes later, an attractive REDHEAD (30), approaches their subject, and sits on his lap sidesaddle. They peck on the lips, and progress to a full-scale make out and grope-fest.

Then the woman stands, smooths her clothes, and leaves. The subject goes back to reading his paper and eating. Nick and Henri look at one another.

NICK
We missed something.

MIME
Let's follow her.

INT. RITZ HOTEL - DAY

She goes inside the hotel and enters a room marked "Employees." The guys sit down on a sofa in the luxurious lobby, and Nick holds a magazine from the coffee table in front of his face for cover.

NICK
I feel underdressed.

NICK
Let's wait for Red to surface.
She's a piece to the puzzle.

The woman reappears a few minutes later as a brunette, wearing a navy dress with red piping and a little scripted red "R" on the collar. She takes her place at the concierge station. The guys leave the hotel.

EXT. PLACE VENDOME - DAY

Nick's taking off part of the disguise, and stuffing it in his pack.

NICK
So, now we've seen four players.
The first one buried something, the
second blocked the view of it, the
third switched briefcases with the
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
first, and the fourth did something
so smoothly with the first that we
missed it.

MIME
These guys are pros.

NICK
What are they up to?

MIME
It's got to be about the plates. We
can't lose sight of that.

EXT. NEAR BUREAU DE CHANGE - 11:45 A.M.

Lucy, Nick, and Henri are waiting for the neighbor to close
for lunch. Nick is dressed as a priest.

LUCY
Here he comes, and he's got extra
luggage.

The subject has a brown satchel slung over a shoulder, as
well as his usual black briefcase.

NICK
He's probably going to pass it to
someone. I'll stay with him, in
case he hands it off along the way.
Why don't you secure a bench in the
park.

LUCY
(smiling)
I would rather secure a hotel room
for a while, Father. Wink, wink.

He kisses her patronizingly on the forehead.

NICK
Try to control your urges. We have
work to do. I'll call you when
we're getting close.

She goes one way, and Nick and Henri follow the neighbor.

MIME
She seems to have very active
hormones.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Tell me about it. I've started
taking vitamins.

MIME
You like her, don't you?

NICK
She's all right.

Henri is grinning.

NICK (CONTD)
What?

MIME
Nothing.

The neighbor goes into a bank across from his shop.

INT. BANK - DAY

The guys follow him inside. The neighbor waits in a SHORT LINE to do a teller transaction. Then he moves to another window, and a WOMAN escorts him to the safety deposit box area. Nick and Henri busy themselves at an island with deposit slips, etc. The neighbor emerges, and leaves.

EXT. CHAMPS ELYSEE - CONTINUOUS

NICK
(on phone)
We're on our way. Keep your eyes
peeled.

LUCY
I'm on the case.

EXT. PARC MONCEAU - DAY

The boys join Lucy on the usual observation bench, after the neighbor takes his regular seat.

LUCY
I'm a sinner, Father. Drive the
devil from me!

NICK
Keep your voice down. Let me see
the binoculars.

(CONTINUED)

Nick's POV:

The concierge from the Ritz comes into view, and sits down on the neighbor's lap. They pick up where they left off last time.

LUCY
Public display of affection is hot.
Let's make out.

NICK
I'm trying to spy on these guys,
Luce. What if James Bond's
girlfriend kept distracting him?

MIME
Girlfriend?

NICK
(to Henri)
It was just a figure of speech.

MIME
A card laid, is a card played.

LUCY
I'm going home.

He resumes the surveillance.

NICK
Okay.

LUCY
(standing)
I'll probably pick up a couple of
male prostitutes on the way to
satisfy my sexual appetite.

NICK
(not really listening)
Have a good time.

She storms off.

NICK (CONTD)
It looks stiff. Wait. She's worked
the strap of the satchel onto her
shoulder.

The concierge gets up and leaves with the satchel. Nick puts the binoculars down.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

She's slick. Let's go.

MIME

Give her a head start. Let's not have our movements timed exactly with hers.

They wait for a minute.

MIME (CONT'D)

I think your girlfriend's upset.

NICK

Just because I wouldn't make out with her? I was spying.

MIME

She's sensitive.

NICK

You know I have needs, too. What about my needs?

MIME

Buy her a little something before you go home. It would show you care.

NICK

Okay, I'll buy her something. In the mean time, can we tag along after Mata Hari, or would that be asking too much?

MIME

I'm ready.

They close the gap on the concierge and shadow her to a metro station. They slip into the train car with her, and exit a few stations later. She walks briskly with the satchel swinging on her shoulder, and eventually enters the Libyan Consulate.

Nick and Henri cross to the other side of the street, and wait on the sidewalk by the curb.

MIME

Take out your map, and turn it upside down like you're a tourist. Someone might be watching.

Nick reaches in his pack for his map.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Why's such a fair skin lass,
visiting the Libyan consulate
during her lunch hour?

MIME

She's a courier, but what's she
delivering? We don't know what our
boy slipped in the satchel while he
was at the bank?

A minute later a TAXI SCREECHES to a halt in front of the
consulate. Red streaks out of the building without the
satchel, jumps in the taxi, and it ZOOMS off.

NICK

We're never going to figure out
what these characters are up to.

MIME

I think it's time to do a little
gardening.

NICK

What if he catches me? I have a
very low threshold for torture.

MIME

Don't worry, he's not going to
torture you. He'll kill you, if he
catches you. Let's buy Lucy a gift.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - SAINT-GERMAIN-DES PRES - DAY

Nick and Henri are browsing the cases. A sophisticated
looking SALESWOMAN approaches.

