Book of the Month

by

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Logline:

Unaware he has triggered a chain of events that will lead to a nuclear holocaust in the 1987 post-cold war era, an amateur novelist must transform himself and travel halfway around the world to prevent World War 3.
EXT. MATAWAN NJ TRANSIT COMMUTER TRAIN STATION PLATFORM, SEPTEMBER 1987 - DAYBREAK

ROBERT CAIN (BOB), mid 30's, stands on the platform, looks at his leather Berluti shoes, noticing they are short of the high shine they should have, and that they have a noticeable scuff on one edge. He reaches down to give them a quick "hand shine" when he looks up to see the headlights of a car entering the near full parking lot. The new Jaguar drives to the front row and finds the single open parking spot very near the entrance.

MERRILL HALLSTROM, 60, hops out of the car and walks briskly up to the platform next to Bob. Merrill carries himself with grace and perfection, as if the whole world revolves around him, although his disposition is just the opposite, being caring and compassionate. Bob looks down at Merrill's identical shoes, which have a perfect shine, smiles to himself and gently shakes his head.

Train approaches the platform.

BOB
Good Morning Merrill. I figured you would have been at your place on the shore this weekend.

MERRILL
Wish I could have Bob, but I'm having some work done at my house in Holmdel, wanted to be sure it was done right. It's time to winterize the pool, so I thought I'd do a little remodeling of the poolhouse.

Bob smiles and shakes his head

BOB
I should have such problems to keep me away from the shore for the weekend.

The train slows to a stop, opens the door, and the two board a half full train, sitting across from each other.

INT. NJ TRANSIT TRAIN CAR - DAYBREAK

MERRILL
So how was your weekend?

BOB
Pretty quiet, most exciting thing I guess was watching President Reagan's speech about the pope coming to visit LA.
MERRILL
(Leans forward with a concerned look on his face)
Bob, Jen's been gone for over 2 years now. You got a sizeable settlement from the insurance company, why don't you take some of that money and go out and enjoy yourself? Travel. Book a tour to an exotic destination and meet some people.

BOB
(sighs)
I've thought about it, but I keep thinking "Jen would really have loved this," and the desire just fades away.
(shakes his head)
Still too soon.
(Leaning forward, with a bit of confidence and bluster)
Besides, your company is going gangbusters, I don't see you sipping pina coladas on some caribbean island.

MERRILL
Touche, my friend. We've been incredibly busy. I can't believe so many people buy those trashy romance novels we publish. But then again, there are some 7 million people just in the city, figuring half of them are successful, leaving over a million lonely wives at home. Guess they need to fulfill their romantic desires from our books instead of experiencing it in their own lives.

Merrill sees the sadness in Bob's eyes as he is reminded of his own loneliness.

MERRILL
Bob, I'm sorry, I didn't mean...

BOB
That's OK. I should have gotten over this by now anyway.
MERRILL
Say Bob, we did have record sales a month back, and I'm having a little get together for my staff at the Holmdel house next week, why don't you come by. Get out of the house, have a few drinks, and get your mind off of things.

Bob takes a long look at Merrill

BOB
I just might take you up on that. As a matter of fact, it would probably do me some good to meet some book publishing folks. To be honest, one way I fill my time is writing. I'm taking an old thesis I wrote in college about Benedict Arnold, and have just about finished rewriting it as a novel.

MERRILL
Really? Benedict Arnold? Hate to say it, but from a publisher's perspective, doesn't sound too exciting.

BOB
Hold on, hold on. It's (air quotes) fact based fiction, that theorizes Benedict Arnold was a double agent for the colonies, not a traitor. He knew too much, so the founding fathers positioned him as a traitor, and had him executed so he'd never reveal their dirty little secrets.

Merrill stares at Bob analyzing his seriousness

MERRILL
You're serious, and I'm actually a bit intrigued. Tell you what. If you finish that novel, and if it's any good, I'll publish it for you.

BOB
(laughing)
You're a romance novel publicist, what interest would you have in a book about Benedict Arnold?
MERRILL
Bob, it's my company, and I'll do as I damn well please. My family founded Hallstrom Publishing over 50 years ago, and it's about time I enjoyed something other than the money it's provided me. You do need to come to my party and meet my folks. I may need this book published as much as you.

EXT. NJ TRANSIT RAILWAY AND TRAIN - DAYBREAK

OUTSIDE OF TRAIN HEADING AWAY.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. MERRILL'S HOUSE, COCKTAIL PARTY - NIGHT

People are conversing and milling about observing artwork, decorations, etc. Standing next to Bob, Merrill clinks his glass several times to draw the room's attention.

MERRILL
I'd like to thank you all for coming out tonight, I realize a trek way out here is probably not the way that most of you would choose to start off the weekend, but I hope you're all having a good time anyway (laughs from the guests). In all seriousness though, this is all for you, the dedicated folks of Hallstrom Publishing who crafted the book of the month "It won't be my Destiny" into the best selling book we've ever published. And to thank you all, I want you to take the rest of the week off with pay, as long as you are back in the office on time come Monday morning. (more laughs, clapping, and cheers from the crowd). One other thing, I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, Robert Cain...

BOB
(interrupting Merrill)
Bob, it's just Bob
MERRILL
Bob, who is an up and coming author who I hope will be our next best seller. He doesn't do romance novels (yet), but I think we may need to experiment a bit with a different genre. I won't steal his thunder, so I hope you'll take a few minutes to meet him, and find out what he, and his novel is all about.

Merrill guides Bob over to JOE ABOUD, 40's, editor

MERRILL
Bob, this is Joe Abboud, my chief editor. I might own the company, but Joe here has forgotten more about publishing than I'll ever know.

Bob and Joe shake hands as Merrill walks away to socialize with other guests

JOE
Pleasure to meet you Bob. How do you know Merrill?

BOB
Oddly enough, we met on the train to the city. I remember the first time I saw him. He pulls into the lot 2 minutes before the train was due, finds a parking spot right in the front row, walks up to the platform just as the train arrives. I get to the station 15 minutes early, can never find a parking spot except in the back row, and this guy, looking like he's just walked out of the pages of GQ magazine, just glides in effortlessly. I sat across from him, and he reaches in his briefcase, and pulls out a book. I remember it to this day, it was "Summer's Hot Summer on the Shore." Now that is the last type of literature I thought this guy would be reading, so I said to him, "I gotta ask, my wife is reading that book, and you two look like you have nothing in common. Am I missing out on something?"
Joe laughs

BOB
So he chuckles and responds, "It's trash, but it pays the bills. Thank your wife for me for being a customer." He went on to introduce himself and tells me what he does. We just sort of struck up a train passenger comradery.

JOE
I've known Merrill for a long time, and still haven't figured him out. All that money, and he still rides the train in from Jersey. He should be living in the Hamptons, and riding into work on a private chopper. You mentioned your wife, is she here tonight?

BOB
No, she passed away a little over two years ago in a car accident. Merrill was really helpful back then, and is still helping me get back to a normal life. Hence, my invite here tonight to crash his company celebration.

Other guests approach to introduce themselves, Bob accidentally spills some garnish on his coat sleeve. Bob wipes it off with a napkin, but there is still some on his sleeve. Bob looks around, sees Merrill engaged in conversation, approaches him.

BOB
Merrill, I've made a bit of a mess on my sleeve, where can I clean this up?

MERRILL
Go up to my bedroom, upstairs to the left. Bathroom in there, also I have some fabric cleaning stuff in the clothes closet up there.

Bob ascends the stairs, heads up to Merrill's master suite. He looks around at how well appointed it is, enters the closet, looks at his neat row of fine clothes, finds something to treat the spot on his coat sleeve, leaves the closet for the master bathroom, again viewing its tasteful and unique decor. He cleans his sleeve, puts the cleaner back in the closet (again looking around), heads toward the bedroom door, stops to look around once more, then heads
back downstairs to rejoin the party.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. MERRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Merrill, sitting behind his desk, is scanning through a heavily edited manuscript. Bob sits in one of the chairs across the desk from Merrill, watching. Merrill tosses the manuscript on his desk.

MERRILL
So how's it been working with Joe? Remember, he's the best I've got.

BOB
Since I've never done this before, I assuming it's going well. Only disagreement we've had so far is he wants me to add a section where Benjamin Franklin satisfies Martha Washington's lustful desires, said it would sell an extra 100,000 copies.

(both laugh)

MERRILL
That would be just like Joe, keeping true romance in romance novels. I've got to tell you, I've skimmed through it, and I'm just not getting it. Tell me, in your opinion, what this book is about.

BOB
Well it's pretty simple, Benedict Arnold...

Merrill holds up a hand to cut Bob off

MERRILL
No, no, no, I get that. Tell me "what this is about." Why do I want to read a made up story about a historical figure everyone already knows about?

BOB
Got it. Here's the premise. You're right, everyone knows the story of Benedict Arnold. What this story does, is takes disparate factual

(MORE)
BOB (cont'd) elements, and weaves them together, to create a fictional story that just might really be true. Connecting the dots of historical facts outside the story of Benedict Arnold, to build just enough credibility into the theory that he was just a fall guy. Maybe make a few people scratch their heads and wonder if maybe it might be true.

MERRILL
That's what I thought. Get back with Joe and his team, you've got to put more of your thesis style of writing into this, but keep it colorful enough to make it interesting.

Merrill stands, followed by Bob

MERRILL
I know that's a tough thing to do with your first manuscript, but Joe's the best. He'll walk you through it.

Merrill and Bob shake hands, Bob exits Merrill's office.

INT. HALLSTROM PUBLISHING - DAY

Bob stands at DELORES WESSELL'S (DEE) 50's, very efficient looking, desk as she finishes a phone call.

DELORES
(nodding as she speaks)...I really appreciate that, and I'll see he gets that to you as soon as possible. Bye.

Delores looks up to acknowledge Bob

BOB
Miss Wessell, do you know if Joe is available, we need to make some changes in my manuscript.

DELORES
Bob? We met at Mr. Hallstrom's home, and you've been in here a few times since, so I think it's safe for you to call me Delores.
BOB
I'm sorry. Delores.

Delores calls Joe on the intercom

DELORES
Mr. Abboud, are you available to see Mr. Cain?

JOE
(over the intercom)
Sure, send him in.

Bob walks over to Joe's office, knocks twice on the door, opens the door and enters. Joe is behind his desk, with STEPHANIE HOWARD, late 20's, late 80's attractive, on one of the chairs across from the desk. Both rise to greet Bob.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

JOE
Hey Bob, good to see you again.

