

THE FALL GUY'S DECISION

Written by

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Based on the novel 'The Fall Guy's Decision' by Marcos Fizzotti

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INT. MULTINATIONAL COMPANY MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

COOGAN (55), slightly overweight man, branch manager of a gigantic multinational company, interviews job applicant CESAR (24).

Coogan flips pages.

COOGAN  
So... Cesar, eh?

CESAR  
Yes, sir.

COOGAN  
Quite an impressive resume you got here.

CESAR  
Well, sir, most of it contains only my academic accomplishments.

COOGAN  
You keep calling me sir, and I'll have to look back and search for the queen of England, maybe she's handing out honorific titles all over the place.

CESAR  
Yes, sir, I mean...

COOGAN  
Name's Coogan, boy, as in cougar, only without all the teeth.

CESAR  
Thank you, Mister Coogan.

COOGAN  
No mister either, just Coogan.

CESAR  
Sure.

COOGAN  
Where were we...?

CESAR  
My resume.

COOGAN  
Oh yeah, very good. Everything starts with academic accomplishments. The rest, you learn in here.

CESAR  
If you give me this opportunity,  
s..., um, Coogan, I can assure you  
I'll make the most of it.

COOGAN  
Are you committed?

CESAR  
Um... I beg your pardon?

COOGAN  
I asked if you are committed.

CESAR  
Yes.

COOGAN  
Be careful what you say, because in  
here, that'll surely be used  
against you, know what I'm saying?

CESAR  
I'm not sure if I...

COOGAN  
There are things we can change in a  
person, one of them is knowledge.  
But there are those things that  
can't be changed, I'm talking about  
character, do you have it?

CESAR  
Yes.

COOGAN  
DO YOU HAVE IT?

CESAR  
YES!

COOGAN  
Then, I'd say you're in.

CESAR  
That means I'm hired?

COOGAN  
It looks that way, boy.

CESAR  
Yes!

COOGAN  
Congratulations, young man.

CESAR  
Hum...

COOGAN  
Something else on your mind?

CESAR  
Actually yes, if it's not imposing.

COOGAN  
Of course not. Shoot.

CESAR  
I understand that my first  
assignment will be in this place...  
Mogda, right?

COOGAN  
Yep.

CESAR  
Never heard of it. What is this  
place anyway?

COOGAN  
It's one out of three islands that  
compose an archipelago known as  
Porventana, located somewhere on  
the North Atlantic.

CESAR  
Good place?

COOGAN  
Oh yeah, zone of conflicts and  
violence, where kidnapping and  
robberies are as common as tying  
shoelaces, a real paradise.

CESAR  
I also understand nobody wants to  
go there.

COOGAN  
We've been having trouble finding  
volunteers.

CESAR  
Okay.

COOGAN  
Having second thoughts?

CESAR  
Oh no. I'm ready.

COOGAN  
Place is kind of messy, but I guess  
the package of benefits speaks for  
itself, right?

CESAR  
Oh yeah. It's indeed very  
attractive.

Coogan stands up, Cesar follows his gesture.

COOGAN  
Well, I guess that's that. Very  
glad to have you, son.

CESAR  
It's an honor to work for this so  
important company!

They shake hands. Cesar leaves the office and closes the  
door.

COOGAN (WHISPERING)  
You have no idea.

He grabs the phone and types one single number.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Mister Massive?

MISTER MASSIVE (V.O.)  
Coogie? Please, it's Carl to you.

COOGAN  
Great news, Carl! I'm glad to  
announce we've finally got  
ourselves a sucker for the Mogda  
thing.

MISTER MASSIVE (V.O.)  
Right about time. We're behind  
schedule over there. Who's the  
sucker, by the way?

COOGAN  
One Cesar Belmonte, twenty-four  
years old, naïve as hell, proud to  
wear the badge of our so almighty  
powerful conglomerate of  
multinational companies, big puppy  
eyes full of hopes and dreams - you  
know, the works.

MISTER MASSIVE (V.O.)  
Good. And you promised him the  
usual crap?

COOGAN  
And he fell for it like a little  
lamb. One more bee in the spider  
web.

MISTER MASSIVE (V.O.)  
Shouldn't it be one more fly in the  
spider web?

COOGAN  
Not this time, for this one is  
going to bring us a lot of money  
honey!

INT. CESAR'S TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Cesar walks inside on cloud nine.

CESAR (THINKING ALOUD)  
Massive Industries, wow!

He punches the air in celebration.

CESAR (THINKING ALOUD) (CONT'D)  
Wait until I tell mom!

He fills a glass with water and drinks it.

CESAR (THINKING ALOUD) (CONT'D)  
Okay, this Mogda place is dirty and  
violent, but we all have to start  
from something, right?

He takes a deep breath.

CESAR (THINKING ALOUD) (CONT'D)  
How hard can it be?

EXT. BARREN TERRAIN SOMEWHERE IN MOGDA, PORVENTANA - DAY

Men in military uniforms exchange heavy fire with guerrillas,  
which in turn shoot back while running for cover, also not to  
be shot by men in suits, hiding behind limousines.

Rifle bullets fly all over the place. Echoes of machine gun  
fire can be heard from far away.

INT. TERLUZ TELECOM SITE (EQUIPMENT ROOM), MOGDA - DAY

AHMED (27, Pakistani man), BEN (45, Mexican man), and GB (53,  
Brazilian man) look at each other uncomfortably.

AHMED  
Are those shots?

GB  
They are no firecrackers, I can  
tell you that.

AHMED

Oh Jesus!

BEN

Come on! After all this time in here, you should be used to this crap.

AHMED

I am, till one of those bullets hit my head.

GB

It won't be much of a loss.

AHMED

Have you guys got stopped by those roadblocks?

BEN

More times than I can remember.

GB

Once or twice. You?

AHMED

Not so far.

BEN

Then why are you complaining?

AHMED

I'm not. I just wanted to feel important.

GB

You'll never be important.

BEN

None of us is important here.

GB

How about you, Cesar, have you got stopped by those roadblocks?

Cesar is checking some cables connected to TMDFs (Trunk Main Distributing Frame).

CESAR

No.

GB

How do you find this place so far?

CESAR

I wish I was dead, otherwise loving it.

AHMED  
I hear you, bro.

BEN  
Give those cables a break. You keep  
on checking them, they'll grow  
blisters.

CESAR  
Not much else to do in here.

AHMED  
They're definitely not paying us  
enough for this.

BEN  
But you're doing nothing!

AHMED  
My point exactly. I'm bored to  
death.

GB  
Not much we can do anyway without  
any material.

BEN  
Why they send people ahead of  
material, I'll never know.

AHMED  
It's chilling in here!

GB  
No worries. When the working day is  
done, you'll get to come back to  
the unbearable heat outside.

BEN  
What working day?

AHMED  
What are we here for anyway?

GB  
Why don't you tell him, Cesar?

CESAR  
We're here to put together all  
necessary elements to provide the  
locals with the best service there  
is, regarding mobile telephony.

BEN  
In simple words, people can yak on  
a Smartphone, thanks to us.



AHMED

Why? Ninety percent of the locals here can't even afford a rotary dial phone.

GB

Who cares for ninety percent of the population when only the remaining ten percent will eventually consume our product, forcing the local operators to pay our already rich managers?

AHMED

Heard you, bro.

Cesar takes a deep breath and shakes his head negatively.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF WORN-OUT HOTEL - NIGHT

A taxi pulls over, and Cesar leaves the car. He pays the driver, who returns him very angry words in the local dialect.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Cesar walks to the reception desk, which is empty. There are spider webs and seepage on most walls.

CESAR

Hello... Ah, what the heck.

Cesar jumps over the desk and grabs the rusty key to his room.

INT. TINY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Cesar grabs the phone and sits down on the bed, after scaring some cockroaches away.

CESAR

Damn, they are getting big.

He takes a prepaid phone card out of his shirt pocket. Only after he dials a zillion numbers, he hears the other side ringing, far, far away.

CESAR (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)

Um, hello Miss Reese, this is Cesar, calling from Mogda (...) Oh, okay, sorry, Miss Rose. Is Coogan in? (...) Yes, Mister Coogan, sorry.

(MORE)

CESAR (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 (...) No, no, it's just that I  
 still didn't receive any daily  
 allowance (...) Because the company  
 promised me! They also owe me for  
 the hotel and transportation (...)  
 No, no, I don't mean to be pushy,  
 it's just that it's been a month,  
 and I can't seem to reach Mister  
 Coogan (...) Yes, yes, I forgot all  
 about the time zone thing (...)  
 Okay, sorry to bother, I'll try  
 again some other time... Bye.

The call is actually disconnected on the other end, before  
 Cesar can say 'bye.' He takes a deep, frustrated breath.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT IN NEW YORK - NIGHT

Coogan shares a big table with three other men, CARL MASSIVE  
 (62), CEO, overweight man, LARDEN (58), CFO, overweight man,  
 TUBSTER (55), COO, overweight man, all wearing impeccable,  
 lustrous suits. They raise their respective glasses of  
 champagne. Mister Massive is also smoking a cigar.

MISTER MASSIVE  
 To our smartness!

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| LARDEN      | TUBSTER     |
| Hear, hear! | Hear, hear! |

MISTER MASSIVE (CONT'D)  
 How are things in Mogda, by the  
 way?

COOGAN  
 Still behind schedule, materials  
 waiting in customs to be released,  
 customs agents waiting to be  
 bribed, the usual stuff. But the  
 important thing is our man is  
 hanging in there, doing an  
 excellent job, dreaming of  
 compensations.

LARDEN  
 Cesar, right? I wish I could see  
 his face when he realizes he'll get  
 nothing out of it other than his  
 miserable salary.

COOGAN  
 And the funniest thing is there's  
 absolutely nothing the poor bastard  
 can do about it.

They all laugh. Mister Carl Massive puffs his cigar.

INT. DIRTY BAR IN MOGDA - NIGHT

A deliciously beautiful woman in her early twenties, dark hair and well dressed, talks to the bartender (inaudible dialogue). They seem to be discussing business.

Cesar can't take his eyes off her.

BEN

Forget it, man. Definitely way out of your league.

CESAR

I know. But one can always dream of paradise, even in hell. Man, I can't take much more of this place.

AHMED

Same here.

Cesar, GB, Ahmed, and Ben are sitting around a table with their respective glasses of beer in front of them. Cesar's glass is the only one still half full, or half empty.