SALESWOMAN

Bonjour, monsieur.

NICK

Bonjour. Is there anyone here that
speaks English?

SALESWOMAN

I speak English, sir.

NICK

Good. I'm looking for a gift for a
woman. I want it to be a token of
my affection, but not of my
commitment.

(CONTINUED)

This is the first time she has ever heard those words in any language, but she's unflappable.

SALESWOMAN

Perhaps an ankle bracelet. This way, please.

She leads him to a glass case, slides open the back panel, and reaches inside for a black, velvet, display tray. She puts it on top of the case.

NICK

I think these say what I'm trying to communicate.

The woman nods.

NICK

(pointing)

That one please.

SALESWOMAN

Shall I gift-wrap it for you?

He turns to Henri, who nods affirmatively. Nick turns back to the woman.

NICK

Sure.

EXT. RUE DE RENNES - DAY

On the way home, Nick stops and looks into a window of a lingerie shop. There's an anatomically correct female mannequin, modeling leopard spotted underwear. He takes the little jewelery box out of his sport coat pocket, looks at it, and turns it over in his hand.

NICK

Underwear might be a better gift. It's intimate, yet noncommittal.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - DAY

She's listening to music on her iPod, and VACUUMING when Nick comes in. He walks up behind her, puts his arms around her waist, and kisses her cheek. She turns off the vacuum cleaner.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
(louder than normal)
Anything happen after I left?

He plucks one of the earbuds out of her ears.

NICK
Red dropped the satchel off at an
embassy.

LUCY
Which one?

NICK
Libya.

She spins around toward him.

LUCY
Libya!

NICK
Yeah. Only the French would let the
Libyans have an embassy in their
country. They must be the most
stylish of all the countries
sponsoring terrorism.

He produces the lingerie bag from his pack, and hands it to
her.

NICK (CONTD)
Sorry if I was insensitive earlier.

She eyeballs both sides of the bag.

LUCY
I wonder what could be inside a bag
with an underwear logo on it?

NICK
Maybe it's patio furniture.

She removes two sets of demi-bras and thongs. One has
leopard spots, the other has tiger stripes.

LUCY
Why, it's underwear!

She checks the size tags.

LUCY (CONTD)

Good guess.

NICK

The woman told me they're from the Seigfried and Roy collection.

LUCY

I forgive you.

She gives him a peck on the lips.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They're sitting at a cramped table in a CROWDED bistro, enjoying themselves.

NICK

I've thought of a plan to meet the neighbor.

LUCY

Let's hear it.

NICK

Okay. We know he gets home between 6:15 and 6:30. What if we were to plant you in front of our lobby door at 6:10 with too many art supplies for you to carry?

LUCY

You want me to meet him?

NICK

Yeah. You're going to kind of seduce him.

LUCY

You're joking.

NICK

Nope. Buy yourself a tiny, black, spandex dress and some pumps. And put on some warpaint.

An older, heavysset WAITER with curly, gray hair and a handlebar mustache brings their next course. Lucy leans across the table after the waiter leaves.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
(sotto)
I've never seduced anyone.

NICK
You won't have to do much. You have a porno star body. When it's stuffed inside a little dress, you're going to be irresistible.

LUCY
I don't think this plan is going to work.

NICK
Oh, it'll work. I'm going to let you in on a secret that men are never supposed to reveal to women.

She looks intently at him, and then leans her elbows on the table, resting her chin on her fists.

NICK (CONTD)
When men see women with bodies like yours, wearing clothing that appears to be spray-painted on, we instantly lose fifty IQ points.

LUCY
What do I say to him?

NICK
Innocently ask if he could help you get your stuff inside. I guarantee he will carry everything up to your apartment for you. Then make some small talk, like you're meeting someone for the first time. Introduce yourself, ask him what apartment he lives in...

LUCY
What did you bury in your garden in the middle of the night?

NICK
I don't think that should be one of the questions.

LUCY
All right; we've met. Now what?

NICK

Best case scenario; he invites you over for a drink sometime. If he doesn't, we'll have to come up with a contingency plan.

LUCY

Why would he carry my stuff upstairs, if he lives on the ground floor?

NICK

Don't worry. He'll carry your stuff to Brussels if you want him to. You're going to be on a first name basis with him by 6:30 p.m. on Monday.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

They're returning home after dinner.

NICK

I'll be over in a minute.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Nick sees the answering machine blinking.

NICK (CONTD)

Henri, it's Zach. I need your support.

Henri floats into the room. They both stare at the phone.

MIME

Let's hear the verdict.

Nick hits the play button on the machine.

ZACH

(on machine)

Nick, it's Zach. Got the first two chapters. Killer-diller! I'm meeting with Tantum Bell tomorrow. Get me some more. And whatever you're doing; keep doing it! If the rest is like this, we're going to be playing the big time from now on. Ciao.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

See? All you have to do now, is not
get killed before the story's
finished.

INT. COURTYARD - IN FRONT OF LOBBY - EVENING

INTERCUT:

Lucy and the art supplies are in place. The neighbor comes into the lobby, and sees a damsel in distress in a tight, little black dress. He offers to help her with her things.

Nick and Henri are upstairs in the studio pacing the floor. At 6:25 they hear Lucy TALKING to someone as she SQUEAKS opens the DOOR to her apartment. The guys have their ears pressed next to the door.