Joe shakes Bob's hand, and leads him over toward Stephanie.

JOE
Bob, this is Stephanie Howard. Steph, this is Bob Cain. 

STEPHANIE
Pleased to meet you Mr. Cain, we were just talking about your book.

Bob and Stephanie shake hands, a little longer than usual. Both smile with an evident mutual attraction.

BOB
Pleased to meet you as well Stephanie, and please, call me Bob.

Stephanie, while still shaking Bob's hand, embarrassingly breaks her gaze at Bob and looks down for a moment. She looks back at Bob.

STEPHANIE
Thanks, and you can call me Steph.

Joe is obvious to the mutual attraction

JOE
Great, now that we've gotten that out of the way, take a seat.

All three sit. Stephanie and Bob trade glances and shy smiles
JOE
So Bob, what brings you here today?

BOB
Well, Merrill called me in to talk about the book. Wanted to give me some constructive criticism and work with you on the "tone."

Stephanie starts taking notes, while continuing on and off glances at Bob.

BOB
While he likes the general content, the way I've written it, it's just a story. Seems it needs a bit more of an emphasis on the reader feeling, "Hey, this might have really happened."

JOE
Glad you're open to that Bob, we'd talked about that earlier, and that's why I've engaged Steph here. She's a junior editor and transcriber, and has a real knack for giving good guidance on flow and tone.

STEPHANIE
There's something about the final keying of the manuscript into the computer system that helps me get a feel for those things, helps me understand the perception of the readers as I'm typing it, almost like I'm translating the story to them.

BOB
How long do you think the rewrite will take?

JOE
Hopefully we can knock it out in the next couple of weeks. Plans I hear are to release it as December's Book of the Month. It'll take a lot of dedicated time, you two will have to work closely together to meet the deadline. You OK with that?

Stephanie looks down at her notebook, shyly smiling and blushing.
Bob stands and begins to head for the door.

**BOB**
I'm willing to put in all the time it takes. I can't tell you how excited I am to get this finished and bring this story to life.

Bob opens the door, pauses, then turns back looking into Joe's office

**BOB**
And Joe, Merrill says we may need to add a scene where Benedict Arnold satisfies Martha Washington's lustful desires.

Stephanie turns away from looking at Bob in a full blush, Bob looks at Stephanie, slyly smiles, and exits the office.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN:**

**INT. MERRILL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Merrill presses the intercom

**MERRILL**
Dee, have Joe come in here.

Joe picks up the manuscript on his desk and looks at it

Double knock on the door, Joe enters

**JOE**
You wanted to see me boss?

**MERRILL**
I do, it's about the Benedict Arnold book.

Joe sits across from Merrill

**MERRILL**
What do you think about it?

**JOE**
Personally, ah, I actually like it. It's a big stretch from our usual stuff, but I thought it was pretty catchy. We didn't make a lot of changes, but the few things Steph worked into it really set the hook to the story.
MERRILL
So you'd be OK with this as December's book of the month?

Joe leans back and puts his hands behind his head

JOE
Like I said, it's a stretch from our norm, but yeah, I'd support it.

Joe leans toward Merrill

JOE
Going to leave a couple million lonely housewives unhappy though.

Merrill chuckles

MERRILL
Well, we've got a strong bottom line this year. Might get a few complaints from our loyal readers, but controversy gets press, and press sells books, so it may not be too bad in the long run.

Merrill picks up the manuscript, flips through it to nearly the end.

MERRILL
Now, I don't usually do this, but we need to change chapter 12. I want it rewritten to where Benedict Arnold isn't killed. He escapes, and a look-alike is killed in his place.

Joe leans back in his chair

JOE
Whew, that's a big change. Do you think Bob will go for it?

Merrill leans forward

MERRILL
Frankly, I don't care. I haven't been able to get hold of him for the past couple of days. Have Steph do the rewrite, and I'll make him appreciate the change.

Merrill slides the manuscript across his desk to Joe
MERRILL
Have Dee get hold of Bob, and get him in here Friday. We need to get this finalized and printed. Make sure Steph gets me the final manuscript by Wednesday, and make sure Dee gets a copy of the final to Bob as well.

Joe picks up the manuscript, stands, walks to the door, and opens it. He turns back to Merrill

JOE
Are you sure about this boss, I really did like it.

MERRILL
It's not up for debate. Make it happen.

Joe exits, closing the door behind him.

Merrill, swings his chair around, puts his feet up on the window sill, looks out the window, deep in thought.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. MERRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Intercom buzzes

MERRILL
What is it?

DELORES
Joe asked me to have you join him in his office, he says there's a problem with the Benedict Arnold book.

Merrill exits his office, walks to Joe's office, entering without knocking

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

Joe views the people in the office, Joe is behind his desk, Steph is sitting across the desk from Joe, Bob is anxiously pacing.

MERRILL
What seems to be the problem?

Bob waves the manuscript in his hands at Merrill
BOB
What the hell is this???

MERRILL
It's the December book of the month. I ask again, what is the problem?

JOE
You know good and well what the problem is. You've changed the ending. The climax. The whole aspect that ties everything together and makes this a believable theory. What are you doing?

MERRILL
Sit down Bob.

Bob stares at Merrill

MERRILL
Bob, sit down so we can discuss this rationally.

Bob stares at Merrill, the relents and sits down hard in the other chair across from Joe.

MERRILL
Bob, in the scheme of things, this is a minor change.

BOB
Dammit! It changes the whole thing. It changes this from a plausible theory and turns it into a cheap movie of the week!

MERRILL
Bob, this is how things work. We needed the extra hook at the end, and now we have it.

BOB
It's not going to happen!

MERRILL
Bob, it is going to happen. This meeting is not professional, but as a personal courtesy to you. Hallstrom Publishing now owns this book, and it is going to be our December book of the month. With this ending.
Bob leaps from his chair and heads toward the door, as he forcefully pulls it open, Merrill stops him. Merrill then leads him into the reception area.

INT. HALLSTROM PUBLISHING - DAY

MERRILL
Bob, we've been friends a long time. Take a bit of time to think. Sit down for a few minutes and think this through. I'll be back in a few minutes.

Merrill returns to Joe's office and closes the door.

INT. JOE'S OFFICE - DAY

MERRILL
Well, he took that better than I thought he would.

Merrill looks at Stephanie.

MERRILL
Stephanie, we need to have this ready to go first thing Monday morning. You're going to have a long weekend getting this into the computer system.

Stephanie nods to Merrill, she is visibly upset.

MERRILL
Look Stephanie, these things are tough. I'm older than this publishing house, seems I've worked here forever, and learned a lot along the way. If I know anything, I know that he will get over this long before he will get over you. Go out and talk with him. You'll both feel a lot better.

STEPHANIE
Yes sir.

Stephanie exits Joe's office for the reception area.

INT. HALLSTROM PUBLISHING - DAY

Stephanie sits on the couch next to Bob and rubs his shoulder. Bob is tense, but begins to relax somewhat once Stephanie touches him.
STEPHANIE
I'm so sorry this happened Bob. Just so you know, it's not unusual. I've seen this happen many times before.

Bob looks at Stephanie

BOB
What do YOU think?

STEPHANIE
I understand your points. From an accuracy perspective, I do like your version better. (pause) But Merrill has this unique knack. He seems to be able to turn anything into gold. He does have a great track record, just look at the success of the publishing house, compared to the crap we publish.

Pause

STEPHANIE
Think about it. What do you really want?

Pausing, Bob thinks about her question, slowly a sly smile comes to his face.

BOB
What do I want?

STEPHANIE
Yeah, it's really important for me to know.

BOB
What I want, what I REALLY want, is for you to walk out of here with me, right now. Forget about this nonsense for a while, have a few drinks with me, and join me for an extravagantly expensive dinner tonight. This is going to be a busy weekend for you if the final copy has to be ready on Monday to go to the printing house.

Bob stands, turns toward Stephanie who is still on the couch, and extends his hand. Stephanie takes his hand, stands, and begins to walk with him toward the door, not letting go of his hand.
INT. BAR '21' LOUNGE - NIGHT

Stephanie and Bob are seated in the corner booth. The waiter brings fresh drinks and removes the empty glasses from the table. They clink their fresh drink glasses, and smile at each other.

BOB
Getting back to earlier today in Joe's office, I'm sorry how I acted. I'm old enough to know better than to throw a temper tantrum.

STEPHANIE
No worries, it's a tough business, and I'm sure the guys have had to deal with much worse.

BOB
I don't care about the guys, and right now I really don't even care about the book. (pause) What I do care about, is making an ass out of myself in front of you.

Stephanie reaches over, pats Bob's hand, Bob smiles

STEPHANIE
You were a hero, not an ass. Nothing wrong with defending what is dear to you. Shows you have passion.

WAITER (45) approaches

WAITER
A table upstairs has just become open should you wish to dine there.

Stephanie and Bob look at each other. Stephanie smiles, and settles back.

STEPHANIE
I kind of like where I am. Right here. Right now.

Bob looks up at the waiter with a smile, shakes his head no, and the waiter departs. Stephanie and Bob smile at each other, mock toast with their drinks, and each takes a drink from their glass.
INT. BAR '21' LOUNGE - NIGHT

Several glasses litter the table, Stephanie and Bob pick at the remnants of several appetizers.

STEPHANIE
...and that's how Summer's Hot
Summer has defined my career.

Bob picks up the waiter wallet, scribbles his signature on the check, grabs his credit card and slips it into his pocket. He stands and offers Stephanie his hand. Stephanie takes Bob's hand, and rises a bit clumsily due to the drinks and the late hour. Stephanie puts her arms around Bob.

STEPHANIE
And tonight has made it all worthwhile.

Stephanie takes Bob's arm and they head toward the door.

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

Outside The 21, the DOORMAN (35) tries to hail them a cab

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry for having to head home so early, but it's going to take me all weekend to get your book loaded into the computer so we can start the printing next week.

Bob raises an eyebrow

BOB
And what would you think if I were to offer you an alternative?

STEPHANIE
You might be able to persuade me with the right offer. What do you have in mind?

A cab pulls up in the background and the doorman opens the back door for them

BOB
When I decided to write this book, I bought one of those new computers so I wouldn't have to mess with

(MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
retyping it over and over every
time I made a change. I have my
whole manuscript already entered,
and can give you a copy of it on
electronic disks. You just load the
disks into your system, push the
right buttons, and viola, you're
done.