TV is shown from a short distance.

Anchorman of TV news speaks.

ANCHORMAN

Hostilities grow dangerously among rival families connected to organized crime in New York and Chicago, although the FBI still has no clue as to who the main players in this deadly game are, competing to control drug and arms trafficking routes in the third world. Authorities suspect a key figure in the dispute is powerful businessman Franco 'Rib-Crusher' Razzini. He's believed to be one of the main big bosses in the underworld of organized crime in New York...

On TV, FRANCO RAZZINI (63), slightly overweight man, is showed walking to his limousine, cheerfully smiling and waving to the horde of cameras and reporters all around. However, he does not say anything, just goes into the vehicle, which speeds away from the crowd.

ANCHORMAN (CONT'D)

...But so far there are no evidences connecting him to any illegal activity...

BEN

Man, those gangsters are making a mess back in the continent.

AHMED

Still, beats being in here.

GB

I'm surprised they have cable TV in this pigsty.

TV is shown from a short distance.

Anchorman of TV news speaks.

ANCHORMAN

Razzini's greatest rival and archenemy in Chicago is most likely to be no other than Mister Fabrizio Pugliese, owner of the gigantic Homely Inn hotels chain, with businesses all over the world...

On TV, FABRIZIO PUGLIESE (71), skinny man, is showed walking into an imposing building, only not so cheerful.

Cesar turns to the counter again. The majestic woman disappeared.

CESAR

If it wasn't for the pack of compensations...

BEN

The only pack you'll ever see in this racket is a pack of wolves.

CESAR

Come on!

GB

He's not kidding, young man.

AHMED

Listen to the man.

CESAR

I'm not listening! I'll go grab the next round.

GB

My man!

Cesar stands up and walks to the counter.

CESAR

Hey bartender!

BARTENDER (STRONGLY ACCENTED ENGLISH)  
Wait your turn!

CESAR (WHISPERING)  
Wonderful...

He sits on a stool and waits.

WOMAN  
Hey...

Cesar turns around, to find the dark hair goddess right by him and talking to him.

CESAR  
Um... Hi!

He shrinks within his clothes.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
I mean... What can I do for you?

WOMAN  
You're in my seat.

Cesar frowns.

CESAR  
Um...

She points a forefinger at the stool short backrest. Cesar turns around, and in fact he finds her fancy red jacket hanging on it.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Oh, so sorry. I haven't seen it.

Cesar stands up, flushing like a tomato, and shrinking even more. While walking back to his table, he hits his own forehead with a hand.

CESAR (WHISPERING) (CONT'D)  
Stupid, stupid! Man, I'm such a jackass...

WOMAN  
Hey!

Cesar turns back to her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
But this seat here is available.

The woman nods at the stool beside hers.

Cesar looks over his shoulder to make sure the beauty is really talking to him.

He walks back to the counter and sits down on the stool indicated by her.

WOMAN (CONT'D)  
You're here on work?

CESAR  
Yes. Me and my friends over there...

He points a shaky forefinger at somewhere behind him.

WOMAN  
I figured it couldn't be pleasure.  
Not a very good place to make a living, either.

CESAR  
Yes, but, you know, we go where they send us.

WOMAN  
I know what you mean.

CESAR  
How about you? Are you here on work as well?

WOMAN  
Can say that.

She lights a cigarette and offers him another one.

Cesar declines with a timid nod.

CESAR  
Name's Cesar by the way, um... From Alabama.

WOMAN  
Bliss, from New York.

They shake hands.

CESAR  
My Company is also from New York.  
Nice to find someone from home in such a hellhole.

She smiles while blowing smoke.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Bliss, huh?

BLISS  
That's right.

CESAR  
I couldn't agree more. I mean... I  
hope I'm not being inappropriate.

BLISS  
Not at all.

Cesar stares at her, bewitched.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Want a beer?

CESAR  
Sure!

Bliss snaps her fingers, and the bartender immediately comes to them, leaving other customers talking to themselves.

INT. TINY HOTEL ROOM IN MOGDA - NIGHT

Cesar walks into his room cheerfully.

He looks down at the bed, only one big, fat cockroach on it.

CESAR  
Ah come on, Cocky! Can't sleep with  
you anymore! Especially because  
this guy is about to score big!

Cocky does not seem to care.

Cesar scares it away, sits down on the bed, and grabs the phone. He takes the prepaid phone card out of his shirt pocket.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
I hope I still have credit.

He types a zillion numbers on the phone and hears it RINGING on the other side of the world. But this time, nobody even cares to answer.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Come on, Miss Rose! It's way within  
working hours over there now!

Nobody answers his call, he gives up. He places the phone back on the worn-out, spider-web-covered nightstand beside the bed.

He lies on the bed, but his eyes are still glowing, as if nothing else mattered.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Ah, Bliss!

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY (DUSK)

It's raining. Cesar and Bliss are sharing a table, enjoying happy-hour with coffee and muffins.

BLISS  
Something wrong, honey?

CESAR  
No, I'm just tired.

BLISS  
Are you alright? You look  
breathless.

CESAR  
I had to run to take the bus before  
the rain.

BLISS  
Did you do it?

CESAR  
I'm dry, ain't I?

She stretches her lips in a wide, captivating smile.

BLISS  
Shouldn't your company give you a  
car or something, knowing how  
inhospitable this place is, with  
nearly no public transportation  
whatsoever?

CESAR  
I've already requested one. They  
said they're analyzing my  
solicitation.

BLISS  
When will they finish the analysis  
and give you the goddamn car?

CESAR  
I don't know! And I don't want to  
talk about it.

BLISS  
I just want your wellbeing. I  
didn't mean to push you or  
anything.

CESAR  
I'm sorry. You're such a nice  
person, and I'm this barrel of  
grumpiness. Tomorrow, I'll talk to  
my branch manager, see how things  
are progressing.



BLISS  
No apologies needed. I know how stressful this must be for you.

CESAR  
And I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for you.

Bliss flushes a little before such sincere compliment.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
If I'm not careful enough, I'll be sucked into that place.

BLISS  
Too much work?

CESAR  
I wish. I don't fear work, only how long it takes to start it. There's just too much red tape for the equipment to arrive, and headquarters blames me for the delay.

BLISS  
I read the name of your company in a huge billboard right next to a mining zone. They do that kind of stuff, too?

CESAR  
Massive controls a nonprofit organization destined to mining projects and better use of soil resources. However, it's a totally different department. I know nothing about it.

BLISS  
And where is this... site located? I mean, the place you work.

CESAR  
It's in the middle of Road 45, close to the drilling zones, where the old mining company used to stand.

BLISS  
It's a war zone over there, a very dangerous place, gang land and drug dealing routes.

CESAR  
Yes, it was the first thing they told me when I came in.

BLISS  
Any serious incident?

CESAR  
Not so far. It seems that telecom technicians are too insignificant to be considered a threat. If my colleagues and I don't stick our noses into anybody's business, nobody sticks their noses into ours.

BLISS  
Always a clever policy. It definitely keeps you out of trouble. And who are these colleagues you mentioned?

CESAR  
My workmates! Most of them are foreigners like me, coming from all places reached by the company tentacles. A very distinguished bunch! We may be predictable, but we surely deliver a first class service!

BLISS  
I already knew the latter. I don't know about the others, but I must say you're everything but predictable.

CESAR  
I can say the very same about you, always the mysterious one.

BLISS  
I thought you were used to that already.

CESAR  
How do you know so much about Road 45?

BLISS  
Let's say it's not the first time my family sends me here on business. And, every time I come, I learn new things, hear rumors here and there... you know, the way people get to know stuff.

CESAR  
And, are you finally gonna tell me what your family business is?

BLISS

We work with... exportation and distribution of industrialized products and similar items that help improving agriculture in developing countries like this one.

Cesar frowns.

BLISS (CONT'D)

At least I'm glad to know you get along fine with everybody.

CESAR

Well, they are not all nice. I don't mean us, the pawns, but the ones in charge of the site. Some of them like to make our lives a living hell, just to show off to the local managers.

BLISS

Is there somebody in particular who's bothering you the most?

CESAR

We deal with them. Why are you asking me this?

BLISS

Nothing. Just curiosity. After all, we need to know who to trust and who we should be more careful about.

CESAR

I've just had this brilliant idea! I think I can get you an authorization to enter the site tomorrow!

BLISS

Why would you want me in your workplace?

CESAR

Oh, I can think of a million reasons, meet my friends, see what we do around there, maybe even bore you with technical explanations. But, what I really want is spending more time with you and, of course, show my friends the wonderful, beautiful girl I hang out with, so they will all envy me! I hope I'm not being disrespectful.

BLISS

I'm flattered, actually. It's just that... Are you sure this is a good idea?

CESAR

Come on! You said you were gonna have some time off! You sound like you don't want to go.

BLISS

For crying out loud, you know it's not that!

CESAR

What is it, then?

BLISS

I don't want to be a fifth wheel or something.

CESAR

It'll never happen. You'll always be a balsam to sore eyes and a gift for the spirit!

Bliss looks mesmerized for a moment.

BLISS

You know something... If you think you can cope with me, then let's do this! But you're buying lunch!

Cesar jumps for joy.

CESAR

It's a deal! My cab will be at your hotel, eight o'clock sharp!

BLISS

Um, Cesar... If you allow me, I think I can get you a more appropriate mean of transportation.

INT. BIG, FANCY, AND LUXURIOUS LIMOUSINE - DAY

CESAR

Unbelievable! You do have a generous family.

BLISS

Owner's daughter privilege.

CESAR

Not that I'm complaining.

BLISS  
Do you want to drink something?

CESAR  
If we were in the heat outside, I'd most certainly accept. But under this air-conditioning, I must say I'm cold.

BLISS  
Yes, it's a little too much.

She moves a circular button on a console located by the side of the door. In the blink of an eye, the temperature rises to a more comfortable level.

CESAR  
Now, I can even have a drink. Do you have a Coca?

BLISS  
I didn't know you were into those things.

CESAR  
I meant Coca-Cola!

She grins.

BLISS  
I know. Just kidding.

Bliss opens an ingeniously spacious mini-fridge on a corner. She grabs the requested beverage and gives it to her boyfriend.

He opens the can and enjoys its content.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
I still think they should've given you a rented car. And the hotel they put you in is a rat-hole!