After the neighbor helps her take everything inside, she walks him to the door and thanks him. She closes the door and waits for a minute before going next door.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

NICK

Translate every syllable!

LUCY

It went exactly like you said it
would!

She hands him a business card.

NICK

Robert Bley, currency specialist.

MIME

It should read, Abdul-Azim, Vicious
Terrorist.

NICK

(to Lucy)

I told you, you could do it.

She's beaming from the accomplishment. Nick pulls her down onto the loveseat.

NICK (CONTD)

Where'd you leave it with him?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
I'm having cocktails over there
tomorrow night.

NICK
I can't believe this worked so
well. I have to put this in my
book.

LUCY
By the way, he couldn't take his
eyes off my dress.

NICK
By the way, either can I.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMNT - EARLY EVENING

NICK
What time do you go to the
neighbors?

LUCY
7:30.

NICK
I got you a few things for the
occasion.

He hands her a Louis Vuitton-style purse.

LUCY
I wasn't going to take a purse.

NICK
There's a digital camera built into
this.

He opens it to show her the camera, then slips his shoulder
through the straps, and tucks it under his arm for a
demonstration. He moves it around.

NICK
Point the front, right corner at
what you want to shoot, then
squeeze the bag gently with your
arm. It's got a hair-trigger. You
just have to barely touch it.

LUCY
Let me try.

He hands her the purse.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Make sure she's comfortable with this. It significantly increases the risk factor.

NICK

If you don't want to use it; you don't have to.

LUCY

It won't be a problem.

She subtly squeezes the purse with her arm.

NICK

Looks good. I have an earpiece for you, too.

He opens the little, clear, plastic bag it's sealed in, turns it on, and gives it to her.

LUCY

Tiny.

NICK

It's supposed to be military-grade equipment. Try it on.

She puts it in her ear.

LUCY

Does my hair cover it?

She leans toward him, and turns her head for an examination.

NICK

I can't see it. Here's the strategy: You have to make sure he takes you outside on the patio. Then, get as close to the garden as possible. I'll be watching you through the binoculars, telling you what I see. Be observant, but only take pictures of something that looks suspicious. That'll minimize your arm movement. If you have any doubts about using the camera; don't!

LUCY

Check.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

It might also be smart to look for a security camera while you're there.

LUCY

Why?

NICK

I think we're going to dig up whatever he buried.

LUCY

This is exciting!

NICK

Please be careful. If I see anything that worries me, I'm bringing you home. Understood?

LUCY

I'll be careful.

They kiss good-bye more times than normal.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Nick's wearing his camouflage outfit with dark face paint, standing inside the palm tree pot. He's looking through the binoculars. Henri is behind him. They both take DEEP BREATHS and let them out simultaneously.

NICK'S P.O.V. of the patio:

Abdul and his wife, are sitting across from Lucy, who is facing Nick's apartment. They're drinking white wine and chatting.

MIME

This is nerve-racking.

NICK

I know. I hope she's careful.

Abdul's CELL PHONE RINGS. He stands, and goes inside the apartment with it pressed to his ear. The woman and Lucy get up, and move toward the garden. They begin a botanical tour around the patio.

NICK

Here we go. The woman's showing Lucy around the garden.

(CONTINUED)

MIME
Where's Abdul?

NICK
Inside.

Abdul comes back outside with a bottle of wine, and refills everyone's glasses.

MIME
Reel her back in.

NICK
Not yet. I want her to look for a camera.

MIME
What about a dog?

NICK
Yeah, that's a good idea.

Nick puts on a headset with a boom microphone.

NICK
(to Lucy)
If you can here me, scratch your shoulder.

She does it.

NICK (CONTD)
Good. That will mean yes if I ask you something. If you rub your eye, that will mean no. Try it.

She does it.

NICK (CONTD)
Do you see anything suspicious in the garden?

She scratches her shoulder.

NICK (CONTD)
Make sure you can describe exactly where it is, in case the pictures don't come out clearly. Have you seen a security camera anywhere?

She rubs her eye.

NICK (CONTD)

Are you using the camera?

She scratches her shoulder.

NICK (CONTD)

You're doing great. I can't see your arm moving at all. When you look for a security camera, check the roof and side of the building. Oh, and look for a dog.

She looks puzzled.

NICK (CONTD)

Make this a short visit. I don't want to press our luck. I miss you.

She smiles.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy is standing next to Nick behind the palm tree. He's looking through the binoculars, and she's pointing. Henri is on the loveseat.

LUCY

There's a decent size patch of dirt half-way down the fence that faces your apartment, that definitely looked different from the rest of the garden. I'm ready to dig that sucker up tonight!

MIME

Slow her down, Nick. She's too revved-up.

Nick turns to face Lucy as the voice of reason.

NICK

We need a foolproof plan for an operation like this. Did you see anything resembling a camera?

LUCY

Negative.

NICK

What about a dog?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
Double negative. I feel so alive!
Doesn't this make you feel alive?!

NICK
Yes, and I hope to stay that way.

LUCY
Just think up a plan, Brainiac.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

NICK
I'm going to write next door for a
while. Should I wake you when I'm
done?

He flexes his eyebrows like, Groucho.

LUCY
That's okay. I know you love me.

INT. NICK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

NICK
We've arrived at the "L" word.

MIME
Attention! Attention! Is there a
doctor in the house?! Please report
to the psychiatric ward with a 1000
cc's of Thorazine.

NICK
Very amusing.

MIME
Well?

NICK
Well, what?

MARCEL
Do you love her?