Stephanie pantomimes a balance scale with her hands

STEPHANIE
Hmmmm, spend the weekend working,
or spend the weekend... Hmmmm.

Steph pauses, holding one hand higher than the other, looks
at Bob and smiles

STEPHANIE
Let's do it!

Bob whispers in the doorman's ear and slips him some cash.
Bob helps Stephanie into the back seat of the cab, then
slides in beside her. The doorman leans in the cab window.

DOORMAN
The Waldorf. And get them there
five minutes ago.

The cab pulls away from the curb and into the night traffic.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. MATAWAN NJ TRANSIT RAILWAY AND TRAIN - MID MORNING

Bob and Stephanie are walking down the platform after
exiting from the train

BOB
You know, you really didn't need to
come all the way out here to get
disks of the manuscript, I
would have been happy to bring them
into the city for you.

They continue walking, as Stephanie takes Bob's arm and
smiles at him

BOB
I grew up around here, and it's
always been home.
They walk for a few more steps as Bob looks around

BOB
I look around, and as much as it has changed, it's still the same.

Bob points at Merrill's Jaguar parked in the first row of the parking lot.

BOB
This is Merrill's car. He must have stayed in the city over the weekend or gone down to his place on the shore. I still don't know how he is always the last one to get here to the station, but still gets the best parking spot in the place. I've always envied people with that kind of luck.

Bob points to his car in the back row of the parking lot.

BOB
See where I have to park?

They continue walking, Stephanie's arm still in Bob's

BOB
Have you always been a city girl?

STEPHANIE
No, I grew up on Long Island and moved to the city after I graduated. Wanted to be a writer, and I thought I'd get my inspiration living in the city.

BOB
I thought Long Island girls only moved to the city to become actresses.

STEPHANIE
Not me. I wanted to tell the story through the poetic imagery of my words, not deliver lines someone else had written.

BOB
Hence the job at Hallstrom Publishing? Hoping to make contacts and get an insider's perspective?
STEPHANIE
You got it. Only after a while, I realized that while I could compose with just the right words, I had no creativity to create the stories to be told. So now I'm content to help others tell their stories with my words.

They arrive at Bob's car, and Bob opens the passenger door for Stephanie.

STEPHANIE
Can't say I'm sorry about the way things turned out the way they did, otherwise we might not be here like this now.

Stephanie gets in the car, Bob closes the door behind her, then gets into the car and they drive away.

EXT. BOB'S CONDO - DAY

Walking up to the door of the condo.

BOB
Here we are, my little slice of heaven on earth.

Bob opens the door and they enter the condo.

INT. BOB'S CONDO - DAY

Stephanie stops and looks around inside Bob's condo.

STEPHANIE
Wow, this place is huge. I wish I had this much space.

Stephanie walks over to the sofa table, picks up the wedding photo of Bob and his deceased wife. Stephanie looks at it for a moment, then turns to Bob with questioning eyes.

BOB
My wife and I on our wedding day. She passed away in a car accident a few years back. I probably should have told you, but it's not really much of a topic for a first date, and to be truthful, it's still tough for me to talk about it.

Stephanie sets the picture back down, and reverently straightens it.
BOB
I bought this place just after the accident, the old house had too many memories.

Stephanie walks over and hugs Bob.

STEPHANIE
I'm sorry, I didn't know...

BOB
It's OK. I get a little stronger every day. I'll never forget her, but I've come to grips that she is really gone, and I'm still here, so I need to keep moving forward in life.

Bob takes a deep breath.

BOB
OK, enough of that for now. Can I get you something to drink? Water? Juice?

STEPHANIE
No, I'm fine. Show me around if you don't mind.

BOB
Sorry, I guess I'm not much of a host. Actually, you're the first guest I've had here.

Bob takes Stephanie's hand and leads her through the condo, stepping into and pausing in the various rooms.

BOB

They pause in the office

BOB
This is really a second bedroom, but I converted it into an office. This is where I have my computer, and where I did all my writing. Are you ready for me to make the disks for you?

STEPHANIE
Well that was a pretty quick tour, mind if we go over it again, a

(MORE)
STEPHANIE (cont’d)
little more slowly this time? Maybe we can start in the last room you showed me, only this time, let's spend some "quality time" in there.

They lock eyes, smile, and walk back to the bedroom.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. BOB'S CONDO – NIGHT

Scene fades into the living room, where Bob and Stephanie are snuggled on the couch with coffee cups. A pile of computer diskettes sits on the coffee table.

STEPHANIE
I really do need to be getting back to the city so I can spend the day tomorrow getting your manuscript loaded into the system and making Merrill's final edits.

BOB
It should only take a half hour or so to load the disks. You can spend the rest of the day editing, or (pause) I can come into the city and we can spend the day together. The weather has been great for this time of year, don't you want to get out and enjoy it?

STEPHANIE
I don't know...

BOB
C'mon. You said you liked my version better, and it's more historically accurate. It'll give more credence to the book.

Stephanie is trying to decide

BOB
Where's that girl that braved leaving Long Island for Manhattan and the telling of good stories?

Stephanie still tries to decide
BOB
I think we should leave the copy as is. Load the disks, then we'll catch a matinée of Les Miserables at the Broadway theater, and cap off the evening at the Rainbow Room.

STEPHANIE
You're right. What can it hurt?

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. MERRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Merrill, looking tired, sits behind is desk. His desk is empty, except for a book, a bank check, and a single piece of paper. There is a double knock on the door, and Bob enters.

BOB
Hey Merrill.

Bob pauses and looks at Merrill with concern

BOB
You OK? You're looking kind of worn out.

Bob steps over to the desk, picks up the book, sits across from Merrill's desk.

BOB
Trouble with the book? I thought it was selling pretty well?

Bob tosses the book back on Merrill's desk

MERRILL
Trouble with the book? That's a loaded question. Not with the sales, mind you, it's a winner. One of the best selling books of the month we've ever had.

BOB
So what's wrong. Are you getting heat about the genre? That it's not a romance novel?

MERRILL
No, no, no, that's not it at all. I wish it were that.
Merrill stands and sighs deeply.

MERRILL
Bob, I've got some bad news. Miss Howard, Stephanie, is dead. She's been murdered.

Bob leaps to his feet.

BOB
Oh my God, what happened?

Merrill approaches Bob, puts his hands on Bob's shoulders, and guides him back into the chair.

MERRILL
Bob, not unlike you, I have a story that I've carried around for many years, and never shared with anyone. And now, it's become tangled up with you, your book, and Miss Howard's death.

Merrill silently shakes his head, and returns to his seat behind the desk.

MERRILL
When I took over Hallstrom Publishing in the early '70's it was struggling. We were paying the bills, barely, and not going anywhere. It wasn't a great secret that if something didn't turn around in a couple of years, we'd have to close up shop.

BOB
I'm not following...

MERRILL
(Holding up his hand)
Hold on until you hear the rest of the story. Then you'll understand.

Merrill again stands, and slowly paces around the office

MERRILL
Around that time, I got a call from a fellow, said he had an idea how we could turn the business around. He sounded sincere, so I had him up here for a meeting.

BOB
Who was it?
Merrill motions downward with his hands for Bob to be patient.

MERRILL
Two well dressed men showed up for the meeting, they're names aren't important, as I now realize they were probably phoney names anyway. They presented me with a check for $100,000, and asked that I establish a book of the month program. Their company would see to the promotion of the Hallstrom Publishing and the book of the month program. They would see to it that we got international distribution as well, guaranteeing a turnaround in our business.

BOB
Who were they with?

MERRILL
That's exactly what I asked them. They became a bit fidgety, and said they weren't at liberty to say, that it was a "very private" company. Since the check was a cashier's check, from the bank right here on the first floor of this building, there was no company name on it.

BOB
That's just too weird, what did you do?

MERRILL
I pressed them. They said that they would need one other thing from me, and I thought, here it comes. They said, One day, and that day may never come, we may need you to insert a line in one of your books of the month.

BOB
Sounds like that line from The Godfather. Were they with the mob?

MERRILL
That's what I thought. I gave them back the check, thanked them for the book of the month idea, and

(MORE)
MERRILL (cont'd)

tried to show them the door, but they never left their seats. The older one looked up at me and said, Mr. Hallstrom, are you a patriot?

BOB

Whew.

MERRILL

I told him of course I was. That's when he said that they represent a small, covert organization in the US government, and were charged with keeping America safe from Russian intervention.

Bob's eyes widen

MERRILL

They said even though Nixon had just returned from the Moscow Summit, and the Cuban Missile Crisis was ten years old, and fading away from peoples memories, we were still at war with Russia. To protect American interests, their organization had, over the past few years, smuggled a small nuclear bomb into Russia, and hidden it inside the Kremlin itself, to be discharged only if the fate of the US was in danger.

Bob stands, somewhat unbelieving

BOB

Well that's all interesting cloak and dagger stuff, if it is actually true, but how does that affect my book and Steph's murder?

MERRILL

You needed to know that background before you could understand how you are linked. You see, what they then told me, was that the sign for their operative in Russia to detonate the bomb would be a date, positioned in a certain place in our book of the month.

BOB

What? I don't get it.
The triggering code was to be a date embedded in the in a certain line and chapter in the book of the month. For example, if the February book of the month had the date May 6 in the second line of the second chapter, the device was to be detonated on the following May 6.

Bob grabs the book on the desk and flips to the 12th chapter

That's right, the 12th line of chapter 12 in your book says, "...although he died in London on June 14..."

Bob moves his lips as he reads the line from the book, closes the book, sets it back on Merrill's desk, and sits back down

Now you understand my desire to change that chapter. I trusted Miss Howard to make the appropriate edits, which evidently were not done, as you can see.

Merrill returns to his chair behind the desk

She never failed me before. She was not involved in this, nor is anyone else in the company aware of this.

Bob lowers and shakes his head, near tears, knowing he has caused this event, and Stephanie's death

Bob, look at me.

Bob looks up at Merrill

Bob, Stephanie was tortured before she died. She had evidently been interrogated.

Bob bursts out in tears

No....
MERRILL
I had originally recruited the operative in Russia, but I don't know if it is still the same person, so the agency that engaged me does not know who he, or she is. I did it through an intermediary in West Berlin that had contacts in East Berlin. There would be no way for me to get him to stand down without creating an international incident. In other words, we are all dead. Sooner or later.