CESAR  
My branch manager told me it's been a little tricky to release money for this mission, because they're on a tight budget. But, they're working on it, and very soon I'll have an answer.

BLISS  
Well, if I understood you correctly, three quarters of your time in here already flew. When will they finally get you a car and transfer you to a better hotel?  
(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

Only when you are already in the flight back home, coach class by the way?

CESAR

They're working on it, okay?

BLISS (SARCASTIC)

I'm sure they are.

CESAR

What was that?

BLISS

Nothing.

Cesar's right leg shakes on his padded seat.

From the car windshield, it's possible to see a police roadblock straight ahead.

Cesar freezes.

EXT. ROAD IN MOGDA - DAY

All policemen (or whatever they are) blocking the way carry machine guns strapped to their necks by bandoliers, as well as pistols in holsters, placed on the sides of their belts.

The limousine is forced to stop.

In a matter of seconds, all men around the vehicle raise their weapons, pointing their barrels to each and every part of the limo.

A soldier, possibly the squad leader of that small militia, strides to the driver's door, his face fixed like a stone, as if he's about to kill everybody.

He knocks hard on the glass. The chauffeur opens the window.

SQUAD LEADER (ACCENTED ENGLISH)

Open the goddamn door!

The limo driver barely unlocks the door, and the soldier pulls it open so violently that almost causes the chauffeur to fall on the floor.

SQUAD LEADER (CONT'D)

Passport and documents!

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Cesar watches the chauffeur nervously handing documents and talking to the squad leader (inaudible dialogue).

EXT. ROAD IN MOGDA - DAY

The chauffeur taps on the window on Bliss' side. She opens it.

CHAUFFEUR

The captain requests that everybody  
steps down the vehicle.

Bliss does not look nervous whatsoever. She nods at Cesar.

Cesar opens the door and leaves the vehicle.

He's immediately surrounded by a bunch of uniformed evil-looking men, pointing machine guns right to his forehead. Fear is all over Cesar's face.

On the other side of the limo, Bliss is the last one out, with no hurry at all.

When the squad leader, the so called 'captain', looks at her, his eyes glow in fear.

CAPTAIN (WHISPERING)

Ah, I didn't know it was you, miss  
B...

He has to swallow the rest of his speech when Bliss signals him to shut up, subtly enough to not be noticed by Cesar.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Um... Passport, please.

With a hand gesture, the captain signals his soldiers to stand down.

They obey him, putting the machine guns down.

The captain returns the documents to Bliss.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Could you please inform your  
destination?

She fixes eyes on him with mild reproach.

BLISS

We're going to the  
telecommunication site of Terluiz,  
you know, the cell phone operator.  
The gentleman with me is a telecom  
technician, and, unlike your  
politicians, he has to work to make  
a living. We don't want him to be  
late for work, now do we?

Cesar looks as if a gelid chill ran all the way down his spine.

Nevertheless, to his relief, the captain only opens a disgusting smile, revealing a hideous dentition, probably the result of years of neglect, all in the middle of a dirty, untreated, and dusty beard.

CAPTAIN

I know what you mean. Only next time, be more careful with the routes you choose, miss. Many groups of dissidents and rebels still operate in this area, and I don't need to tell you how nasty they are. We try to protect the innocents the best we can with these roadblocks. But, you know, we can't be two places at once.

BLISS (SARCASTIC)

Yes, you do a great job about it.

CAPTAIN

You may go now.

The captain says his good-bye by timidly touching his beret with fore and middle fingers.

The group returns to their respective places in the long limousine.

As soon as the militia clears the way, the chauffeur puts the vehicle in motion.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

CESAR

You handle yourself remarkably well almost under fire.

BLISS

As I told you before, it's not the first time my family acts in this area. We kind of know how to deal with these types.

Cesar and Bliss enjoy comfortable silence.

EXT. TERLUZ SITE PERIMETER - DAY

The limousine goes through the site perimeter security with no problems at all, to get into the parking lot.

INT. TERLUZ MAIN BUILDING - DAY

Bliss and Cesar enter the building.



Security guards by the reception desk hand them badges with microchips as if Bliss and Cesar own the place.

CESAR

Jeez, how come we passed security so easily?

BLISS

Why not?

CESAR

The ground floor houses very expensive equipment. Any tiny damage and the whole country will have no phone service of any kind.

BLISS

They trust us. We do look reliable.

CESAR

Come on! My friends and I went through a lot of red tape, not to mention endless security inspections when we first came to the site.

BLISS

Alright, I confess. I made a few phone calls yesterday to cut some of the red tape.

Cesar faces her.

CESAR

You never get tired of surprising me.

INT. TERLUZ TELECOM SITE (EQUIPMENT ROOM), MOGDA - DAY

Cesar and his coworkers frown in front of racks and boards.

CESAR

What about the cables, Ben? I already fear the answer.

BEN

Nothing yet. We got boards, generators, racks, servers, and a bunch of other junk, but nothing to connect them to one another.

CESAR

And you can also include, among this junk, a pile of assholes, by which I mean us.

BEN

I don't know why you're so worried, man. All these delays are not our fault! Let the ones in charge sort the problems out, and may the company keep us paying our daily allowance.

CESAR

Yeah, only I wasn't paid a single daily allowance yet, and we have to stay here for as long as this equipment doesn't come.

BEN

I hear you, bro.

Cesar turns to Bliss.

CESAR

Are you alright?

BLISS

It's cold in here.

BEN

Both literally and figuratively, sweetheart.

AHMED

A few minutes in here is enough to bring anybody on the verge of despair and depression.

CESAR

At least the air-conditioning is working.

BEN

All devices here need to operate strictly within a certain range of temperature, normally very low, in order to work properly and avoid the burning of vital circuits.

AHMED

Sahara desert outside and North Pole inside. We could get a cold in here.

BEN

Not to mention this reek of metal. All this dust adheres to my clothes like freaking glue.

AHMED

There are still parts under construction in the building, you know.

CESAR

I wonder how we are still alive.

AHMED

I wonder if they are paying us enough for this.

CESAR

I'm not being paid at all, almost.

Bliss takes a look around.

The hangar-shaped construction is vastly ample, designed to shelter several kinds of equipment of all sizes and shapes. The place is packed with racks, organized in rows, with sufficient space among them so workers can move between them, for maintenance purposes. Such racks roughly resemble refrigerators, only with printed boards inside, instead of food.

Bliss taps her foot on the floor.

BLISS

This floor feels hollow.

BEN

Because it's not the real floor.

BLISS

It looks real enough to me.

AHMED

We call it raised floor, because it sits a little above the real floor, so cables can run along the gap in between.

Bliss nods and looks up.

On the upper part of the construction, there are fluorescent lamps screwed to frames which, in turn, are attached to the roof by long and thick ropes.

The whole place is cold and practical, no picture or plant of any kind.

BLISS

I've been to maximum security prisons that were cozier than this place.

All eyes turn to her. She smiles uncomfortably.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
My brother had some run-ins with  
the law.

AHMED  
Oh.

Bliss quickly becomes the center of attention.

BLISS  
Do you have washrooms in here?

BEN  
Do you have to go now?

BLISS  
Nope. Just precaution. Why? Is  
there a problem?

BEN  
Well, we do have a washroom, but  
the toilet flushing system is out  
of order since last week, and the  
maintenance personnel is taking  
their sweet time to come and fix  
the problem, despite our hysterical  
requests.

AHMED  
You can take your chances using it,  
or hang in there until your bladder  
and guts are about to explode.

BLISS  
I'll hang in there until my bladder  
and guts are about to explode.

AHMED  
Clever thinking.

GB  
Oops! Here comes trouble! The  
Manhole is in!

MISTER CIRTES (32) bursts into the site, walking with fast  
little steps and an angry face.

MISTER CIRTES  
Any news?

GB  
Nothing yet. No cables, no  
connectors, no wires, no shoelaces,  
nothing.

MISTER CIRTES  
And what are you guys doing about  
it, GB?

GB

We are plucking hair out of our balls and connecting the boards with them. Maybe that works. What else can we do over here other than waiting?

MISTER CIRTES

OUR bosses are not happy with all these delays. They think there are too many folks here doing nothing.

GB

Then, you can tell OUR bosses what should be pretty OBVIOUS already! Unless you find a way to conduct electricity with your fart, it's impossible to make the equipment work without the DAMN material! If there are folks here doing nothing, it's all OUR bosses' fault!

Mister Cirtes (the Manhole) looks disconcerted. No other worker dares to join that conversation, but they are clearly putting efforts to suppress laughter. The Manhole notices it, and his face is red with anger.

MISTER CIRTES

You are aware of course that I'll have to write a detailed report about everything that happens here, including your behavior.

GB (YAWNING)

You do that. Just don't exhaust yourself too much. That would make me worried.

The Manhole curses under his breath and walks away.

But he suddenly stops in front of Bliss. After measuring the beautiful woman from top to bottom, Mister Cirtes looks down on her.

MISTER CIRTES

And who the heck is she?

CESAR

Um, she's with me.

MISTER CIRTES

Is she authorized to be in the premises?

GB

No, she seized the whole place and made us all hostages!

BLISS (MURMURING)  
Hostages... That takes me back...

GB  
Of course she's authorized to be in here. And so far she's been way more useful than you. Don't you have a report to write or something?

The Manhole grimaces and looks down on them in indignation. He turns his back on the workers and leaves the premises, stepping hard on the raised floor.

BLISS  
Who's the charming fella?

GB  
Ah, that's our dear 'project general manager', or at least this is what he likes to believe. You have to admit, that's some pompous name for a job position.

BEN  
His name is 'Mister' Cirtes, he definitely dreams of being called 'mister' one of these days.

GB  
He's just an ass-kisser who knows nothing of anything. He was hired for the single purpose of spying on us, to see if we are doing our jobs. In other words, he's a fancy overpaid rat.

BLISS  
Fancy overpaid rat... I like it!

AHMED  
Unfortunately, we have to occasionally pretend we respect him, for the sake of our jobs.

Bliss turns to GB.

BLISS  
In this case, isn't it a bit risky to talk to him like you did?

GB  
Everybody on the top floors knows that they need us more than we need them.

BLISS  
And what about this 'Manhole'  
thing?

She smirks.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
I heard you calling him this when  
he came in.