NICK
I care for her. But I have
commitment issues.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

You also had germ, flying, and tidiness issues.

NICK

That's true.

Nick opens the medicine cabinet and removes the ankle bracelet that's hidden there. He obtains a flashlight from the other room, and creeps next door like a thief in the night.

INT. LUCY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

He stealthily scales the ladder up to Lucy's bed and pulls back the comforter up to the shin of her right leg. Then he directs the light at the jewelery box and removes the bracelet.

She feels around with her leg for the missing cover. He struggles a little getting the bracelet latched around her ankle, but manages it without waking her. Then he covers up her exposed leg, slides up to the pillows, and kisses her lightly on the cheek.

NICK

(sotto)

There's something I want to say, but you go ahead and sleep. This is just a gift; it's not symbolic of anything. But, I am fond of you, and I think you know that. Frankly, I'm not sure why, because you're so kooky. Not that I'm a prize, myself. After all, I hang around with a dead mime. Of course you don't know that. If you did, it might put some strain on our relationship. I don't know what the future has in store, but I want you to know that I'm more comfortable being with you, than anyone I've ever been involved with. That's all I have to say for the moment. So, good night.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - DAY

He's typing like a wild man. Lucy enters, and drapes herself over his back and around his neck.

LUCY
I love it, Nick! You were so clever
to put it on me while I was asleep.

He pivots around in his chair.

NICK
Let me see it.

She pulls her pant leg up and turns her hip inward, flexing the calf muscle. He gets down on his knees in front of her, and kisses her ankle just below the chain.

LUCY
You're such a stud.

He sits back on his chair, and pulls her down on his lap.

NICK
My story is blasting out of me.
I've never experienced anything
like this. I'm writing it, and
living it at the same time.

LUCY
That sounds amazing.

NICK
I've thought of a plan for digging
in the neighbor's garden. Could you
invite them to be your guests at
the gallery for a private showing?

LUCY
Sure.

Nick leans forward and clicks the save button on the keyboard. Then he puts up the pictures that Lucy took of the neighbor's yard.

NICK
Your shots came out great.

Lucy touches the screen on a spot of one of the pictures.

LUCY
Right there! See how that patch of
dirt looks different?

(CONTINUED)

He magnifies the picture.

NICK

That's got to be it. It definitely looks big enough for a briefcase.

LUCY

Are you going to go over there when I have them at the gallery?

NICK

Yeah. It should only take a few minutes, now that I know where to dig. How high's the wall?

LUCY

Five feet, or so. I could see over the top of it.

NICK

We're going to crack this case wide-open, Sister! And then, an extra bad dude is going to jail!

She cradles his face in her hands, and kisses him lovingly.

LUCY

You're quirky, but you're more man than all the guys I've ever been with combined. I'll find out what night they're free.

INT. LOBBY RITZ HOTEL - DAY

Nick and Henri are sitting on a sofa reading a newspaper. Nick is wearing a turban, Nehru jacket, and sandals. His pigment is tinted. GUESTS are coming and going.

MIME

We're wasting our time here.

NICK

Indulge me. I want to become more familiar with her gestures.

At 9:00 a.m. the concierge takes her position behind the desk. At 11:59 a.m. she goes to the employee room to change her uniform and hair color. She walks out the side door of the hotel with a folded newspaper under her arm.

EXT. RUE DE RIVOLI - CONTINUOUS

The guys follow her closely down a CROWDED street. A MAN in a suit, wearing dark sunglasses, passes her going the opposite direction. They exchange folded newspapers.

NICK

Did you see that move?! These guys are the real deal. I could die in France.

MIME

It doesn't matter where you die. It's where you go after you die that counts.

NICK

I'll try to keep that in mind.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Nick and Henri are dressed in black shoes, black jeans, and black turtlenecks. Nick looks out the window toward the sky. It's overcast. Lucy enters the apartment, wearing her little black dress. She walks up to Nick and spins around.

LUCY

Zip me.

NICK

What time are they meeting you at the gallery?

LUCY

Nine o'clock. You're going to have plenty of time. I hired a waiter to pour champagne and pass hors d'oeuvres first.

NICK

Perfect.

LUCY

How are you?

NICK

My stomach is acting like a cement mixer. Call me the moment they arrive, and don't let either one of them out of your sight for a second.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Good luck.

They embrace, and then she exits. Nick CLUNKS a small DUFFEL BAG of supplies onto the counter.

NICK

I want to double check our equipment.

He removes the contents of the bag, one item at a time.

NICK (CONTD)

Mountain climbing pick, collapsible military shovel, wire cutter, rope, lock-picking set, miner's helmet with light, gloves, ninja mask, flashlight, Tang and water bottle.

MIME

Tang? Are we doing a moon landing?

NICK

I didn't know what to pack. I've never tried to save the world before.

MIME

Do you want to check the location on the computer one more time?

NICK

I could find it with my eyes closed.

MIME

Okay. Let's relax until she calls.

Nick sits ramrod erect on the loveseat with his hands intertwined behind his neck. Henri's at the breakfast counter. Nick's CELL PHONE RINGS, launching them both to their feet.

LUCY

(on phone)

They just walked in. I love you, Nick.

NICK

Ditto.

He clicks off, and puts the phone in his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Did you just cryptically say you loved her also in a way that guys do when someone's listening to their conversation?

NICK

I just said ditto; that's all.

MIME

You did tell her you loved her.

NICK

Did you hear me say it?

MIME

Well, you implied it.