Merrill stands, picks up the check off his desk, folds it in half, walks around to Bob, and slides the check into Bob's jacket breast pocket.

MERRILL
This is a very generous check for your book, including future proceeds. I've given our bank downstairs instructions to cash this check for you immediately, no questions asked. I would advise you to take the cash and disappear, to enjoy what little of your life you have left.

BOB
Isn't there ANYTHING you can do?

MERRILL
Let's see. Get into Russia, then get inside the Kremlin. Identify an operative I don't even know, and try to persuade him to not do as he's been ordered. That same operative who is under orders to carry out the mission no matter what. It's more likely I would be killed than prevent the detonation, even IF I could figure out who the operative was.

Merrill walks over to his office door, and looks out.

MERRILL
Dee, grab Joe and come in here please.

Merrill walks back behind his desk and sits. Delores and Joe enter, Delores sits while Joe remains standing
MERRILL

Dee, Joe, I want you to witness my signing of this.

Merrill signs the paper on his desk. Puts down the pen and looks at them all.

MERRILL

I want you all to know, that what I'm doing, I'm doing of my own free will, and this paper will attest to that. No one is responsible for this but me. Please make certain this paper stays safe.

Merrill opens a desk drawer, pulls out a handgun, and shoots himself in the head. Joe rushes toward Merrill, Delores stands and screams, Bob stands, looks at Merrill in shock, then quickly walks out the office door.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Bob runs through the door of the stairwell, and runs down several flights of stairs. He arrives on the ground floor sweating and disheveled. He stops, pulls the handkerchief from his breast pocket, and the check falls on the floor. He picks it up and looks at it, having previously forgotten about it due to Merrill's suicide. He folds it back up, slides it into his shirt breast pocket, wipes the sweat from his face, brushes his hair with his fingers, composes himself, and exits the stairway to the street.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob steps out onto the sidewalk, stops, and carefully glances around for anyone on the street who may be watching him. He looks up to see the bank sign above him. He pats his breast where the check is in his pocket, and walks toward the bank, entering it.

INT. BANK - DAY

Bob steps into the bank, looks around, again composes himself and walks confidently up to the TELLER female (20).

TELLER

Hi, how can I help you today?

BOB

Hi, I need to cash a check.

Bob withdraws the check from his pocket, lays it on the counter, and endorses it. Bob then slides the endorsed check to the teller, who picks it up, turns it over, and looks at it with surprise.
Wow, $25,000? Are you sure you don't want to deposit some of it?

Bob is taken aback by the amount as he hadn't even looked at it before

(stammering)

$25...? Uh, yeah, I'm sure. Please just cash it.

Are you sure you wouldn't prefer traveler's checks? They're a lot safer.

Sirens begin to be heard in the background

I'm sure. Just cash.

Sirens begin to get louder

(ina questioning tone)

OK

I'm going to need some identification Mr. Cain.

Bob fumbles for his wallet and shows the teller his driver's license. The teller makes some notations on the check.

How would you like it?

(beginning to get nervous as the sirens get louder)

In cash I said!

I know. I meant what denomination of bills do you want?

Bob looks a bit puzzled, as he hadn't thought of that before. Quickly regaining composure.

Hundreds.

(MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
(pauses)
Make that 23,000 in hundreds, and
2,000 in twenties.

The teller opens her cash drawer and looks in it for a
moment, closes it, looks back at Bob

TELLER
That's more than I have in my
drawer, I'll need to get this from
the back.

The teller heads back out of sight, while sirens wail, and
some stop, as the emergency vehicles have gotten to the
building. Bob turns to look outside a couple of times,
turning back to the teller station nervously. The teller
returns with a large amount of cash, and the branch manager,
a well dressed man. There is fear in Bob's eyes.

TELLER
Mr. Cain, this is our branch
manager. He said he'd gotten a note
from Mr. Hallstrom that you'd be
coming in, and wants to talk with
you about opening an account with
us.

BOB
Look. All I want is to cash my
check and head home. Is that too
much to ask?

The teller and manager look at each other puzzled. The
manager turns and walks away, shaking his head
questioningly. The teller puts the cash on the counter and
starts to count it out. Bob grabs the money and starts
stuffing it in his pockets.

BOB
That's OK, I trust you.

TELLER
Slow down Mr. Cain. Acting like
that, with all those police cars
outside, people will think we're
getting robbed. Let me get you a
bag for that.

The teller reaches under the counter, produces a bag, and
hands it to Bob. Bob scoops the remaining bills into the bag
and turns to leave.
TELLER
(Brightly)
Thanks Mr. Cain, have a great day!

Bob hurriedly exits the bank.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob steps onto the sidewalk outside the bank. There are several police cars with their lights on, and an ambulance parked in the street in front of the building. Bob again composes himself, glancing around for anyone who might be observing him, and starts walking to the corner. Several people have gathered on the sidewalk to see what all the emergency activity is about. Bob turns the corner and begins walking down the street, still glancing around for anyone watching of following him. When he feels confident he is secure, he steps to the curb and hails a cab. He pulls open the door, gets into the backseat.

INT. CAB - DAY

CABBIE
Where to mister?

BOB
Huh? What?

CABBIE
Where to? C'mon, I ain't got all day here.

BOB
Just drive. Head downtown.

Cabbie shakes his head and pulls into traffic

EXT. NYC TRAFFIC - DAY

Cab driving in NYC traffic.

INT. CAB - DAY

BOB
The Bowery. 2nd and Houston.

CABBIE
Waddya wanna go down there for mac?

BOB
Just go. There's an extra 10 in it for you if you step on it.

Sound of the cab accelerating.
EXT. NYC TRAFFIC - DAY
Follow the cab as it migrates through the NYC traffic.

INT. CAB - DAY

BOB
Wait a minute, pull over here. Now.

EXT. NYC TRAFFIC - DAY
Cab pulls over to the curb

INT. CAB - DAY

BOB
Wait here, I'll be right back.

Bob starts to exit the cab, then gets back in leaving the door open.

BOB
Hey, do you smoke?

CABBIE
Yeah, what of it?

BOB
Let me borrow your lighter.

CABBIE
Why?

BOB
Just let me borrow your lighter for a minute. I'll give it right back.

CABBIE
What for?

BOB
Just give it to me!

CABBIE
10 bucks.

BOB
What?

CABBIE
10 bucks. You want to borrow my lighter, it'll cost you 10 bucks.

Bob reaches in his pocket, pulls out a $100 bill and gives it to the cabbie.
BOB
Here. Turn the meter off, do as I say, and don't ask any more questions. There's another one of these for you when we get downtown.

The cabbie stuffs the bill in his pocket, turns off the meter, and hands Bob his lighter.

CABBIE
You're the boss.

Bob exits the cab

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob looks around, and no one is on the street. He walks to a storm drain and pulls out his wallet. He removes his credit cards and license, and melts them with the lighter. He tosses them down the sewer, then tosses his wallet down the sewer. He gets back into the cab.

INT. CAB - DAY

BOB
Let's go. And no more questions.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Cab drives off

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Cab pulls to the curb in the Bowery.

INT. CAB - DAY

Bob hands the cabbie another $100 bill, gets out of the cab, then leans back in.

BOB
Thanks man.

Bob closes the cab door and walks away.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob looks around as he walks down the street. He sees several homeless men around. He keeps looking down alleys until he sees what he is looking for, a lone homeless man sleeping in an alley. Bob walks down the alley and shakes the homeless man on his shoulder to wake him.
BOB
Wake up man, wake up. C'mon, I've got a deal for you.

HOMELESS MAN
Huh? What? Who are you?

BOB
C'mon man, wake up. I've got a deal for you.

HOMELESS MAN
Got anything to drink?

BOB
No man, something better.

The homeless man rolls over to ignore Bob. Bob walks around him and says.

BOB
Look man, I'm an investigative reporter. I need to blend in around here, so I need to look like I belong around here. I'll give you a hundred bucks and my clothes for your clothes.

The homeless man suddenly looks interested.

HOMELESS MAN
Like those Woodstein and Bernwood guys who did Watergate?

BOB
Yeah, just like that, only this is going to be bigger.

HOMELESS MAN
Never seen a hundred bucks before. Never had a nice suit like that neither. That coat warm?

BOB
Warmer than yours, but you'll be able to get a hotel room with the money.

HOMELESS MAN
Bullshit, I don't need no hotel room.

(smiles)
But I'll be able to stay warm on the inside for a long time.
The homeless man starts to unbutton his coat. Fade out.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob exits the alley wearing the homeless man's clothes. He stops to mess up his hair so he doesn't look as groomed. Bob walks down the street continuing to look around to see if he has been followed. He spots a liquor store and enters.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Bob walks around the store to the wine section, looking at the best wines in the store, picks a bottle, then catches himself in the mirror. He puts the bottle back, and grabs 2 bottles of the cheap wine. He walks to the counter and sets the bottles down. The LIQUOR STORE CLERK (50's) rough, looks Bob over.

    LIQUOR STORE CLERK
    Never seen you before, who are you?

    BOB
    I'm thirsty.

Bob hands the clerk a crisp $20 bill. The clerk studies the bill, then looks hard at Bob.

    LIQUOR STORE CLERK
    Somethin' 'bout you ain't right. You smell like shit, but look like you just got outta the shower.

The clerk looks at the bill, then back at Bob. He holds up the bill.

    LIQUOR STORE CLERK
    This thing real? Where'd you get a brand new 20 dollar bill?

Bob grabs the two bottles, and stuffs them in his coat pocket.

    BOB
    Yeah, it's the real deal, and so am I. Keep the change.

Bob exits the liquor store.

EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob walks down the street, still looking around to see if he is being observed. He sees an old hat with long earflaps lying on the sidewalk, picks it up and puts it on, then continues on his way. He walks past an alley, then backs up and enters the alley. He takes some $20 bills from his
pocket, crumples them up in his hands, then drops them on the dirty pavement. He slides them around on the dirty pavement with his foot to make them look old and used. He picks them up and crumples them again, then sticks them in his coat pocket.

INT. PRINCE HOTEL – DAY

Bob enters the flophouse lobby, and walks up to the clerk. Several down-and-outers sit in the lobby in various states of consciousness. Bob slides a crumpled $20 bill across the counter to the HOTEL CLERK (50's), male, disinterested in life.

BOB
I need a room. How long will this get me?

HOTEL CLERK
'Bout a week, maybe more, maybe less. Depends. Who the hell are you?