AHMED  
Never use the phone after him  
without cleaning it first with a  
mouthwash. We don't know what the  
bastard uses for toothbrush, but  
his breath smells worse than the  
washroom!

BLISS  
I see. And if you could please  
satisfy a curiosity of mine, dear  
sir...?

GB  
By all means, my dear. And sir was  
my dad. Just call me GB.

BLISS  
That's exactly what I want to ask  
you. Why everybody calls you GB?

AHMED  
Grayish Beard! Okay, right now it's  
more to White Beard than Grayish  
Beard, but the nickname remains,  
you know, for tradition.

GB  
Get off my back, you little punk!  
Do you want me to show you what an  
old coot like me can still do to  
spoilt little brats such as you?

AHMED  
You take them to lunch?

GB  
That's right, but only if you're  
buying.

Everybody laughs, including a totally enchanted and lost in  
bewilderment Bliss.

INT. TERLUZ SITE SMALL CAFETERIA - DAY

Cesar, Bliss, GB, Ben, and Ahmed share a table, enjoying  
lunch together.

BLISS

So, what's this whole deal with these cables?

AHMED

Well, as a matter of fact, this is the least of our delays, to the point of becoming almost symbolic.

BLISS

And what are your not so symbolic problems?

The irreverent tone of the lady brings laughter from her passionate male audience. They hang on her every word.

CESAR

Wow, Bliss, you're so sensational! Sometimes, I wonder what a girl like you is doing with a guy like me.

AHMED

We're all wondering the same.

More laughter.

BEN

Answering your question, we have to cope with delays and grumpiness from superiors every single day.

GB

Each and every material we need takes ages to come. Printed boards, connectors, network cables, optical fiber cables, and a lot of other cables - everything we need, we don't have.

AHMED

And the big stuff is not the only thing that takes forever to come. Even the software to program the features is not available yet. And the goddamn thing can be sent by e-mail.

CESAR

By the way, is it already decided which of us is going into the rat ward when the cables finally come? Will that be us or Muriel's team?

BLISS

Rat ward?



BEN

That's how they call that gap  
between the real floor and the  
raised floor, where the cables go.

GB

They call it like this because  
rumor says that rats, I mean, real  
rats sometimes take walks around  
the gap, turning the place into  
their private bathroom, among other  
things.

AHMED

We heard cases of installers that  
got sick with Leptospirosis after  
working down there.

BLISS

Did they recover?

AHMED

We don't know. Maybe, these are  
just stories.

BLISS

What if they are not? From what  
I've seen so far in this place, it  
might as well be true! Has anybody  
been notified yet, are they doing  
something about it? Shouldn't they  
call a pest control or something?

BEN

One local big-shot said that when  
all construction works are  
finished, in a month or so,  
everything here will be wonderland.  
All wings will be modern, clean,  
ventilated, and even extravagant, a  
real paradise! That was ten years  
ago, according to him.

BLISS

Some nice work conditions you got  
here.

AHMED

You bet.

BEN

What do you do for a living?

BLISS

Um... About that...

CESAR  
She works with exportation of farm  
equipment to developing nations.

AHMED  
Then, you'd better quit. Nothing  
grows in this country.

BLISS  
Well, one can never lose hope.

And lunch continues in a pleasant succession of light-hearted  
chatting (inaudible dialogue).

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY (SUNSET)

Cesar places a sympathetic hand on his girlfriend's shoulder.

CESAR  
I'm sorry if we bored you, honey. I  
know that was very dull. I just  
wanted to spend more time with you.

BLISS  
Hey, no apologies needed! I wasn't  
bored, not even for a second! I had  
a good time, and I like your  
friends.

A short melody coming from the lady's cell phone, similar to  
the theme song of the movie Godfather, announces the arrival  
of a text message.

Bliss turns her back on Cesar to read the text with privacy.  
After reading the message, she takes a mild breath.

CESAR  
Problems?

BLISS  
Some. Nothing I can't handle, one  
or two minor setbacks.

CESAR  
Something I can help you with?

BLISS  
I don't think so, unless you know  
how to build a reaper in the next  
half-hour.

CESAR  
Well, if cables are what you need,  
don't count on my company.

Bliss smiles, but she looks tense.

BLISS  
About that...

She hesitates. Cesar waits.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
These people you work with... They  
are so good and all, same as you...  
I think you deserve way more than  
you're getting.

CESAR  
We've already talked about this,  
and you know we have enough  
problems as it is.

BLISS  
I know. And that's what pisses me  
off. I just can't swallow it as  
easily as you guys do.

CESAR  
Oh, so that's it, huh!? We're just  
a bunch of complying jerks that are  
too gutless to fight for their  
rights!

BLISS  
Ah, for Pete's sake... That's not  
what I meant!

CESAR  
Maybe, it's not as simple as you  
think! We may end up in a pile of  
legal debts, even unemployed and  
completely devoid of any positive  
reference! We're not talking about  
a tiny, backyard, family company in  
here! If we rock the boat, they can  
do us a lot of harm! It may sound  
strange to you, but not everybody  
can ride in daddy's limo!

Bliss hangs her head, lost in thoughts.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Look, I'm sorry. That was uncalled  
for. I didn't have the right to  
judge you like that.

BLISS  
Forget it. Funny, but I agree with  
you. It's the first time I get in  
touch with this sort of reality. I  
guess I was caught with my pants  
down a bit.

CESAR

Same here.

BLISS

I just think you guys got a lot of talent that is totally wasted. This company of yours forces you to travel a zillion miles away from the ones you care for. You should be paid a truckload of money and be treated like heroes for all this trouble, and not ending up in some half-ass hospital with Leptospirosis!

CESAR

Those are just stories!

BLISS

Whatever! It wasn't the only absurd I heard since we met! The Company screws up, and they try to pin it all on you! Believe me, this boils my blood even more than it does yours.

CESAR

We can handle our problems.

BLISS

Even so, I still think you don't have to take this kind of shit. You're doing your job, you're doing it right.

CESAR

And what do you propose we do? Sue them?

BLISS

For starters, yes!

CESAR

Don't you think this is a little too extreme?

BLISS

Okay. Then be more vigilant with your bosses! Recruit your colleagues and stop going to missions abroad, unless the conditions improve, and the package of benefits becomes more attractive. The Grayish Beard guy said your managers need you more than you need them, remember?

CESAR

You're sounding like you want us to go on strike or something. No company likes rabble rousers or troublemakers.

BLISS

Well, from where I stand, I have this clear impression that it's the company that's making trouble.

CESAR

Give us some time to try to sort things out without going medieval on them, okay?

BLISS

Sure. I'm just asking you to consider the possibility of going medieval on their asses, shall the need arise.

CESAR

It's a deal!

She caresses her boyfriend's back with a hand.

BLISS

I didn't mean to push you.

CESAR

I know.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF TWO-STAR HOTEL - DAY (SUNSET)

The limousine stops in front of the worn-out two-star hotel Cesar is staying in.

Cesar leaves the vehicle, closes the door, and talks to his girlfriend through the window.

BLISS

Well, I got to go a little further to solve that problem they texted me about. Think of what I said. Talk to your friends. That's all I ask.

CESAR

Sure thing. Anyway, I believe things will get better now. The world settles on its own. The Company promised me a big, fat bonus when I get back!

Cesar kisses her in the lips. He disappears into the hotel, and the limousine follows its path with all windows closed.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY (SUNSET)

BLISS (WHISPERING)  
Sometimes, the world needs a little  
help to settle better.

EXT. STREET ON A VERY POOR NEIGHBORHOOD, MOGDA - DAY (SUNSET)

The limousine pulls over by a garage, located in one of the poorest neighborhoods of that capital. Some pedestrians glance at the fancy vehicle, but soon come back to their businesses, as if scared.

As soon as the vehicle stops, a distinguished man in suit, PAUL (58), hurries to open the door for Bliss, who leaves the limousine. Paul has very little hair left, even so neatly close-cropped around his head, with the bald patch reflecting the intense sunlight. Bliss and Paul hug.

BLISS  
Hey Paul!

PAUL  
Hey darling! I was getting worried.  
What took you so long?

BLISS  
I had to make a little stop on the  
way, in a place kind of far from  
here.

PAUL  
Yes, I can understand that.  
Everything here is far away.

BLISS  
Anyway, I came as soon as I got  
your message. Are things really  
that bad?

PAUL  
Even worse than we think.

BLISS  
Where is him?

PAUL  
Inside.

Paul points a forefinger to the garage door, which is hanging a little above the floor.

BLISS  
Did anybody see you coming?

PAUL

Well, if somebody did, they will not stick their noses in. People here know better than that.

BLISS

Great! Take me to him.

Paul signals to the limousine driver, which promptly speeds away as if already knowing where to go.

On the sidewalk, Bliss and Paul look over their respective shoulders almost at the same time, and then walk to the door.

Paul lifts the garage door to the top, so they can enter.

INT. GARAGE - DAY (SUNSET)

The place is a gloomy combination of bleach and engine oil.

Paul closes the garage door, this time all the way down to the floor, so nobody can open it from the outside.

Deep into the garage, two men in suits are standing still. Their faces are rough and sinister. Their gorilla grimaces definitely produces the desired effect on people, considering their line of work.

BLISS

Where did you find those two?

PAUL

Local contractors. They call less attention. Don't worry, they get the job done.

Bliss turns to the general direction of the two goons.

BLISS

Nice meeting you, too.

None of them moves a single muscle in their pockmarked faces.

In the middle of the goons, there's a very worn-out office chair with a man sitting on it, JIMBO (34). His mouth is gagged with a shining, silver duct-tape, as well as his arms and legs, firmly tied up to the chair by the same duct-tape. He is wearing casual shirt and pants, also dirty and worn-out. His dress shoes needs polishing.

Bliss comes closer to Jimbo and fixes eyes on him. Jimbo returns a desperate, pleading look. The man has ugly bruises on the cheeks and around tearful eyes.

BLISS (CONT'D)

Couldn't you wait for me before you started? You know I don't approve of these methods.

PAUL

Can't take any chances, especially considering our situation.

BLISS

Did you have a chance to talk to my father about this?

PAUL

No. I preferred to talk to you first.

BLISS

And you did well.

She turns back to Jimbo and slightly bends her body toward him, to make sure he can hear her.

BLISS (CONT'D)

Jimbo, my boy! I heard you've been dropping the ball on us, you naughty boy!

The man only grunts because of the improvised gag.