NICK

I don't want to talk about it right now. Let's get this thing over with, before I have a heart attack!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBOR'S WALL - NIGHT

Nick and Henri are crouched next to the outside of the wall. Nick removes the gloves and mask from his pack, and puts them on. He looks very "special ops." He lifts the bag onto the top of the wall, and then springs up next to it, landing in a frog crouch. He surveys the area.

NICK

(whispering)

All clear.

He opens the bag, and extracts the flashlight. He aims the light below him, turns it on, and then off immediately. He drops the bag over the garden onto the patio. It THUDS when it hits the bricks.

NICK (CONTD)

Hoorah!

He jumps down next to the bag like a cat burglar, and rolls one time when he hits. He's back in the same crouch with both palms on the ground in front of him. He looks around again, and sees Henri hovering next to him.

Nick opens the bag, and lays out the contents silently onto the patio. He puts on the helmet, and turns on the light. He starts to work with the pick.

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Ground's soft.

He switches to the shovel, and starts to dig.

MIME
I can't get over that ditto thing.
Have you ever told anyone you loved
them?

NICK
No, and I didn't tell it to her
either.

MIME
How much do you want to bet she
thinks that's what you meant?

He stops digging and turns toward Henri.

NICK
It just came out in response to her
saying it to me. It would have been
rude not to say something.

MIME
Admit it. You're in love with her.

NICK
Stop bugging me.

He resumes the digging.

NICK (CONTD)
How far down can this thing be?

MIME
Maybe it's the wrong spot.

NICK
It's not the wrong spot!

MIME
Maybe he dug it up.

Nick stops for a moment.

NICK
I feel something.

He squirms into the hole headfirst up to his chest. He digs his toes into the patio brick, and shimmies his body out of the hole backwards, holding a briefcase by the handle with

(CONTINUED)

both hands. He turns around and sets it gently on the ground between them.

MIME

You got it!

Nick takes off his helmet and kills the light. They're staring at it in the dark.

MIME

Open it!

Nick tries to unhinge the clasp.

NICK

It's locked.

He reaches for the lock-picking set next to the bag. He jiggles the lock for a minute, and it pops open. He reaches inside, and pulls out a small, but heavy, rectangular, metal plate. He sets it on the ground. He shines a light on it, and scans it from one end to the other. He turns off the light.

NICK

It's a twenty euro-note plate.

He reaches back inside, and pulls out five more plates. He lays them out next to each other.

MIME

There they are. This is like a flashback.

NICK

Why'd he bury them? He's got a safety deposit box.

MIME

You can get a safety deposit box opened with a court order. But if the authorities search your apartment, they probably won't dig up your yard.

NICK

Do I turn these things over to the authorities?

MIME

You can't. You obtained them illegally. I have an old friend that can help us. Fill up the hole, and let's get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

Nick repacks and locks the briefcase, and then scoops all the dug up dirt back in the hole. He TAMPS it down with the back of the SHOVEL, making sure it looks like the way he found it.

INT. NICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lucy barges into the apartment. She's wired. Nick is sprawled out on the loveseat, exhausted.

LUCY
Did you get it?!

NICK
Yeah.

LUCY
What is it?!

NICK
Euro-note plates.

LUCY
Are you kidding?! Let me see them!

NICK
They're under the sink. Use a towel
when you touch anything.

LUCY
Prints, right?

NICK
Check.

She retrieves the briefcase, and brings it into the main room. She tries to open it.

LUCY
It's locked.

He gets the lock picking set and after a minute, pops it open for her. She reaches inside with the towel, and sets all the plates carefully on the floor. She gawks wide-eyed at them.

LUCY (CONTD)
(quiet amazement)
Wow.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Yeah, wow.

LUCY

Do we go to the cops now?

NICK

We can't. I committed a crime,
getting them.

LUCY

Let's leave them on the police
doorstep with a note.

NICK

Abdul will deny it belongs to him.

LUCY

Who's Abdul?

NICK

That's Robert's real name.

LUCY

Rebury the briefcase. Then we can
anonymously tell the cops it's back
there.

NICK

Pick a number between zero and a
hundred.

LUCY

Fifty.

NICK

The number was zero. That's how
much chance there is of me going
back there.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nick and Henri are standing in front of an apartment door.
Nick's holding the newly acquired briefcase.

NICK

Who is this guy?

MIME

A childhood friend from my village
in Cameroon. He's a law professor
at the Sorbonne now.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

I can't wait to unload these things. They're freaking me out.

MIME

Jean Pierre will know what to do. We just have to convince him that I told you to bring the plates here. Oh, he doesn't like Americans.

NICK

Wonderful.

Nick RINGS the Bell. FOOTSTEPS are audible.

NICK

Does he speak English, at least?

MIME

Yes.

The door is answered by JEAN PIERRE SIMONE, (50's).

JEAN PIERRE

Oui.

NICK

Good evening, Professor Simone. My name is, Nick Redman.

JEAN PIERRE

American?

NICK

Yes.

Jean Pierre SLAMS the DOOR closed.

NICK (CONTD)

(to Henri)

How do you think it's going so far?

MIME

Ring the bell again. We have to have his help.

Nick rings again, and Jean Pierre responds from inside.

JEAN PIERRE (O.S.)

What do you want?!

(CONTINUED)

NICK
Please, professor. I'm here
with Henri...

NICK (CONTD)
(to Henri)
What's your last name?

MIME
Cherel.

NICK (CONTD)
(to Jean Pierre)
I'm here with, Henri Cherel.