Bob stares at him blankly

HOTEL CLERK
You look like Snoopy in that stupid hat. Here, sign in.

Clerk slides a book in front of Bob. Bob hesitates, then signs in as "Snoop." Bob slides the register back to the clerk. The clerk looks at it, grabs a key and sets it on the counter in front of Bob.

HOTEL CLERK
Room 305, third floor. Stairs are over there. John and shower are at the end of the hall. There's a towel in the room for the shower. You're on your own for soap. Towels and sheets get changed Wednesdays or Thursdays. Depends.

BOB
Let me know when the money runs out. I'll go find more.

Bob takes the key off the counter and turns, heading toward the stairs.

HOTEL CLERK
(calling after Bob)
And no trouble! (pause) Snoop!

FADE OUT
EXT. NYC STREET - DAY

Bob walks down the street, more confident, not looking over his shoulder anymore. He now has a scraggly beard, long hair, and still wears the homeless man clothes and hat. He turns and enters an electronics store.

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE - DAY

Bob walks up to the ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK (20's), male, behind the counter

ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK
Hey Snoop.

BOB
Hey Bill, did my order come in?

ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK
Yeah, hang on, let me get it.

The clerk goes to the back of the store while Bob looks around at some of the items on display. The clerk returns with a box containing some items. He sets the box on the counter, then starts to remove the items from the box one by one.

ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK
Micro camera, sound bugging kit, lock picking kit, wrist watch with a hidden garrote cord... Whatta going to do with all this stuff. Joining the CIA?

Bob laughs

BOB
Nah, just can't be too careful when you live where I do.

ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK
With all you spent on this, you should have just moved somewhere nicer.

Bob starts putting the items in his coat pockets

BOB
I'll think about that next time someone dies and leaves me some more money in their will. Thanks Bill.

ELECTRONICS STORE CLERK
You take care Snoop.
Bob exits the store

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Bob sits at a table reading, several spy related books lay on the table by him. SISTER MARGARET (50's), Catholic nun approaches and sits across the table from Bob.

BOB

Hey sis.

SISTER MARGARET

Hello Snoop.

BOB

Still cruising the halls of literature trying to save us retched refuse I see.

SISTER MARGARET

I've only been hitting on you for about 2 months, but I've been doing this going on 30 years. Figure I've got another 20 left in me. You prepared for that?

Sister Margaret looks at the books on the table, picks one up to look at, then sets it back on the table without opening it.

SISTER MARGARET

More spy books? I see why they call you Snoop.

Bob chuckles

BOB

It's pure escapism sister. The world's going to hell in a handbasket, and this helps me to step away from the realism of that.

Sister Margaret gives Bob a disapproving look

BOB

Oh, sorry Sister.

SISTER MARGARET

Snoop, I can tell your a well educated man. I know you won't tell (MORE)
SISTER MARGARET (cont'd)
me what led you to this station in
your life, but I wish you'd let me help.

BOB
What if this is my life's choice?
What if the proletariat has become
the new bourgeoisie, and by turning
my back on that life, I truly shed
those chains of tyranny?

SISTER MARGARET
I work for God, would you classify
me as a part of that tyranny?

BOB
Well played Sister Margaret.

SISTER MARGARET
I knew you could state the case,
but couldn't make the case. No one
can. And yes, I'm here with a
message from my boss, and he wants
to talk to you.

BOB
How do you know we aren't already
talking?

SISTER MARGARET
If you were, we wouldn't be having
this conversation right now.

Bob puts down his book.

BOB
You're never going to give up, are
you?

SISTER MARGARET
As many times as we've had this
conversation before, I think you
know the answer to that.

BOB
So what's in it for me?

SISTER MARGARET
Only eternal life with the glory of
God.

Sister Margaret stands up
SISTER MARGARET
St. George's Ukrainian Church. Just of 7th Street and Bowery. Mass is at 6 in the morning, or at 7:30 if you want to sleep in.

BOB
Ukrainian Church? Isn't the Ukraine in Russia?

SISTER MARGARET
Not really, but close. Both Russia and the Ukraine are republics located in the Soviet Union.

BOB
You seem to know a lot about the area. Tell me more about it. How does a Catholic Church exist in a communist country?

Sister Margaret sits back down across from Bob

SISTER MARGARET
The roots of Christianity in that area date back to the apostle St. Andrew. With nearly 2,000 years of acceptance and growth, it's much more established than the political base of the Soviet Union. People will tolerate political and border wars, but will draw the line at religious genocide. Hitler couldn't do it with the Jews, there's no way the Soviets can do it with the Catholics.

BOB
So how is it that there is a Ukrainian Catholic church in lower Manhattan?

SISTER MARGARET
Lower Manhattan was a prime destination for Ukrainian immigrants in the 18th & 19th centuries. As so many immigrants have, they brought their religious beliefs here to America, built up the church, and it's following. In most cases, their religion was the only thing they had to bring with them.
BOB
You don't sound much like an immigrant, so how did you get involved?

SISTER MARGARET
My grandparents emigrated from the Ukraine and settled in lower Manhattan. Our family has lived in this area since. I was raised in St. George's, and it always felt like home, so when I was called, it was a calling for me to serve here.

BOB
Do you still have family back in the Ukraine?

SISTER MARGARET
I do. And St. George's has a partnership with St. Nicholas church in Kiev. I've always dreamed of visiting, my ancestral home, and the home of my church.

BOB
Ahh, the dream of going home. Even an old stew bum like me can understand how that works, on many levels. I too wish to go home one day.

SISTER MARGARET
So where is home?

Bob taps his heart and points at his head saying

BOB
Here and here for now.

SISTER MARGARET
Snoop, I've just laid out my family history for you. Can't you give me just one nugget of information about you?

BOB
(smiling)
Just one, right?

SISTER MARGARET
Yes, just one. For now.
BOB
(pulls out his hat and puts it on)
This is why they call me Snoop. Used to be Snoopy, but I shortened it. Made me feel more mysterious.

SISTER MARGARET
(stands)
Until tomorrow morning then?

BOB
Tell you what Sister, let me check my calendar for any conflicts, but I'll try to make it happen.

SISTER MARGARET
Thanks Snoopy, that's all I ask.

Bob watches as Sister Margaret walks away, he is deep in thought.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. PRINCE HOTEL - DAY

Bob walks down the hotel staircase and approaches the desk clerk.

BOB
Hey Jim.

HOTEL CLERK
Hey Snoop, how are things?

BOB
Well, I've got a bit of a problem I hope you can help me with.

HOTEL CLERK
Sorry Snoop, you've been a good guy here, but I never get involved with the residents here.

BOB
I'm just looking for a bit of guidance, advise really. I seem to have lost my ID card, and need some help in getting a new one.

HOTEL CLERK
So go to the courthouse.
BOB
Well, there's a problem with that. If I can't prove who I am, how can I get proof of who I am? I was hoping you may know someone local around here I could get a bit of (coughs) help from.

The Hotel Clerk looks at Bob suspiciously, eying him up and down.

HOTEL CLERK
You serious? Not going to come back to bite me?

BOB
One hundred percent serious. Trust me, I've never given you reason not to. If it works out, I'll make it worth your while.

The Hotel Clerk again looks at Bob, trying to decide what to do.

HOTEL CLERK
Eddie at the social club over on Spring Street might be able to help.

BOB
But that's a private club.

HOTEL CLERK
Go to the liquor store around the corner on Prince. Ask for a bottle of Taylor Port, 20 year old. Say it's for Eddie, and that I sent you. It ain't cheap.

BOB
Not a problem.

HOTEL CLERK
Next Tuesday, take the port to the social club. There will be two guys standing outside. Show the bottle to the shorter one, and tell him you have a gift for Eddie.

BOB
That's it?
HOTEL CLERK
That's all I can help you with, you're on your own from there. Don't make me regret this, or you'll regret it more than me.

BOB
Understood. Thanks Jim.

Bob begins to walk toward the exit door, stops, then turns back to the Hotel Clerk.

BOB
And you won't regret it.

FADE OUT:
FADE IN:

EXT. SPRING STREET - DAY
Bob walks down the street holding the bottle of port, approaches a door that has two men standing next to the door, one on each side of the door. The door is marked with the word "PRIVATE CLUB." Bob approaches the shorter man.

BOB
Good afternoon, I have a gift for Eddie.

Bob shows the man the bottle of port. The man looks at the bottle, looks over Bob, and enters the door without saying anything. Bob begins to follow, but the other man outside the door blocks his path. Eddie waits for the first man to come back out.

After a pause, the first man opens the door, then gestures with his thumb for Bob to enter the social club.

INT. PRIVATE SOCIAL CLUB - DAY
Bob enters the club. The inside is dimly lit, with a thick haze of cigarette smoke hanging in the air. Several tables are occupied. Bob spots a table with one man sitting at it, with two men standing next to the table. The man sitting at the table gestures for Bob to join him. Bob approaches the table, and still standing, offers the bottle of port.

BOB
A gift for you sir.

The man seated at the table takes the bottle from Bob, looks at it, then hands it to one of the men standing beside him. He returns his look to Bob, and gestures for Bob to sit beside him.
EDDIE
Thank you for the kind gift, to
what do I owe this gesture?

BOB
Thank you for taking time from you
day to see me. I am a bit ashamed
to ask, having just met you, but I
am a man in need of something.

Eddie leans back and stares at Bob for him to continue.

BOB
I need a couple of passports.

EDDIE
So go to the post office. Why do
you come to me for such advice?

BOB
Let's just say I currently have no
proof of identity. Actually, I have
no identity now.

EDDIE
No identity?

BOB
No, none.

EDDIE
So no one would know if, poof, you
just disappeared?

Eddie looks at his companions and laughs, they laugh along
with him.

BOB
That's right, poof, and I'm gone.
But I'd prefer it be on my terms.

Eddie leans forward in his chair and stares at Bob.

EDDIE
I still don't know why you come to
me.

Eddie leans back in his chair, and folds his hands over his
stomach.

EDDIE
I do, however, know of a friend who
may be able to help you.
Unfortunately, he too has a
(MORE)
EDDIE (cont'd)

problem, that perhaps you may be able to help him with.

Bob leans forward in his chair.

Bob

How can I help?

EDDIE

This friend of mine has a customer who claims he can't pay my friend a large sum of money that is past due. In addition, he keeps frequenting my friend's place of business. This is quite embarrassing to my friend, and I don't like my friends to be embarrassed. It would be a personal favor to my friend and me if you were to collect this debt for my friend, and persuade this customer of his to, let's say, never visit my friend's business again, so as to not cause any future embarrassment.