Bliss waits a few seconds to make sure psychological pressure is correctly applied, and only then removes the duct-tape from the man's mouth, with the necessary violence to pluck beard threads from his unshaven face, which causes him to moan even more.

JIMBO

I swear I didn't know this was gonna happen!

Jimbo's voice drags. He gasps for air in a strange way, indicating that his body also took a beating, not only his face.

JIMBO (CONT'D)

I swear on my mother's grave! They told me it was just part of the deal!

BLISS

Ah, Jimbo, Jimbo... How disappointing. After all we did for you and your family!

JIMBO

Listen to me, please! Let's talk about this!



BLISS

We are talking. That's why I'm here. You see, when Paul here sent me the message, a lot of things fell into place all of a sudden.

She takes a breath.

BLISS (CONT'D)

Our dear mutual friend Colonel Odile is sending that captain clown of his, together with the rest of his bozos, to set up roadblocks. I myself got stopped by one of those. It nearly blew my cover. That was very unpleasant.

JIMBO

I... I know nothing of this!

BLISS

I found it weird at first. But now, it all makes sense. Odile is nervous. He's trying to put his best foot forward, even pretending he's a cop. If I had to guess, I'd say he's afraid of being caught. And now I know why he's so scared.

Bliss sits down on the armrest and brings her head closer to Jimbo's.

BLISS (CONT'D)

It's because some cock-sucking, treacherous little maggot has been tipping off the federal police about our routes. But I suppose you know nothing about this either, right, Jimbo?

The man tries to say something, but chokes on his own saliva.

BLISS (CONT'D)

Yes? Is there something you want to tell me, Jimmy boy?

JIMBO

L-look, Miss Tati...

In an outburst of anger, Bliss slaps the man in the face so strongly that almost makes his head turn completely around.

BLISS

Never, ever say my real name in public! For all you care, I'm your Bliss, sweetheart!

JIMBO  
I'm... I'm sorry.

BLISS  
Forget it. Now, you were saying...

JIMBO (BREATHLESS)  
I didn't mean any harm. They told  
me everything would be handled  
properly!

BLISS  
You're lying to me, Jimbo. You knew  
very well what you were doing. What  
a nasty boy!

She pauses for a few seconds.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
You know, until a couple of hours  
ago, I wouldn't even know how to  
classify a lowlife, sleaze ball  
like you, but today I heard a term  
that fits you like a glove - a  
fancy overpaid rat, that's what you  
are. Now tell me, dear boy, who's  
your contact?

Jimbo does not answer. His body shakes so hardly that it  
seems on the verge of a seizure.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
I haven't got all day.

JIMBO  
They're gonna kill me.

BLISS  
Don't worry about that. You know  
we're gonna protect you.

The tormented man silences. Bliss twists her nose.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Is that pee I smell...?

JIMBO  
I can't!

Jimbo bursts into tears.

JIMBO (CONT'D)  
I can't!

BLISS  
Very well, then.

She stands up and turns to Paul.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
You said those two troglodytes over  
there get the job done, right?

PAUL  
Satisfaction guaranteed.

BLISS  
Then I assume they know the drill.  
Fingers first, then toes, and, last  
but not least, the little limb  
between his legs, which must be  
rather wet now. And if he's still  
not cooperative, I believe they  
know the way to his eyes.

Paul nods at the goons on both sides of the chair.

One of them turns to a small table at arm's reach and grabs a  
heavy duty bolt chain lock wire cutter. For the first time, a  
slight smile opens on his face.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Well, gentlemen, you take it from  
here. I got work to do.

She turns her back on the group and walks toward the garage  
door.

The big goon brings the gigantic bolt cutter very close to  
Jimbo's little finger with fierce determination, ready to cut  
it off.

JIMBO  
NOOOO! NOOOO!

Jimbo struggles on the chair as hard as he can manage, crying  
and begging.

JIMBO (CONT'D)  
I tell you! I tell you everything!

Bliss stops and turns around.

Paul nods again at the goon.

He stops what he's doing and stands still beside the chair  
again. The goon still has the bolt cutter in his hand, and  
his face is one of disappointment.

The lady calmly walks to the chair.

BLISS  
I'm listening.

JIMBO  
He didn't say his name. It's true!  
I swear on my father's grave!

BLISS  
Then describe him!

JIMBO  
Big, corpulent guy, his face was  
smashed like a freaking boxer. He  
was wearing a striped suit, Mickey  
Mouse tie, and one of those small  
hats.

Bliss looks at Paul.

BLISS  
Moochie?

PAUL  
No doubt, there's no other like  
him.

Paul frowns in such a way that even his bald patch wrinkles.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
It's way, way worse than we  
thought!

The girl faces Jimbo with extremely punitive eyes.

JIMBO (WEEPING)  
They made me do it!

BLISS  
Ah, Jimbo...

JIMBO  
Please, don't kill me!

BLISS  
So, you gave away our local routes  
to no other than the right hand of  
Don Fabrizio Pugliese, as in  
Chicago Pugliese, the same scumbag,  
son-of-a-bitch who's been trying  
for years to get his hands on my  
family's territory! The same  
bastard who threatened to kill my  
father several times!

JIMBO  
They made me do it!

BLISS  
Of course they did. They made you  
do it for the right price. I bet  
you sold yourself cheap, you  
miserable sewer rat, disgusting  
disloyal maggot, bastard, cock-  
sucking, human garbage!

JIMBO  
Don't kill me! Please!

Bliss stretches her body and takes a deep breath, calming herself down.

BLISS  
Alright. What Moochie told you?

JIMBO  
He said it was just a matter of time until the old Razzini got a rope around his neck. He told me that international authorities were all over you and the corrupt police you have in your pockets. Very soon, they would apprehend all your trucks and arrest your entire family. And every single person who had business with you would go down as well.

BLISS  
And you believed him.

JIMBO  
I couldn't take any chances! I have wife and kids! They need me! I can't go to jail!

BLISS  
It's hard to believe a piece of shit like you had the nerves to pass your genes along.

She leaves the languid human-being in the company of the two hard-faced goons, to have a private talk with Paul.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Well, straight to the point, what happens now?

PAUL  
Obviously, the old Pugliese is finally hitting us with everything he got. He knows the routes over here are strategically important. He wants to take them away from us.

BLISS  
And how do you think he's gonna do it?

PAUL

Smoothly, as usual. First, he spreads rumors that our business here is going to hell, in order to scare the key-people we need, both locals like Odile, and foreigners like Jimbo over there. Then, Fabrizio offers to help and steals those people from us, with promises of protection and financial rewards, leaving us isolated.

BLISS

Got it. And once we lose our support and cover, we get exposed to the international authorities.

PAUL

And they're gonna have a hell of a field day. If Interpol decides to raid and intercept our trucks, they'll have the opportunity of a lifetime to expose your father and connect him to the operations in the island. Then, it's just a matter of time till the FBI storms upon your dad like flies.

BLISS

But, if geopolitics keeps this trash for country under leash, how old bastard Pugliese is gonna come in?

PAUL

Geopolitics' attention won't last forever. When this dump ceases to make headlines in the papers and the web, your distinguished geopolitics is going to sweep this place under the rug again. They got better things to do with their demagoguery.

BLISS

That's when the old prick will make his move, right?

PAUL

Yes. When dust settles, your father will be in jail, or so hopes Fabrizio. Then, little by little, he'll send his own people here and take those same distribution routes that once belonged to us.

BLISS

Very smooth, eh?

Paul sighs.

PAUL  
And the worst of all is I don't see  
a way out of this.

Paul wipes sweat off brow with a handkerchief.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
If only we had a fall guy.

All of a sudden, Bliss' eyes shine a strange glow.

Paul notices the enigmatic face of the girl and comes closer  
to her.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Anything you want to say, Bliss?

BLISS  
As a matter of fact, yes. Do you  
think Moochie is still in town?

PAUL  
Of course! He won't move a muscle  
before making absolutely sure  
everything's going according to  
plan. But, I'm pretty sure he has  
no idea we captured his snitch.

He points a disdainful forefinger at Jimbo.

BLISS  
Then, listen to me, Paul. That's  
what we're gonna do. First, tell  
your orangutans over there to  
locate Moochie and eliminate him.

PAUL  
Are you sure this is a good idea?  
He's the big boss' pet, almost like  
a son to old Fabrizio.

BLISS  
I know! That'll be a way to show  
him we found out about his little  
scam. He's gonna get nervous,  
because he doesn't know how much we  
know. He'll have to lay low for a  
while. That'll buy us some time.

PAUL  
What if he retaliates?

BLISS

He won't take the chance. When the other families find out we killed his right hand, they'll be sure we had a good reason, because they trust my father. They know he would never kill somebody so important without a good reason. If Don Pugliese tries to get even, everybody will suspect he was doing something very wrong. His hands will be tied. He'll have to let go.

PAUL

In theory, that should work. But I still think you ought to contact your father and leave the decision to him.

BLISS

We don't have time. Besides, my father sent me here to do a job, and I won't let him down.

PAUL

What exactly do you have in mind, Bliss? Could you please tell me?

BLISS

I have an idea that can get us out of this mess.

PAUL

Would you please be so kind to share it with me?

BLISS

Not yet. Would you be so kind to trust me blindly on this one, no questions asked, at least for now?

PAUL

You know I trust you. But I'll have to say something to papa.

BLISS

Do you think you can stall my old man for a while?

PAUL

I'm not sure. As you know, I have been your family's 'Consiglieri' even before you were born. Your daddy knows when I'm trying to bullshit him.

BLISS

Please! It's important.



PAUL

I see what I can do, but I hope you know what you're doing, missy. This is not only about the law breathing on our necks, but also about the families. There are many of them, some loyal to us, some loyal to Pugliese, and they want us to become food for the fishes. A mess like this can bring us on the verge of a war between the families, with the FBI right in the middle to get indictments. A lot of people are going to die.

It's Bliss' turn to frown.

BLISS

I think I can stop all that.

PAUL

You think?

She hesitates.

BLISS

I'm asking you, do as I say. Finish that sleaze ball Moochie, then take a helicopter back to New York. My father will probably call a meeting with the other bosses.

PAUL

I don't know. We're taking a pretty big chance here. And I don't like to be kept in the dark.

BLISS

Please! You have to trust me on this!

The 'Consiglieri' meditates for a moment.

Bliss waits in anticipation.