JEAN PIERRE
Go away before I call the police!
Henri is dead.

NICK
Let's go. If the cops come and find
these plates on me, I'm going to
get shipped off to a penal colony
in French Guiana.

MIME
Where'd you get that?

NICK
"Papillon."

MIME
Tell him when we were seven years
old, we drilled a hole in the
woman's shower near his parent's
home in Douala, so we could become
better acquainted with the female
form. Jean Pierre wanted to marry
Alice Crochet's older sister after
he saw her naked. She matured
early.

NICK
(to Henri)
Boys will be boys.

MIME
Tell him.

NICK
Professor Simone, did you marry
Alice Crochet's sister after you
saw her naked in the shower?

(CONTINUED)

Jean Pierre, unlocks and reopens the door, looking stupefied.

JEAN PIERRE

No one knew that, besides Henri!

NICK

Probably a good idea to keep it that way, sir. May we come in?

Jean Pierre steps away from the door, gesturing for Nick to enter. He's discretely checking around for some sign of Henri. The three men are in the middle of the living room.

JEAN PIERRE

Did Henri really die in prison?

NICK

Yes, sir. He's dead as disco.

JEAN PIERRE

This is fantastic. How is it possible you can communicate with him?

NICK

It's a long story.

MIME

Show him the plates.

Nick opens the briefcase, pulls out one plate at a time, and CLANKS them down side-by-side on a coffee table. Jean Pierre's eyes get huge, as he stares at them.

JEAN PIERRE

Where did you get these?

NICK

From someone who wishes to do France and the world great harm.

JEAN PIERRE

And Henri told you to bring them to me.

NICK

He said you would help us.

JEAN PIERRE

(beat)

This is incredible. Sit. Something to drink?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

No thanks.

JEAN PIERRE

I do know someone in the Treasury department. I could call him to examine them?

Nick looks at Henri.

NICK

What do you think?

MIME

It has to be done tonight. If Abdul-Azim discovers they're gone, this operation is finished.

NICK

(to Henri)

But at least the plates would be safe, and he couldn't flood the market with money.

MIME

We need to arrest this menace. If not, he will find another way to attack the non-Muslim world.

JEAN PIERRE

Are you speaking to Henri?

NICK

Yes.

JEAN PIERRE

Amazing!

NICK

Okay, here's the deal. The plates have to be examined tonight. We're working with a small window of opportunity. If your government acts quickly, they can catch a major terrorist. Also, I don't want to be around while the authorities are here.

JEAN PIERRE

I understand.

(CONTINUED)

MIME

Tell him to call his contact now,
and we will return tomorrow
morning. He can not let the
authorities take the plates, unless
they can arrest him without
evidence.

NICK

(to Jean Pierre)

Professor, I can only leave the
plates with you overnight, and I
have to have them back by tomorrow
morning, unless an arrest can be
made without them. Is that
possible?

JEAN PIERRE

When I tell him what I have, he
will be here instantly.

NICK

Until tomorrow.

JEAN PIERRE

A demain.

They shake hands, and Nick and Henri leave.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Nick and Henri are in front of Jean Pierre's apartment. Nick
is disguised as an old, Hassidic Jew. He RINGS the BELL.

JEAN PIERRE

Oui.

NICK

It's Nick, professor.

Jean Pierre opens the door.

JEAN PIERRE

You look different, *monsieur*. Come
in.

INT. JEAN PIERRE'S APARTMENT - DAY

They enter, and everyone sits.

NICK

What did you find out?

JEAN PIERRE

The plates are real. They are from the Banque de France break in that Henri was involved in.

NICK

That's what we expected. Anything else?

JEAN PIERRE

They can only make an arrest, if the evidence is in the possession of the criminal. Otherwise, they will not be able to convict him in court.

NICK

Why don't they just plant them on his property?

JEAN PIERRE

That's conspiracy. The case will not even go to court in France. You need to put them back where you found them. Then they can make the arrest.

NICK

Professor, I was fortunate to not get killed when I acquired them. I can't go back there again.

MIME

Nick, I need you to do this for me. I'll be there with you the whole time. I'm stuck like this for eternity, if I don't get this guy. Do you want that?

NICK

(to Henri)

Henri, don't guilt-trip me. This is a job for James Bond, not Nick Redman.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE NEIGHBOR'S WALL - 3:00 A.M.

Nick, Henri, Jean Pierre, and a TREASURY AGENT are crouched next to the outside of the garden wall. Behind them are a DOZEN MEMBERS of a Tactical Strike Team. Nick's dressed as a Ninja again with a shovel secured to his back by Velcro.

NICK

I can't believe I'm doing this again.

HEAD TREASURY AGENT

You are doing France a great service, *monsieur*.

MIME

You're going to be hero. Look at what's going on here. Is this a blockbuster ending for your book, or what?

HEAD TREASURY AGENT

It is very important for you to understand, that we can not arrest anyone until the evidence is put back, and you are not on the property. It must not look like a conspiracy.

NICK

And arresting him immediately after I'm out of there, isn't a conspiracy?

TREASURY AGENT

I do not make the laws, *monsieur*.

MIME

Come on, let's go. I'll meet you on the other side.

Henri passes through the wall, and Nick hops up on top of the wall. Jean Pierre hands him the briefcase.

JEAN PIERRE

Is Henri going to be with you?

NICK

Yeah.

JEAN PIERRE

Faites attention, monsieur.

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Check.

He jumps down onto the patio holding the briefcase, and lands awkwardly on his right ankle. He rolls onto the ground in AGONY.