BOB

It would be my pleasure to do this favor for you. Where can I find these people?

Eddie reaches up and takes the bottle of port from his bodyguard and looks at it.

EDDIE

I have many friends. Tomorrow, go see the man who sold you this bottle, and tell him how appreciative I am to have received it. He will have instructions for you.

Eddie looks at one of his bodyguards and nods to him. The bodyguard reaches under Bob's arm prompting him to stand.

EDDIE

And one more thing. As you will be a representative of mine, please dress more properly.

BOB

Thank you sir, I will.

The bodyguard escorts Bob out the door.
INT. BAR - NIGHT

Bob sits at the bar sipping his drink, watching a patron. He removes a photo of the man from his pocket and looks at it to confirm he is watching the right man. He returns the photo to his pocket. His hair is trimmed and combed, as is his beard. He wears a sportcoat and slacks, with an open collared shirt.

The man stands up and walks to the restroom. After the restroom door closes, Bob walks to where the man had been seated, puts a $20 bill next to the half empty glass of beer, and walks to the restroom. He pulls on the door, and realizes it is locked. As Bob stands by the door, another patron approaches.

BOB
It's going to be a while, my friend isn't feeling very well right now, if you know what I mean.

The patron walks away.

Sound of the door being unlocked, and as the door starts to open, Bob pushes his way in.

DEADBEAT
What's going on, who are you?

Bob locks the door and looks at the deadbeat.

BOB
Who is not important, and you know why I am here.

In a swift motion, Bob spins the man around so his back is to Bob, and Bob pulls the crown from his watch and wraps the garrote wire around the man's neck.

BOB
But since you asked, I am an angel, here to right a wrong you have committed. Now there are two kinds of angels, angels of mercy, and angels of death. Blink twice if you'd prefer I was an angel of mercy.

The man blinks his eyes twice. Bob releases the garrote wire and shoves the man down onto the toilet.
DEADBEAT
I swear I don't have the money now, but I can have the thousand I owe you next week.

BOB
Now that's a problem. I don't have until next week, and you certainly don't. In addition, you've been an embarrassment to have around.

DEADBEAT
What are you going to do?

BOB
How much money do you have on you?

The man pulls some bills out of his pocket and counts it quickly.

DEADBEAT
Thirty-two dollars. I have thirty-two dollars. Here. Take it.

The man holds the money out to Bob.

BOB
Well that's just not enough to make the problem go away, and right now, you're nothing more than the problem. And I need this problem gone tonight, and gone forever.

The deadbeat slinks back away from Bob.

Bob reaches in his pocket and pulls out some bills.

BOB
Here is what's going to happen. We are going to walk out of this bar together and get into a cab. I'm going to take you to Penn Station, where you're going to get on a train to, New Orleans, where you will stay for at least a year. I have $500 seed money for you to get started down there. I have people there who will be watching you. You are not to leave the city. Period. I have people here who will be listening for you. You will not contact anyone outside of New Orleans. Period. I have bought your debt, and now own you. One (MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
year from today, should you not
break these rules, this debt will
be erased. Do you understand?

The deadbeat nods his head

BOB
Let's go.

Deadbeat stands up and straightens his clothing, then looks
at Bob.

DEADBEAT
How do I know I can trust you?

BOB
You don't.

Bob pushes the $500 into the deadbeat's breast pocket.

BOB
But what alternative do you have?

Bob unlocks and opens the bathroom door, and leads the
deadbeat out of the bar.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

A man (Michael) sits at a table in a barren room. There are
only two chairs at the table.

Bob approaches the table, and Michael gestures for him to
sit. Bob sits in the open chair.

MICHAEL
How did it go with him?

Bob removes an envelope from his pocket, and slides it
across the table to Michael.

BOB
This was delivered to me by
accident, I believe it belongs to
you.

Michael picks up the envelope and slides it into his jacket
pocket.
MICHAEL
Thank you, that was most kind. And what of the poor, misguided sole who delivered this to you?

BOB
With all due apologies sir, it seems he will be unable to ever be a customer of yours again.

Michael smiles.

MICHAEL
Seems a shame, but it's probably for the best. Do you have the names?

Bob removes a paper from his pocket, and slides it to Michael.

BOB
This provides all the details I believe you will need.

Michael picks up the paper, scans it, and nods his head.

MICHAEL
Very well, meet me back here in a week with the photos, and we'll be able to complete the documents.

Bob exits.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. ST. GEORGE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Bob sits in the rear pew as parishioners are leaving mass. Sister Margaret approaches and sits next to him.

BOB
Beautiful service this morning. Quite inspirational. More so than usual.

SISTER MARGARET
Now aren't you glad you listened to me? And to God?

BOB
More than you will ever know. Sister Margaret, something has (MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
happened, and I need to talk about it. Privately. Is Father Paul hearing confession this morning?

Sister Margaret looks concerned.

SISTER MARGARET
What is it, can I help?

BOB
No, no, this is something I need to speak with Father Paul about.

SISTER MARGARET
He will be hearing confession this morning, but not until nine.

Bob takes Sister Margaret's hand.

BOB
Sister, I can't thank you enough for setting me on this path. I can't imagine all the people you have led to being saved, including me.

Bob lets go of her hand.

BOB
If you don't mind, I'd kind of like to just sit here for a while and pray for guidance as I wait for Father Paul.

Sister Margaret stands to leave.

SISTER MARGARET
Of course, of course. Peace be with you.

BOB
And also with you sister.

Sister Mary walks away, fade out.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

Bob enters the confessional and kneels. FATHER PAUL (60), Catholic priest, is in the confessional.

BOB
Father Paul?
FATHER PAUL
Yes my son.

BOB
Father Paul, this is Snoop.

FATHER PAUL
Yes, I know.

BOB
Father, I need to talk to you about Sister Margaret.

FATHER PAUL
Snoop, have you ever been to confession before? This is not how it's done.

BOB
I know Father, but I do need to talk to you privately, and this was the best way I could think of.

FATHER PAUL
I do have an office, and office hours posted.

BOB
But were here now, and it's private. Can't we just talk now?

Father Paul sighs.

FATHER PAUL
Go on, my son.

BOB
Father, I can't tell you all the great things Sister Margaret has done for me in changing my life. These past couple of months have been miraculous for me.

FATHER PAUL
Yes, she is one of our finest and most devoted. So what is the problem with her?

BOB
Father, it's not a problem, it's an opportunity. I want to thank her in a special way, for all that she has done for me.
FATHER PAUL
There is no need for that my son, her reward lies in the kingdom of heaven.

BOB
Father, please hear me out. A few weeks ago, I overheard her talking about the worldwide catholic conference being held at St. Nicholas Church in Ukraine this year. It runs from Easter to the Ascension, and there will be representation from churches all around the world. Sister Margaret said since her ancestors hailed from the Ukraine, and she has always wanted to visit. I thought it would be special for her to be able to attend the conference this year, as no one knows if it will ever be held in the Ukraine again.

FATHER PAUL
Yes, yes, the conference is one of the church's biggest events every year. But we are a poor parish with very limited funds. We just can't afford to send anyone on such a venture.

BOB
That's where I can help father. You see, I too have heritage from the area. Russia, not the Ukraine. I still have family living there. I believe I can now turn my life around there, living in a new place, with family and God beside me.

FATHER PAUL
I'm sorry but...

BOB
Wait father. I just inherited a small amount of money from my last living relative here in the states. With your permission, I'd like to provide the means for Sister Margaret to go to the conference. I would travel with her so she could give me the strength I need to embark on my own new life.

(MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
Otherwise I'm afraid I'll just spend it on booze, and who knows what else. It's becoming a terrible temptation.

FATHER PAUL
Are you sure about this? Have you discussed this with Sister Margaret?

BOB
No father, I wanted to seek your permission and blessing first.

FATHER PAUL
I know little of your past life my son, but I do feel there are to be great things in your future. You have my approval to discuss this with Sister Margaret, and carry on, provided she consents.

BOB
Thank you father.

Bob exits the confessional, and sees Sister Mary sitting alone in a pew. Bob sits down beside her.

BOB
Sister Margaret, you have been so good to me, I want to thank you.

SISTER MARGARET
Oh there is no need for that, this is what my life has been dedicated to.

BOB
You don't understand, I need to tell you what I just discussed with Father Paul.

SISTER MARGARET
Snoop, the confessional is a sacred place, what's disclosed in there is between you and God.

BOB
I did get Father Paul's blessing to talk to you about this, and I'm certain God wouldn't mind either. You see, I recently received a small inheritance, and wanted to (MORE)
BOB (cont'd)
use it to take you to the
conference in the Ukraine I heard
you talk about a couple of weeks
ago.

SISTER MARGARET
Oh no, that's simply out of the
question.

BOB
Why?

SISTER MARGARET
It's so far away, and I have so
much to do here.

BOB
Sister, I heard you say this is the
most important conference for the
church every year, and there's no
doubt that you have devoted your
life to the church, which means
this is the most important event
this year for what you have devoted
your life to. In addition, I've
often heard you say you would like
to visit the Ukraine sometime
before you die. Now this year the
conference is in the Ukraine, and I
have been given the means to take
you there, almost sounds to me like
there has been a heavenly
intervention.

Sister Margaret slowly smiles

SISTER MARGARET
And Father Paul gave his approval
for this?

BOB
He did.

SISTER MARGARET
So I suppose it's decided then. I
don't even know where to begin to
prepare.

BOB
I'll help you with that, and we
have plenty of time.

Bob reaches in his pocket and removes his spy camera.
BOB
Show me that smile again, I want to capture this moment.

Sister Margaret smiles at Bob, and Bob takes a couple of pictures of her.

BOB
Thank you Sister, I'm sure this trip will be meaningful for both of us.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

INT. BARREN ROOM - DAY

Bob and Michael sit at the table. Michael removes an envelope and slides it across the table to Bob.

MICHAEL
The photos worked very well. These documents are perfect, you will have no trouble passing through any borders.

Bob withdraws an envelope from his pocket and slides it across the table to Michael. Michael stops it halfway across, and slides it back toward Bob.

MICHAEL
This is not necessary my friend. You did me a service in collecting my debt, but then you did me a favor by permanently solving my problem. I just wish you would be staying to work with me in the future.