PAUL

One condition.

BLISS

You name it.

PAUL

You tell me your plan.

BLISS

In the limo, on the way to the airport, I'll tell you everything.

PAUL  
You bet. Don't forget you'll have  
nowhere to run, my beauty.

Bliss smirks.

BLISS  
I wouldn't even think of that.

PAUL  
And what we do with the rat over  
there?

Paul nods at Jimbo.

BLISS  
I said I would protect him, and I  
always keep my word. Send the  
scumbag home, straight to my  
father's arms. He got a lot to  
explain, and my old man has the  
right to look him in the eyes.  
Then, it's up to him.

JIMBO  
NOOOO! Please, don't do that! Give  
me a chance to quit and try my luck  
elsewhere!

BLISS  
It's too late for that, Jimmy boy.

Paul signals to his hired gorillas.

PAUL  
You heard the lady. Take the maggot  
to the car.

GOON 1  
Right, boss.

BLISS  
He speaks!

The two huge goons untie the beaten up Jimbo, who can barely  
breathe, let alone stand up. He is carried to the back door,  
where the limousine awaits.

PAUL  
Okay, that's our cue.

Paul takes Bliss' arm, so they can follow their way.

BLISS  
Just a sec.

She pulls her arm away from his hand.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
I have to make a phone call. I'll  
be with you shortly.

PAUL  
Don't take the whole day. Every  
second counts!

BLISS  
I know that!

Paul adjusts his tie, turns his back on her, and leaves.

Once alone in the garage, Bliss draws the cell phone from her  
pocket and presses the green button.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Cesar? (...) Hi, honey, how ya  
doin? (...) Great! Um, listen up,  
I'm in the city library, making a  
research about your company. (...)   
Curiosity, you know. (...) Yes,  
yes, exactly! (...) So, could you  
please tell me again the name of  
your branch manager? (...) That's  
right, the one who sent you here.

INT. FANCY NIGHTCLUB IN NEW YORK - NIGHT

Mister Coogan and his three superiors are sitting on a big,  
rounded couch, around a big table, accompanied by eight young  
ladies, two young ladies each, none of them their wives. They  
are all chatting and drinking. Loud music is all around.

Lady 1 comes closer to Mister Coogan.

LADY 1  
So, tell me, mister big shot, how  
does it feel to be a big shot?

COOGAN  
My dear, we live in a world where  
moral concepts are turned into a  
sick joke. And the capacity to win  
in life is determined by how low an  
individual can sink in order to  
succeed. Thus, the only way to get  
justice against the sharks that try  
to swallow you is by reaching the  
bottom of the ocean before they do.

LADY 1  
Oh.

MISTER MASSIVE  
You're surely a philosopher when  
you're drunk.

COOGAN  
Am I wrong?

LARDEN  
Nope. Just inconvenient.

COOGAN  
My point is, if I was an honorable  
man, I would tell the employees the  
truth right from the job interview.  
If you want to be a winner, my boy,  
you have to learn to be a pig like  
me. Kiss my ass if you want to  
succeed.

MISTER MASSIVE  
I couldn't agree more, Coogie. But  
we both know that you're everything  
but an honorable man.

TUBSTER  
None of us is.

LARDEN  
Hear, hear!

COOGAN  
I know. And I love to be a pig!

Coogan makes pig noises.

They all raise glasses of black beer and explode in laughter,  
while the women giggle like little girls.

MISTER MASSIVE  
Alright. All bullshit aside, did  
you arrange everything with Pierre?

COOGAN  
The fucker knows what he has to do.

TUBSTER  
Who's this Pierre anyway?

COOGAN  
He's our project manager in Mogda.

TUBSTER  
Good man?

COOGAN  
Oh, the best. He bullies employees  
like no one else, also polishes our  
apples like a pro.

TUBSTER  
I like him already.

LARDEN  
A toast to Cesar!

They raise their glasses again.

LARDEN (CONT'D)  
Our most distinguished and brave  
entrepreneur! After an excellent  
and honorable performance in the  
field, he'll be greeted with lots  
of kind words and taps on the back,  
but no money!

COOGAN  
Sometimes, I pity those poor,  
industrious boys!

TUBSTER  
Really?

COOGAN  
Um... NO!

Coogan explodes in more laughter. A few seconds later, the  
rest of the group joins him in the laughter.

INT. PIERRE'S OFFICE, COMPANY'S BRANCH IN MOGDA - DAY

PIERRE (45), short, balding guy, frowns at Cesar's timesheet.

CESAR  
So, Mister Pierre, is everything  
okay? Ready to put your John  
Hancock in there?

PIERRE  
I'm afraid not.

Cesar hesitates.

CESAR  
W... What?

PIERRE  
You heard me, boy.

CESAR  
You're pulling my legs, right?

PIERRE  
I don't do that, kid. Can't sign  
this thing.

CESAR

But... If you don't sign it, they won't pay me my extra hours!

PIERRE

That's exactly the point. Too many unjustified extra hours in here.

CESAR

What do you mean unjustified?

PIERRE

I mean you can't prove you really worked those many hours.

CESAR

Um... But... I... Jesus, I work them, for crying out loud! Ask anybody!

PIERRE

Don't have time to ask anybody.

CESAR

Now, you listen to me. With all due respect, this is absurd! I worked those hours, I have to be paid! I earned it! My work colleagues are my witnesses! Do something, go talk to them!

PIERRE

What about the weekly report?

CESAR

What?

PIERRE

The spreadsheet you're supposed to fill out with everything you do, including the extra hours. The same one you were supposed to e-mail me every week, putting your bosses in copy.

CESAR

I know what it is, but...

PIERRE

But what?

CESAR

With so much work, I kind of... I didn't have time to fill the weekly report out. But they told me it was not important, that things here were sort of informal...

PIERRE

Well, they told you wrong. Sorry, kid. Can't sign no timesheet without some written proof you're actually worked all these many extra hours.

CESAR

Well, too bad! 'Cause I'm not leaving until you sign my damn timesheet!

Pierre faces Cesar.

PIERRE

Are you sassing me, by any chance?

Cesar hesitates.

CESAR

Well, no. It's just that...

PIERRE

'Cause this sort of thing can get your ass fired.

Cesar hangs his head.

PIERRE (CONT'D)

I can understand your frustration, boy, but that's how it is. Next time, fill out your weekly reports.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

In the overcrowded coach class, Cesar travels back home, sleepless and with an anguished face. On the seat to his left, a fat guy sleeps with mouth wide open and snoring like a lawnmower. A young mother and her crying baby are sitting to his right.

Cesar lets his head rest against the seat headrest.

CESAR (WHISPERING)

Ah, Bliss...

EXT. MASSIVE INDUSTRIES' HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK - DAY

The imposing building in the huge industrial complex belonging to Massive multinational company is shown from above.

INT. CESAR'S CUBICLE - DAY

Cesar is typing on his laptop keyboard, when his desk phone RINGS. He answers it.

CESAR  
Yes (...) Sure thing, Miss Rose.  
I'm a-coming!

He hangs up.

CESAR (MURMURING) (CONT'D)  
Finally!

INT. MISTER COOGAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CESAR  
Hey Coogan! What's up?

COOGAN  
Please, have a seat.

Cesar sits down across the table from Coogan.

CESAR (PLAYFULLY)  
So, Coogan, when can I get my big bonus?

Coogan faces him with a serious face.

COOGAN  
We need to talk, Cesar.

Cesar's joy disappears from his face.

CESAR  
Um, okay.

COOGAN  
I'll cut to the chase here. I'm afraid you were given a negative evaluation by Pierre, your project manager in charge of the mission in Mogda.

Cesar looks at him in deep confusion.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
According to his report, although your work is reasonably satisfactory, your behavior leaves a lot to be desired. He classified you as rude and insubordinate.

CESAR  
Well, I had some problems with him regarding timesheet, but...  
(MORE)



CESAR (CONT'D)

Jeez, reasonably satisfactory? I worked like a mule in there!

COOGAN

I'm sure you did. Look, I'm on your side in this one, okay?

CESAR

I'm sure you are, but...

COOGAN

Look, if it was up to me, you'd get everything that was promised, but I'm afraid our chiefs are way colder. I mean, I fought hard for you, but couldn't change their stubborn minds.

CESAR

What do you mean?

COOGAN

Guess we have to kiss goodbye to your bonuses.

Cesar faces him with desperate eyes.

CESAR

But... Everybody in Mogda liked my work! Especially the customer! What about their evaluation?

COOGAN

Cesar, I know you are a hardworking, extremely competent man. Problem is, as soon as Pierre's evaluation hit the men upstairs, they decided to cancel the whole thing. Believe me, I tried to talk some sense into those sharks, but they just don't listen! I really stuck my neck out for you!

CESAR

I know. Are you sure there's absolutely nothing we can do?

COOGAN

I can't just make the evaluation disappear. Better behave next time, son.

CESAR

So, other than my salary, I'm getting nothing else.

COOGAN  
Well, you'll always have my respect  
and recognition, in this mission  
and in the others to come.

CESAR  
Thank you.

Cesar leaves the office.

Coogan grins. He stretches his body, crossing fingers behind his head.

The desk phone RINGS, he answers it.

COOGAN  
(...) Are you kidding, Carl? I  
should win an Oscar! (...) Oh yes,  
I do deserve your congratulations  
and the bonus. After all, due to my  
hard work and extreme competence,  
the mission in Mogda was a complete  
success!

INT. CESAR'S CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Cesar comes back to his cubicle and sits down, pouting. But he smiles when he sees the picture frame on his desk. He grabs it for a closer look.

CLOSEUP of the picture frame. The picture inside is a 'selfie' of him with Bliss.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN MOGDA - DAY

Bliss is sitting by a table outside a small cafe. She types on her cell phone, brings it to her ear, and waits.

FRANCO RAZZINI (V.O.)  
Hello!

BLISS  
Hey, papa, it's me!

INT. FRANCO RAZZINI'S OFFICE IN NEW YORK - DAY (SUNSET)

Franco 'Rib-Crusher' Razzini talks on his desk phone.

FRANCO RAZZINI  
Hey, snowflake! How's my little  
girl?

INTERCUT BETWEEN BLISS and FRANCO RAZZINI

BLISS

Stop calling me that, pa! It's been long since I was seven!

FRANCO RAZZINI

Ah, never to a father. You'll always be my little girl! But, tell me, honey, things are getting better over there?