MIME

Quiet!

NICK

My ankle.

He drags himself a few feet to the spot, and maneuvers himself onto his knees. He reaches back for the shovel, but doesn't secure his grip on it, and it CLANKS onto the patio bricks. He twists around, stretches out to the shovel, and recoils back to his knees.

MIME

Dig!

The lights come on in the house, and there's COMMOTION. Nick digs with adrenalin speed, and drops the briefcase in the hole. He scoops the dirt over it, and WHACKS it with the back of the SHOVEL.

MIME

That's enough! Let's go!

Nick drags himself over the flowers to the wall. The door of the house BURSTS OPEN, and there is YELLING in ARABIC. A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT. Abdul-Azim is running toward him. There's another SHOT. It hits next to where Nick is trying to slide his body over the wall. Henri pushes Nick over the top. The Tactical Team pours into the yard like ants at a picnic, taking Abdul Azim and his wife into custody. The head Treasury agent digs up the plates. He leans over the wall, and shows it to Nick, who is lying on the ground, clutching his ankle.

HEAD TREASURY AGENT

Merci, monsieur. You are to be commended. I will need you to accompany us to the station. There is some paperwork, as you would expect.

NICK

I can't walk.

(CONTINUED)

JEAN PIERRE

Let me help you.

MIME

You've made a new friend.

NICK

You pushed me over the wall. You touched me! What's going to happen to you?

MIME

Not now.

INT. TAXI - MOVING - NIGHT

Nick and Henri are heading home after being at the police station. Nick's foot is wrapped in an Ace bandage. An aluminum crutch is propped up against the door.

NICK

Are you going to be stuck between levels of the afterlife forever?

MIME

I can appeal it, due to the unusual nature of the circumstances. It's possible they might be lenient.

NICK

I owe you my life.

MIME

You wouldn't have been back there if it wasn't for me. I couldn't let you get shot.

INT. LUCY'S BATHROOM - THAT NIGHT

Nick's sitting on the toilet seat in the "Thinker Position." Lucy's taking a shower, jabbering away to him. Henri's in the mirror.

LUCY

This is the most un-fucking-believable story I've ever heard! Terrorists, shooting, hyperinflation, and you saved the free world by yourself!

(CONTINUED)

NICK

You make it sound so dramatic.
There were a lot of people
involved.

LUCY

Wow, Nick! Wow!

He looks up at the schools of multi-colored fish on the shower curtain that she's elbowing in an effort to wash the harder to reach places. He stands up with the help of his crutch, and taps her on the shoulder through the curtain.

LUCY

Be out in a minute.

NICK

I want to tell you something.

She pulls the curtain open a crack to look out.

LUCY

What?

NICK

Ditto.

LUCY

What's that supposed to mean?

NICK

Before I went over the wall the first time, you called to tell me Abdul-Azim and his wife arrived at the gallery. You said you loved me, but I was too inhibited to say that I loved you too, so I just said ditto.

LUCY

That's sweet.

She pulls the curtain closed. He pulls it back open, then gingerly kneels down on his good leg next to the tub.

MIME

I can't believe what I'm seeing.
You're going to propose to her,
aren't you? Can you imagine how
quirky you're kids are going to be?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
What's going on?

NICK
Please turn off the shower. There's
something I would like to ask you.

She does it, and then reaches for a towel to wrap around her torso.

MIME
You need a ring. Unhook one of the
shower curtain rings.

NICK
Could you please unfasten one of
the shower curtain rings, and hand
it to me?

LUCY
Why?

NICK
I need it.

LUCY
You need a shower curtain ring?

She accommodates his request. He CLEARS his THROAT.

NICK
I know we've only known each other
for two weeks...

MIME
I have to tell you something.

Nick pivots half-way around to the mirror.

NICK
Not now.

MIME
It can't wait.

LUCY
Nick, you're talking out loud
again. Are you aware that you're
doing this?

NICK
(to Lucy)
Sorry. If I could have just a
moment to collect my thoughts.

(CONTINUED)

NICK (CONTD)

(to Henri)

This better be great. And make it fast!

MIME

Remember I told you we had one more thing to do before I could go?

NICK

Are we going to discuss it right this second?

MIME

I said it was a slight transgression.

NICK

Yes.

LUCY

Nick, what's happening to you? Can you hear me?

NICK

I can hear you. I just need one more minute, please.

She steps out of the tub.

LUCY

The moment's passed.

She leaves the room. Nick gets up and sits on the end of the tub, facing the mirror.

NICK

Did you hear it? She gave me "The Tone." Every woman gives it to me before they say things aren't working out between us. Why couldn't you have waited five more minutes?

MIME

Lucy's my daughter.

NICK

Huh?

MIME

It happened while I was touring the States. I want her to know how

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MIME (cont'd)

sorry I am that she was given up for adoption, and that terrible woman became her mother. I cringe every time I see her limp. Tell her I never stop feeling guilty about it.

NICK

How do you expect me to tell her something like that? Lucy, I don't really talk to myself. I talk to the ghost of Henri Cherel, the mime. Who, oh by the way, just happens to be your biological father. She already thinks I'm one taco short of a combination plate.

MIME

Our deal was for you to help me fix two things, in exchange for a best selling story. I have delivered my end of the bargain, and you have completed half of yours. I have to make retribution to her, or I can't move on.

NICK

Well, I don't know how to tell her.

MIME

We'll hold a seance. You'll raise my apparition, so she can see me. Then I can tell her how sorry I am.