BOB
A kind offer, and this was my pleasure. Should things not work out for me, I may take you up on that.

MICHAEL
I'm always here to help should things not work out for you.

Michael puts the envelope back into his pocket, stands, and walks away.

FADE OUT
INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Bob is sitting at the airport gate, and Sister Margaret walks up to him and sits down next to him. Sister Margaret looks shocked when she sees that Bob is now dressed as a Catholic priest. He is now well groomed, his hair and beard have been trimmed, and there are tinges of gray in his hair and beard.

BOB
You look surprised, don't you like my new look?

SISTER MARGARET
Why in the world are you dressed like that.

BOB
It's still a delicate world we live in, and relations between the USSR and US are strained. The only way I was able to get a visa for the travel was as a priest attending the conference.

Sister Margaret holds up her passport to Bob.

SISTER MARGARET
And I still don't understand how you were able to get me a passport in such a short amount of time.

BOB
From the moment you agreed to go, my only job has been to get things prepared for our trip, and I had plenty of free time to dedicate to it. That's when I found out about the travel restrictions. Speaking of preparing for the trip, have you been studying your conversational Russian like I have? It'll be good for you to know a few key phrases, to help you get around.

SISTER MARGARET
I have. I can ask for directions to a church, a restaurant, and a bathroom, although I'm not sure I can understand the responses.

(MORE)
SISTER MARGARET (cont'd)
(pauses)
I still can't believe this. I've
never been in an airport before,
much less ridden on an airplane,
and here we are talking about
speaking a foreign language.

Bob is deep in thought, as Sister Margaret begins looking
through a travel brochure.

SISTER MARGARET
Did you know that this plane holds
over 400 people? And that we will
be flying in the air for over 8
hours without stopping?

BOB
So you've never flown before?

SISTER MARGARET
No, the furthest away from home I
have ever been was a trip to
Washington D.C. We took the train,
and that was a frightening
experience. I'm not sure I can do
this.

BOB
Sister Margaret, I've flown many
times before. Once you are in the
air, you'll relax, and realize it
is the only way to travel.

SISTER MARGARET
You have flown before?

BOB
I haven't always been homeless.

SISTER MARGARET
Where have you flown to?

BOB
Ahhh, that's a topic for a
different time.(stands) If you'll
excuse me, I need to pop into that
bookstore over there and get
something to read on the plane. Can
I get you anything?

SISTER MARGARET
No thank you, I brought along my
favorite book. But please hurry
(MORE)
SISTER MARGARET (cont'd)  
back, I'm still nervous, and it's  
comforting to have someone here  
with me.

INT. AIRPORT BOOKSTORE - DAY

Bob looks around a bit, then selects the book "Zodiac" by  
Robert Graysmith from the shelves. He then picks up a small  
notebook and approaches the BOOK STORE CASHIER, (40),  
female.

BOOK STORE CASHIER  
Will that be all?

BOB  
Yes please. Thank you.

Cashier looks at the book then back at Bob  

BOOK STORE CASHIER  
Do you know what this book is  
about?

BOB  
Yes ma'am.

BOOK STORE CASHIER  
I wouldn't think this would be  
suitable reading material for a man  
of the cloth. This guy is as  
despicable as they come.

BOB  
Yes, but we are all God's children,  
and he loves us all.

Cashier rings up the sale.

BOOK STORE CASHIER  
That'll be 8.87. I love my children  
too, but that doesn't make them any  
good.

Bob hands the cashier a ten dollar bill, she hands him back  
the change.

BOOK STORE CASHIER  
8.87, 88, 89, 90, 9 and 10.

Bob takes the book and looks up at the cashier.

BOB  
Well, if everyone were good, I  
guess I'd be out of a job.
Bob turns and walks out of the store. He walks a way down the terminal to a currency exchange and stops. The CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER (25), female, greets him.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER
Hi, how can I help you?

BOB
I'd like to exchange some US dollars for Soviet rubles please.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER
Certainly sir.

The cashier reviews a listing of the current exchange rates.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER
the exchange rate is .58, that's $1.73 per ruble, and we take a 4% charge for the exchange. How much would you like to convert?

Bob looks around to be certain no one is looking. He pulls a stack of $100 bills from his pocket, and hands it to the cashier.

BOB
This please.

The cashier looks shocked.

BOB
Please. And thank you.

CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER
(using her calculator)
Let's see, that's $10,000, less 4% fee for $9,600, converted to rubles, that's 5,568 rubles. I'll need to get that from the back.

The cashier walks away from her window, as Bob casually looks around. The cashier returns with the currency.

BOB
Could you put that in two equal stacks for me please?

CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER
(doing a quick calculation)
That would be 2,784 rubles each. Let me go back and get the proper denominations.
The cashier again walks away for a few moments, then returns, counting out the currency on the counter.

**CURRENCY EXCHANGE CASHIER**

(counting out the currency)

1,000, 2,000, 500, 600, 700, 50, 60, 70, 80, and 1, 2, 3, 4.

(counts out second stack of currency)

1,000, 2,000, 500, 600, 700, 50, 60, 70, 80, and 1, 2, 3, 4.

Bob takes the currency and puts one stack in his right pocket, and one stack in his left pocket. He then removes a $100 bill from his pocket, puts it on the counter.

**BOB**

Thank you, keep this in case your drawer should ever run short some day.

Cashier holds up the bill, looks at it briefly, then slides it in her pocket.

Bob walks back to Sister Margaret, sits down beside her. He reaches in his pocket and removes the wad of rubles.

**BOB**

I took it upon myself to get you some local currency should you want to buy some souvenirs when you get to the Ukraine.

**SISTER MARGARET**

Oh, I can't take that.

**BOB**

Please sister, this is the least I can do. It means a lot to me.

**SISTER MARGARET**

Oh it's too much.

**BOB**

Oh sister, don't worry. It's not that much, what with the exchange rates and all.

Sister Margaret hesitantly takes the money

**SISTER MARGARET**

I don't know how to thank you for all this.
BOB
Please, all this is thanks enough. You have no idea.

Bob picks up his Zodiac book to look at it.

SISTER MARGARET
How can you read that, such an evil person.

BOB
I've always been intrigued by the codes. I was hoping to see if I could make any sense of them. Some say there are even codes in the Bible.

SISTER MARGARET
And there are some that say there is no thing as God. I think the world would be a much better place if we just took things at face value and didn't try to hide things in secret codes.

BOB
Amen to that sister.

Boarding call for Pan American flight 74 from New York to Frankfurt, with continuing service to Moscow.

BOB
That's us. (stands) Are you ready?

Offers Sister Margaret his hand to help her up. Sister Margaret takes his hand and stands.

SISTER MARGARET
I don't believe I have ever been more excited and afraid at the same time.

BOB
Me too sister, me too.

Bob and Sister Margaret walk toward the line at the gate.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Sister Margaret is in the seat next to Bob and is asleep. Bob has his tray table down, and opens his Zodiac book to a
page showing the symbols of the Zodiac's coded messages. He has his notebook open, and is randomly copying symbols from the book to his notebook.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM IN MOSCOW - DAY

Sister Margaret and Bob stand on the platform by a waiting train, their baggage is on the ground surrounding them.

BOB
I've gotten you round trip tickets from Moscow to Kiev, so when you are ready to come home, just get back on this train and take a cab back to the airport. I know you'll do fine.

SISTER MARGARET
I do wish you'd reconsider and come to Kiev with me. It's a long ride, and I don't know what to do once I get there.

BOB
Don't worry, I've gotten you a sleeper, and if you sleep half as well on the train as you did on the flight over, you won't even know I'm not there. You have plenty of money to get yourself a cab to the cathedral, and I'm sure they are prepared to receive visitors for their upcoming event.

(pausing, deep in thought)
Besides, I have a ways to travel myself, and people to find. I don't know how long that will take me, or how they will react to me once I find them. I need some time to myself to prepare. Remember, we have adjoining seats for the flight back home. If we meet back up then, I will have been unsuccessful, and will tell you of my adventures. If we don't meet again, know that I have found who I am looking for.

Sister Margaret hugs Bob, then pulls back with her hands on his shoulders.
SISTER MARGARET
I know that the Lord will provide for you, and that I won't see you again. I will continue to pray for you that God gives you the guidance you need now, and forever.

Sister Margaret picks up her luggage and boards the train. Bob watches her board, and continues watching the train for a few moments after Sister Margaret has entered it, then picks up his bags and walks away from the platform.

EXT. FRONT OF MOSCOW TRAIN STATION - DAY

Bob walks up to a cab on the street, opens the door, throws in his luggage, and gets in the back seat.

INT. MOSCOW CAB - DAY

BOB
Otel' natsional'nyy pozhaluysta.

Subtitle "Hotel National, please."

MOSCOW CAB DRIVER
Amerikanets?

Subtitle "American?"

BOB
Da.

Subtitle "Yes."

Cab pulls away from the curb.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL NATIONAL - DAY

Bob walks through the hotel lobby to the concierge desk.

BOB
Yest' li vas sotrudniki, kotoryye govoryat po-angliyski?

Subtitle "Do you have any staff that speak English?"

CONCIERGE
Da, yes. We are an international hotel, much of our peoples speak English.
BOB
The Good Lord never ceases to provide. (smiles)
Perhaps you could help me check in?
My name is Father Jack Daniels, from the United States?

The concierge walks around the desk, and leads Bob to the check in counter.

CONCIERGE
Follow please

The concierge approaches a clerk behind the counter.

CONCIERGE
Eto otets Jack Daniels iz Ameriki, ne mogli by vy proverit' yeg, pozhaluysta?

Subtitle "This is Father Jack Daniels from America, can you check him in please?"

HOTEL NATIONAL CLERK
Da, yeah, I help you. Do you have the reservation?

BOB
Da, yes. Father Jack Daniels from the United States, staying three nights.

The clerk looks in the computer, and shakes her head, looks at the concierge, then looks back at Bob.

HOTEL NATIONAL CLERK
I have no reservation, could be another name?

BOB
Not that I know of, I hope you have a room that I can have.

HOTEL NATIONAL CLERK
Da, yeah, we have rooms. I check you in.

Hotel clerk begins typing into the computer.
BOB
(turns to the concierge and places his hand on his forehead)
Oh no. I was to have a ticket to tour the Kremlin tomorrow waiting here for me. I don't suppose you have that here for me either.

CONCIERGE
I'm sorry, no. We have no record of your visit.

BOB
I don't suppose you would have the ability to get me into the tour tomorrow.