BLISS

We're working on it. But there's still a lot to do.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Just one thing, darling. I was told about the death of Alfredo Maracchio, or Moochie as they called him, Don Fabrizio's right hand. He died right there in the island.

BLISS

Yes, there's been an accident.

FRANCO RAZZINI

So I heard. By misfortune, his head intercepted a .38 caliber bullet, which came from nowhere.

BLISS

What a shame, huh? He was such a nice fella.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Anything else you want to add, missy?

BLISS

Considering the circumstances, don't you think I did good?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Yes, but I really wish you had consulted with me first. Now, I'm the one who has to deal with the old man.

BLISS

I could have asked you, but if I am to take the family's business someday, I have to learn to carry my weight, especially in situations like this.

FRANCO RAZZINI

And I couldn't be prouder that you think like this.

(MORE)

FRANCO RAZZINI (CONT'D)

Of course, I appreciate your initiative. However, while I'm still breathing, how about some team work next time, huh?

BLISS

Got it.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Good. How's the operation going?

BLISS

We had to reduce the number of trucks a little, but everything is still on schedule.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Great! How about our old friend Odile and the rest of his clowns? Is he causing any trouble?

BLISS

He's nervous, you know, afraid to go to jail, or to the morgue. However, I managed to convince him that all this talk of us getting caught is bullshit. He's more relaxed now. He even stopped setting up all those stupid roadblocks that checked nothing.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Good job, honey!

BLISS

I believe we can keep him on the payroll for one more month, so he keeps looking the other way every time we operate in his area.

FRANCO RAZZINI

That's not a lot of time. If we are to follow your plan, we'll be sticking our heads into a gigantic snake pit.

BLISS

Yes, but it's not like we have a choice anymore.

FRANCO RAZZINI

And if your plan doesn't work, we both end up in jail, or dead.

BLISS

Then, we'd better make sure my plan works, pa.

FRANCO RAZZINI

By the way, how are things going between you and that boy you're dating... Augustus, Tiberius, Nero...?

BLISS

It's Cesar, dad!

FRANCO RAZZINI

Yes, that one. How are things going between you two, kids?

BLISS

Never better!

She doesn't resist a giggle.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Have you told him the truth about you, honey?

BLISS

I'm working on it.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Not good enough this time, I'm afraid. You can't live a lie for the rest of your life. This is not our way. Sincerity above all! This is what I've always taught you. You have to tell him. Loyalty is our most precious asset. Without it, we are nothing! See what happened to Jimbo!

BLISS

What did you do to him after all, pa? Did you kill him?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Of course not! He has wife and kids, for crying out loud! I've just justified my nickname and sent him to the hospital. The doctor said that in about a year or so he may be able to talk again.

BLISS

He'd be doing himself a favor if he didn't.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Agreed, but let's stick to the matter in hand. When are you gonna tell Cesar the truth?

BLISS

In due time. He earned my love,  
affection and admiration, and I'll  
do everything in my power to  
protect him, even if it costs my  
life.

Don Razzini's eyes glow in happiness and pride.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Dear daughter... Your mother and I  
always knew you would bring us  
nothing but happiness, especially  
after poor Vitto - God rests his  
soul - got ambushed and shot dead  
in that goddamn gas station.

Bliss can't resist a tear for her brother's tragic demise.

FRANCO RAZZINI (CONT'D)

That's why we put our best efforts  
to raise you right. And by hearing  
you saying those words, I can see  
our efforts were not in vain. I  
couldn't be happier!

BLISS

Thanks, pa!

FRANCO RAZZINI

Especially because if we fail, your  
boyfriend will also be in a world  
of shit. His body will probably be  
fished from some filthy canal.

BLISS

We won't let that happen. Well, I  
have a flight to catch. Talk to you  
at home, pa.

FRANCO RAZZINI

See you soon, snowflake!

INT. COOGAN'S OFFICE, NEW YORK - DAY

Coogan is doing nothing, lost in a wave of self-admiration.

The desk phone RINGS. He answers it.

COOGAN

(...) Sure thing, Miss Rose, send  
her in!

He hangs up. Coogan snaps his fingers in anticipation.

COOGAN (WHISPERING) (CONT'D)

I hope she's hot...

A remarkably beautiful woman enters his office, accompanied by Miss Rose. The secretary leaves and closes the door.

The woman is in her early twenties, with long, platinum blonde hair, a well built, sculptural body. She wears an elegant dress shirt, tight enough to leave only the necessary to the imagination, although her shorts are a bit revealing. She also wears fancy Prada and carries a Louis Vuitton purse.

The woman is Bliss.

Coogan stands up to greet her. He can't resist and sizes her from head to toe with a flabbergasted look.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Good morning. Bryson Coogan at your services.

They shake hands.

BLISS

Good morning! Laura Pugliese, head of the International Accounts Department of Homely Inn Corporation. It's a pleasure to finally meet you.

COOGAN

I can assure you, the pleasure is all mine! Please.

He points at the chair next to his desk.

BLISS

Thank you.

She sits down, and Coogan returns to his chair, across the desk.

COOGAN

So... I suppose your father owns the hotels chain.

BLISS

My role model, boss and CEO!

COOGAN

A combination of success!

BLISS

Do you mind if I go straight to the point?

COOGAN

That's how I like it.

BLISS

I know that your firm recently finalized a huge work of installation of new equipment related to mobile telephony for the operator Terluz, in a small island called Mogda, in the archipelago of Porventana, and they couldn't be happier with the excellence of your services.

COOGAN

Oh yes, a hard, but rewarding work.

BLISS

I can imagine! Especially considering the difficulties imposed by the place.

COOGAN

Well, there are always obstacles to be overcome in any kind of mission. However, this is what we do, and with quality!

BLISS

And I was told that all achievements regarding this project were your doing.

COOGAN

Oh no, it was a team work!

BLISS

Have you ever been to Mogda, to visit the installations?

COOGAN

Um, not quite.

BLISS

Neither have I. I hope I never have to go there. Anyway, I appreciate the good work your people did over there.

COOGAN

You know, when there's work to be done, we cannot be delayed by minor setbacks. Leadership is the key to any successful undertaking.

BLISS

That's our belief as well. This is why we chose you. It came to our knowledge that your company has a big project intended to develop that island, right?



COOGAN

Absolutely! It's a very ambitious pilot project which, if successful, will serve as a model to other developing nations.

BLISS

Please, tell me more about it.

COOGAN

The idea is to close a number of deals with the local military government, with the purpose of obtaining, with the support of the United Nations, a more adequate exploration of the vast mineral resources of the island, not to mention a more just distribution of the resulting income to the benefit of the local population.

BLISS

That's what I read on Newsweek. There's one thing that concerns me, though. I heard rumors that some rebels are planning a military coup in the island, to overthrow their president and take power.

COOGAN

Nonsense! They're just a bunch of troublemakers trying to get attention. Local authorities have them under control. You don't need to worry with those types.

BLISS

That's a load off my mind, for sure. In this case, I'm compelled to believe that, if everything goes right, both the country and its people will experience prosperity for the first time in their history.

COOGAN

And this is our biggest reward.

BLISS

I'm sure it is. And once the population's purchasing power increases, they'll need more cell phones, right?

COOGAN

Exactly! We have to open a little space for business.

(MORE)

COOGAN (CONT'D)

As long as everybody is happy,  
there's no harm in getting some  
loose change in the process.

BLISS

I couldn't agree more.

COOGAN

And the place will also need  
hotels, right? I mean, when the  
region is developed, thanks to us,  
it will attract tourists... right?

Bliss (disguised as Laura) opens a grin.

BLISS

It's good to see we are on the same  
page here. How advanced the project  
is?

COOGAN

We've already got all permits, if  
you get my meaning.

BLISS

May I see them?

COOGAN

They haven't been issued yet.

BLISS

When will they?

COOGAN

One week from now, tops. I give you  
my word!

BLISS

I see. I gather you've already  
heard of our hotels, spread all  
around the world.

COOGAN

If I've heard of them? I always  
stay at your hotels in my business  
trips. They are fantastic!

BLISS

Excellent! So, you must know our  
accommodations are second to none,  
not to mention the amenities we  
offer for the best cost-benefit  
possible. Private parking spot,  
breakfast included, cable TV, Wi-Fi  
in all rooms...

COOGAN

Oh, you don't have to convince me, my dear. I know you are the best, and every regular Joe in Mogda will love your accommodations. As soon as the permits come, your company will be authorized to start the construction works immediately.

BLISS

Perfect!

She caresses the Louis Vuitton purse with two very long finger nails.

Coogan watches that little gesture as if about to have an orgasm.

BLISS (CONT'D)

What about transportation of equipment?

All joy vanishes from Coogan's face. He swallows hard.

COOGAN

Oh, um... I thought... I thought we had everything arranged already. My company will be in charge of transportation.

BLISS

I'm afraid it's not that simple. We received a very attractive proposal from an independent transportation company called Globeliveries, from New York. They've been acting in the region for years, and they know the area like the back of their hands. This is important, considering the boiling caldron that place is.

Coogan takes a deep breath with a concerned face.

COOGAN

I heard... Just between us, Laura, I got solid information that the family that controls this company... Razzini, if I'm not mistaken, has serious connections with the organized crime.

She lifts an eyebrow.

BLISS

You don't say!

She stares at him with wide open eyes.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Are you sure?

COOGAN  
My sources are known to be reliable. Even so, I advise you to make your own research before making a decision. I'm not one to gossip, you understand.

BLISS  
Certainly.

Bliss (disguised as Laura) checks her wristwatch and stands up.

Coogan does the same.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Very well... That'll be all for the moment. We talk again next week. Don't forget my permits!

COOGAN  
No way! And... About the transportation of equipment...?

BLISS  
Ah, no worries. I'll talk to my Board of Directors, but I do believe we'll sign with you, better not to take any chances. I don't want anything to do with no organized crime. They scare the hell out of me.

COOGAN  
A wise decision. We can discuss the matter, let's say, tomorrow, over lunch?

BLISS  
I can't tomorrow, maybe some other day.

COOGAN  
Okay, then. Shall I talk directly to your father to make it official?

BLISS  
That won't be necessary. It's better if we do everything through my office. You have my number, I have yours. If the company's CEO cannot trust his own daughter to handle his capital contracts, who can he trust, then?