NICK

(sarcastic)

Why didn't I think of that?

MIME

Don't worry, I'll help you. Now get in there, and ask my daughter to marry you. You have my blessing.

INT. APARTMENT - MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lucy is reading at her desk. Nick hobbles over to her, and turns her chair around.

NICK

I'm sorry I did such a lousy job in there. Will you let me try to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NICK (cont'd)
recapture the moment? Where's the
shower curtain ring?

LUCY
On the table.

He takes it from the table, and turns back to her. He pulls the ring apart and fastens it around her wrist.

NICK
This is just temporary. Will you
marry me? I'll move to Paris if you
want.

LUCY
What about this talking to yourself
stuff? You do it all the time.

NICK
Yeah. About the talking. Turns out,
I'm not really talking to myself.

LUCY
I just heard you!

NICK
Well, I was talking, but not to
myself. I was talking to someone
that only I can see. That's why it
appeared that I was talking to
myself.

LUCY
Oh, Nick. Do you know how crazy
that sounds?

He DRAGS a dining room chair over to her, and sits.

NICK
Okay, here we go. I communicate
with the ghost of Henri Cherel, the
mime.

She's looking at him, like he has two heads.

LUCY
What?

NICK
I talk to a ghost.

She takes the engagement bracelet off, and hands it back to him.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY
I can't do this.

NICK
I know you think I'm crazy, but I'm not.

LUCY
I think you're very confused.

NICK
If you didn't think I was crazy, would you marry me?

LUCY
I don't know. Yes, I guess.

NICK
How would you like to meet him? We'll hold a seance.

LUCY
Nick, please.

NICK
Give me a chance to prove it to you. If I can't, I'll be out of your life tomorrow. Light some candles, put on some mystical music, and clear everything off the dinning room table.

He gets up and hobbles toward the door.

LUCY
Where you going?

NICK
To get into character.

Lucy prepares the room. Nick hobbles back in, wearing Ali Babba and the Forty Thieves pajama pants, a rhinestone-encrusted vest with no shirt, curved slippers, and a turban with a blue, plastic amulet on front.

LUCY
You look ridiculous.

Nick glances down at himself.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Henri isn't wearing white face.

NICK

I can see some family resemblance.

MIME

If you can pull this off, I'll be out of your life and on my way. You ready?

NICK

I better be. I'm way out on a limb with her.

They walk into the dining room.

INT. DINNING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The three of them are standing by the table.

LUCY

This is stupid.

NICK

Let's sit down. My ankle's killing me. I'll sit at the head of the table. You sit to my right.

LUCY

Do you have any idea what you're doing?

NICK

I know what I want to happen. Take my hands.

MIME

Tell her to clear her mind of any distractions, and to try not to be so skeptical. That's only going to make it harder.

NICK

Luce, I know you're doubtful about this, but please give it a chance. I want you to clear your mind of any distractions.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

I'll try.

MIME

If this is going to work, you both need to be of a single purpose. You need to concentrate on the mime's face, and tell her to concentrate on the clown's face from her dream.

NICK

(to Lucy)

Close your eyes. I want you to visualize the face of the clown in your dream. Block out everything else.

LUCY

I don't like this!

She throws his hands down, gets up, and walks to the window.

LUCY (CONTD)

You have some serious issues, Nick!
You should get some help.

MIME

It's painful for her.

NICK

Please come back to the table.

LUCY

I don't want to.

NICK

I know it's hard for you, but I think we can end your nightmare tonight.

She turns from the window and looks in his direction.

NICK (CONTD)

You know how in your dream a clown performs open heart surgery on you?

LUCY

Yes.

NICK

It's not a clown. It's a mime that looks like a clown.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

What are you saying?

NICK

He's a mime, Luce. Your father's the surgeon in your dream. His name was Henri Cherel. I know it sounds impossible, but he's here.

She comes back to the table, sits down, and takes Nick's hands.

LUCY

What should I do?

MIME

We're there, Nick. Make it happen.

NICK

Concentrate on his face, Luce. Concentrate on that, and nothing else. Your father wants you to know how sorry he is for allowing you to be adopted, and not being part of your life.

She starts to sob, and Henri's apparition floats above the table.

MIME

Tell her to open her eyes, Nick.

NICK

Lucy, open your eyes.

LUCY

Oh-my-God. I see him! I think I'm going to faint.

NICK

That's the way I felt the first time.

LUCY

What happens now?

NICK

Eh, I was sort of wondering about that, also.

MIME

Let me take it from here, Nick. Could you give us a minute?

(CONTINUED)

NICK

Sure.

He gets up and goes next door.

White screen with superimposed, black words: ONE YEAR LATER.

INT. HOTEL BANQUET ROOM - DAY

Nick has accepted The Hemingway Foundation/PEN Award. He's standing at a dais in a tux. Over his right shoulder is a red sash, and pinned to his left breast is the French Grand Cross. He's holding a plaque that he received earlier in the evening. The room is SRO with literarios. Lucy is sitting at the closest table, holding a BABY. They are sitting between Isabelle and JEANETTE, Nick's mom. The three women look very proud. Nick looks at his family and begins.

NICK

"Have an adventure, and then you'll have something to write about."
That was the advice Ernest Hemingway gave me in a dream, when I told him I was blocked. Had he also mentioned that I would win this wonderful award named after him, I wouldn't have wasted so much of my life being an eccentric, hack writer.

SCATTERED LAUGHTER from the audience. He continues on.

FADE TO BLACK

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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