CONCIERGE
No, cannot get ticket for tomorrow, but can get ticket for Friday?

BOB
That would actually be even better, just let me know what it cost.

CONCIERGE
There is special no cost ticket for priest. I will have deliver to your room.

HOTEL NATIONAL CLERK
Room 217 for 3 nights, 600 rubles.

Bob hands the hotel clerk a 1,000 ruble note. The clerk makes change, and hands Bob the key and 4 100 ruble notes as change. Bob hands two of the notes to the clerk, and two of the notes to the concierge.

BOB
Thank you for everything. I'm sure I'm going to enjoy my stay in your lovely city.

Bob picks up his luggage and walks toward the stairway.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. KREMLIN - DAY

A large tour group is inside the Kremlin. Bob is at the rear of the group. The group begins to move forward, Bob monitors their movement around a corner, as he pretends to be fixated
on a painting. Once the last person from the tour group has passed the corner and is out of site, Bob quickly walks to a door marked "PRIVATE", opens it, looks around to see the hallway is empty, and passes through the door to the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY IN KREMLIN - DAY

Bob continues to walk through the empty hallway, stopping at each corner to peer around it to see if anyone is present. While looking around one corner, he sees two armed guards standing outside a door. He pulls back, takes a deep breath, then walks around the corner boldly (to catch the guards attention). Once Bob sees that the guards have seen him, he turns around and runs back the direction he came from, slowly enough that the guards can catch him.

KREMLIN GUARD 1
Chto ty zdes' delayesh'? Eto zapretnaya zona.

Subtitle "What are you doing here? This is a restricted area.

Bob struggles with the guard, but not so hard as to break free from his grip.

BOB
I'm American. I don't speak Russian.

The guards look at each other.

KREMLIN GUARD 1
Amerikanets?

Subtitle "American?"

Bob nods his head.

One of the guards removes a blackjack from his pocket and strikes Bob on the head. Bob is immediately rendered unconscious, and falls to the floor. The two guards grab Bob by his feet, and drag him down the hallway.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. KREMLIN INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Bob sits on a metal chair at a metal table, in a cinder block room. He is disheveled, with a large bruise on his face. His hands are handcuffed behind him, and his feet are shackled to the chair. The RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR (40's),
large in both height and girth, enters the room. The interrogator holds a bag in his hand.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
So tell me your name.

Bob just stares at the interrogator.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
Father Jack Daniels?

Bob continues to stare without saying anything.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
When we checked your room at the Hotel National, there was nothing of interest there. Actually, there was nothing there at all. As if you were planning on a quick departure.

Bob continues to stare silently

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
Perhaps you can explain these things we found on you when you trespassed into a prohibited area in the Kremlin.

The interrogator empties the contents of the bag he carried in. In it is the spy camera, recording device, wristwatch, and lock picks purchased at the spy shop in NY, along with several pages of the codes written on the plane.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
(holding up each item as he describes them)
Spy camera, eavesdropping equipment, lock picks, murderer's wristwatch. Why would a Catholic priest have a need for these items? What were your intentions, Father Jack Daniels?

The interrogator moves behind Bob, pulls the crown to exhibit the garrotte, and holds it up to Bob's neck.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
But most concerning, are these coded messages. Perhaps you would like to explain these things, tell us what these messages say?

BOB
Those aren't mine, you must have planted them.
The interrogator leans over to look at Bob, stands back up, and slaps him across the face with his beefy hand.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
Let's start again. Your joke name is not funny. What is your name? Who do you work for? What is your mission.

BOB
As you can see, I live to serve the Lord.

RUSSIAN INTERROGATOR
You know, Father Jack Daniels, there is no record of you arriving in Russia. There is no longer any record of you at the Hotel National. There is no trace of you anywhere, especially here in the Kremlin. You are evidently a man who will never be missed, because you are a man who doesn't exist.

The interrogator again slaps Bob, this time with enough force to knock him over in the chair. The interrogator looks at Bob lying on the floor, spits on him, and exits the room.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. KREMLIN PRISON CELL - DAY

Bob is shackled to the wall in a small cell, with his arms above him. Bob's ankles are shackled as well, with longer chains. Two guards sit outside his cell. The cell is dimly lit with no window, and rats scurry around his feet on the floor. As Bob begins to fall asleep, one of the guards outside his cell pokes him with an electrified cattle prod to wake him. Bob reacts to the shock of the prod, and slowly looks up at the guard.

BOB
Read any good books lately? Do you like the books of the month?

The guard prods Bob again with another shock from the cattle prod. After recovering from the shock, Bob looks to the other guard.

BOB
How about you? You look like you enjoy romance novels.
The guard prepares to shock Bob again, when two new guards enter the cell area to replace the existing guards. The exiting guard begins to hand the cattle prod to the replacement guard, but turns and shocks Bob one more time before relinquishing the cattle prod to his replacement. Bob looks at the replacement guard with the cattle prod.

BOB
I guess your pals aren't literary experts. How about you? Read any good books of the month lately?

The second replacement guard (without the cattle prod) steps up to the cell, looks at Bob.

REPLACEMENT GUARD 2
What do you know about that?

BOB
I know everything about that. I suppose you do as well.

Replacement guard 1 looks quizzically at them both. Replacement guard 2 looks at replacement guard one.

REPLACEMENT GUARD 2
Nam nuzhno doprosit' etogo cheloveka seychas otsyuda.

Subtitle "We need to question this man now away from here."

REPLACEMENT GUARD 2
Prikroy yego, poka ya yego vypuskayu.

Subtitle "Cover him while I let him out."

Replacement guard 1 sets down the cattle prod, removes his gun, previously slung over his shoulder by the strap, holds it waist high, and points it toward Bob. Replacement guard 2 opens the cell, removes the shackles from Bob's hands and feet, levels his gun at Bob, and pressing the gun barrel into Bob's back, directs him down the cell corridor, through a door, into a dark hallway. Bob's hands are in the air. Replacement guard 2 removes the gun from Bob's back, but keeps it leveled at Bob. Bob turns to face the guards. He speaks to replacement guard 2.

BOB
So you are the one who will detonate the nuclear bomb hidden in the Kremlin?

Replacement guard 2 shoulders his gun pointing it at Bob.
REPLACEMENT GUARD 2
I was told one may come to stop me, and also that once I receive the code that I was to stop at nothing.

Replacement guard 1 shoulders his gun as well, and looks nervously back and forth at Bob and replacement guard 2.

REPLACEMENT GUARD 1
Ob"yasnit' chto proiskhodit.

Subtitle "Explain what is happening"

Replacement guard 2 lowers his gun and looks back at Replacement guard 1.

BOB
Kill me now, and we are all dead in a few months. Stand down, and we all live. Don't kill us all.

Replacement guard 2 resholeders his gun and points it at Bob. He chambers a round and a shot rings out. Replacement guard 2 falls dead from the shot by replacement guard 1.

REPLACEMENT GUARD 1
YA ne sovsem ponimayu, no ubivat' svyashchennika nepravil'no.

Subtitle "I don't fully understand, but killing a priest is wrong."

REPLACEMENT GUARD 1
Sleduy za mnoy, otets. Tebe nuzhno ischeznut', ya eto prikryt'.

Subtitle "Follow me father. You need to disappear, I'll cover this up."

Replacement guard 1 leads Bob through a maze of hallways and stairways to a door.

REPLACEMENT GUARD 1
Eto vedet snaruzhi.

Subtitle "This leads outside."

BOB
Spasibo.

Subtitle "Thank you."

REPLACEMENT GUARD 1
Menya zovut Diak, vspomni menya otets.
Bob steps out the door.

EXT. ALLEY OUTSIDE THE KREMLIN - DAY

Bob takes a few steps from the door, draws a long breath of the fresh air. He looks up at the sky, closes his eyes to embrace the warmth of the sun, and is suddenly struck in the back of the head with a blackjack and knocked unconscious.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

Bob is the only passenger. Bob has on fresh clothes, is cleanly shaven and groomed. There is no more of the grey in his hair. A flight attendant is sitting across the aisle from Bob. Bob is asleep, but begins to wake. As he wakes, the flight attendant stands next to him. She smiles at Bob.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Welcome back. We thought you were gone, but we're glad to have you back.

She hands Bob a drink.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Drink this, it will make you feel better.

Bob empties the glass, then falls back asleep.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. MERRILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bob wakes up in Merrill's bed. He is tired and disoriented. He looks around the room and recognizes it, it is the same, but somehow different. He sees the wedding picture of he and his wife on the nightstand next to the bed. A valet enters the room.

VALET
It's getting late, you need to shower and get into the office. You have a big day ahead of you today sir.
The valet exits the room before Bob can collect himself. He heads into the bathroom, showers, dries off, and goes into the closet. A suit, shirt, and tie has been laid out for him by the valet. He dresses, makes his way downstairs, and heads outside.

EXT. MERRILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Merrill's car is waiting with it's engine running, with the driver holding the rear driver's side door open for Bob. Bob enters the backseat, the driver closes the door, gets into the drivers seat, and drives them away.

INT. HALLSTROM PUBLISHING - DAY

Bob enters Hallstrom Publishing, still quite dazed and confused. The office workers greet him with "good mornings." He walks toward Merrill's office, where Delores sits outside. Delores stands, hands him a cup of coffee.

DELORES
Good morning sir.

Bob is stunned, he stands there holding the cup of coffee. Delores ushers him into Merrill's office.

DELORES
Mr. Abboud will be in to see you in a few minutes Mr. Hallstrom.

Bob begins to speak, but Delores quickly leaves, closing the door behind her.

INT. MERRILL'S OFFICE - DAY

Bob slowly moves around the office, looking around the office. Pan to the pictures around the office, they are all the same as before, only Bob's face has been photoshopped in where Merrill's face had been before. Bob takes a seat behind Merrill's desk. There is a double knock on the door, and Joe enters.

JOE
Merrill, we really need to get going on next month's Book of the Month.

Joe drops a manuscript on Merrill's desk. Bob picks it up and looks at the title page, which reads, in bold type, "Diak's Consent."

Bob studies it for a few moments, and looks up at Joe.

BOB
OK, get right on it.
Bob hands the manuscript back to Joe, and Joe leaves. Bob leans back in the office chair, crosses his legs, and admires his immaculate leather Berluti shoes, same as the ones he had worn in the first scene, only now with no scuff and a high polish.

FADE OUT:

End

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