COOGAN  
Amen to that!

They say goodbye with another handshake.

She turns around, opens the door, and walks away, shaking her hips like a model on the catwalk.

Coogan can't take his eyes off her firm buttocks, until she disappears among partitions.

Coogan closes the door and jumps with hands in the air, celebrating yet another victory.

He gets a grip, adjusts his tie, sits down again, and grabs the desk phone.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Carl? (...) Oh yes, she just left.  
(...) You have no idea, what a woman! Yee-haw! (...) Sure, the final push is given. (...) Well, she plays hard to get, but I'll have her in my Jacuzzi before she knows it! I can barely wait to see that gorgeous body floating in bubbles. (...) My wife? She can always watch. (...)

He cackles.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
(...) Yes, everything's taken care of, including the transportation deal, piece of cake. (...) Oh thank you, sir! (...)

He plays with his Cuban cigars.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
And the best part is no one suspects of our real project for that stupid garbage island. (...) Right, as soon as we finish funding the revolution and have our puppet as the new president, we'll be able to control all exportations of the island mineral resources. (...)

While listening to his CEO, Coogan takes the cigar out of the plastic wrapper. He smells it.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Then, it'll be just a matter of turning Mogda into a very expensive resort, so rich folks from all over the world can enjoy the benefits of Homely Inn hotels, while the local army, now under new management, will keep the population quiet and peaceful. (...)

Coogan lights the cigar and puffs it.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Yes, sir, I made sure our cell phone plans will be overpriced. (...) Terluz will have no choice but to accept them. And the only portion the locals will receive from the mining profits will be jail time in stinky prisons if they dare to disturb the wealthy newcomers. (...) Very well, Carl, see you at the party. Too-da-loo!

He finishes the call and once again stretches his body, crossing fingers behind his head.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Vice-presidency, here I go!

INT. FABRIZIO PUGLIESE'S OFFICE, CHICAGO - DAY

Don Fabrizio talks on his desk phone.

FABRIZIO

Don Franco.

INT. FRANCO 'RIB-CRUSHER' RAZZINI'S OFFICE, NEW YORK - DAY

Don Franco talks on his desk phone.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Don Fabrizio. I'm glad that you found time in your busy agenda to talk to me. I hope I'm not disturbing.

INTERCUT BETWEEN FRANCO RAZZINI and FABRIZIO PUGLIESE

FABRIZIO

Not at all. Even so, it's with great pain in my heart that I must protest the death of my dear right hand and friend, Moochie. This is an immense tragedy.

(MORE)

FABRIZIO (CONT'D)

He was like a son to me. And I know this is your doing, Don Franco.

FRANCO RAZZINI

I'm terribly sorry for causing you so much pain, and you know I'm sincere. But, Don Fabrizio, you also must know I would have never done such a thing unless it was absolutely necessary. Your number-one, the man you've always vouched for, was caught trying to ruin my operations in Mogda! He tried to sell me out to the feds, enticed my own people against me and even put my daughter's life in danger. She was there only to protect my interests!

FABRIZIO

Ah, that boy! It is my fault he turned out like that. I must have spoilt him too much. Me and my wife, God rests her soul, could never have children, so we raised him like one. You have no idea how disappointed I was when I found out what he did. The man I've always trusted! He broke my heart! How could he sink so low, even putting little Tati in danger, for whom you know I have the deepest affection. Please, accept my apologies, Don Franco.

FRANCO RAZZINI

No apologies needed. I'm not happy for what I had to do. But, I'm glad we settled the matter.

FABRIZIO

Yes, yes.

FRANCO RAZZINI

We should meet, Don Fabrizio. How about a little golf in the Country Club, for old time's sake?

FABRIZIO

Ah, that could be just what we need to bring our families back together, but I'm afraid I'll have to be out on a business trip. We'll see to it when I get back. Now, if you excuse me, Don Franco...

FRANCO RAZZINI

Of course, Don Fabrizio.

The call ends there.

FRANCO RAZZINI (CONT'D)  
Bring the families back together my  
ass, cock-sucking son-of-a-bitch!

Franco hits the phone against the table several times, to the point of almost breaking it.

Paul, his 'Consiglieri', is sitting on the other side of the desk, smoking a Cuban cigar.

FRANCO RAZZINI (CONT'D)  
Can you believe the old coot had  
the nerves to lie to my face and  
pretend that Moochie acted on his  
own?

PAUL  
What else could he say? He's afraid  
of the families, even the ones  
loyal to him.

FRANCO RAZZINI  
So, you think he won't retaliate.

PAUL  
I don't think so. 'Cause if he  
does, he'll practically confess  
he's behind the whole thing. There  
are already talks among the other  
bosses. If there's one thing they  
don't tolerate in this business is  
treason from their peer. The old  
man's hands are tied.

Paul puffs his cigar.

PAUL (CONT'D)  
Very clever your little girl, she  
anticipated all that.

FRANCO RAZZINI  
Oh yes, she took after my side of  
the family. Delia's family, you  
know, they are honorable people,  
but kind of idiots.

PAUL  
Anyway, Moochie was important, but  
totally replaceable. Don Fabrizio  
started something he cannot stop  
until one of you is dead. He's  
already invaded our territory in  
Mogda, and he's not planning to  
leave. Colonel Odile is too  
spineless not to change sides.  
(MORE)



PAUL (CONT'D)

Without him, we get exposed to the authorities we cannot buy. And if Bliss fails, we're history. And that boyfriend of hers will sink with us.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Yes, she didn't plan that part quite right. He's a young man of simple origins and high values. He has no idea the shit he's into. My daughter only wanted to help him and take care of her family at the same time. Now, he might as well end up in a ditch, like the rest of us.

PAUL

We must be fast, then. How was the meeting with the families' representatives?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Tense as usual, but fruitful anyway.

PAUL

Do we have support?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Yes, from most families and the Irish clans from east and south of New York.

PAUL

That will certainly help. Now, what did you tell them regarding our problem with Chicago?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Only that Fabrizio wants to get his hands on our business, and he'll stop at nothing to bring us down.

PAUL

How did they react?

The Rib-Crusher's face turns woeful.

FRANCO RAZZINI

Nobody wanted to bring it out in the open, but all bosses are getting ready for a large-scale war against Chicago.

PAUL

This is pretty bad.

FRANCO RAZZINI

You're telling me! We're not in Al Capone's days anymore, but Chicago families are still very powerful. And most of them are loyal to the Pugliese. There will be carnage if we go to war. All garbage men, butchers, meat-packers, and caretakers in both cities will have a hell of a field day.

PAUL

Not to mention the feds. They must know by now that something big is about to happen. They're just waiting for the shit to hit the fan to start distributing arrest warrants all over the place. We have to do something about it right now!

FRANCO RAZZINI

Yes, but we need to be cautious about the part B of the plan.

PAUL

About that, what can we expect from Fabrizio?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Well, he wants his hotels in Mogda no matter what. His construction materials will be transported by this, how is it called, Massive Industries, the people Bliss' boyfriend works for.

PAUL

And where do we stand?

FRANCO RAZZINI

Because of the rumors that my transportation company, Globeliveries, is somehow involved in illegal activities in the region, my stocks plunged downhill.

PAUL

Can we handle the losses?

FRANCO RAZZINI

For the moment, yes. But very soon our capital will go down the drain.

PAUL

What about Massive?

FRANCO RAZZINI

When news of our problems hit Wall Street, Massive's stocks went through the roof. After all, they did sign a big contract with the Homely Inn.

PAUL

In other words, we might as well be heading into a bottomless pit.

Don Franco faces his Consiglieri for a few seconds. He then takes his own Cuban cigar from the ashtray on the table with forefinger and middle finger. He puffs it lengthily. He spins his chair to face the large window behind him, so he can appreciate the restful view of the buildings in the near distance.

EXT. FAÇADE OF TWO-STORY PALACE, NEW YORK - DAY (SUNSET)

FRIDAY

A late model Mercedes Benz parks in front of imposing two-story house.

Coogan leaves the vehicle walking on cloud nine, ejaculating happiness through every pore.

COOGAN (WHISPERING)

Vice-president...

INT. TWO-STORY PALACE - DAY (SUNSET)

COOGAN

Honey, big daddy's here! And with big news!

He closes the door and locks it.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Where are you, sugarplum?

He walks to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DEBORAH (24), Coogan's wife, is making tea.

COOGAN

Hello there!

He inhales deeply.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Is that tea I smell, chamomile tea?

She does not answer.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Ah, let me guess! You somehow anticipated I would be bringing great news and immediately made yourself available to make a delicious tea for your beloved husband, so he can peacefully relax in the quietness of his kingdom. Such a God-given wife!

DEBORAH  
It's not for you.

She kisses him coldly.

DEBORAH (CONT'D)  
There are some guys in suits in the anteroom. They want to talk to you.

COOGAN  
What!?

DEBORAH  
They look like morticians or something.

COOGAN  
That's odd. I'm not expecting any visitors tonight. Are you?

DEBORAH  
Huh-uh.

COOGAN  
Maybe it's the mayor, to give me the key to the city.

He giggles.

INT. ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

Two tall men, ROUGH (35) and BRONCO (37), wearing dark suits and angry faces, are sitting on the couch, very comfortably. As soon as they see Coogan, they stand up and come to him really fast.

ROUGH  
Agent Rough and Special Agent Bronco. Federal Bureau of Investigation.

He flashes a badge to Coogan's nose. Bronco does the same.

ROUGH (CONT'D)  
Are you the owner of this dump?

COOGAN  
Yes. Can I help you with something?

BRONCO  
You most certainly can.

He grabs Coogan's arm.

BRONCO (CONT'D)  
Come with us, please. We need you  
to answer a few questions.

COOGAN  
Whoa! Wait a minute there! What's  
the meaning of this!? Am I under  
arrest or something like that!?

BRONCO  
Something like that.

Coogan sweats.

COOGAN  
What are the charges?

BRONCO  
All in due time. By the way, before  
I forget, here's the warrant.

Bronco waves a piece of paper on Coogan's face.

The two agents drag Coogan to the front door.

DEBORAH  
Do I still have to order you  
dinner?

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF TWO-STORY PALACE - DAY (SUNSET)

A navy-blue van is parked in front of the palace. Coogan is  
thrown inside.

INT. NAVY-BLUE VAN - DAY (SUNSET)

In the van, a THIRD AGENT (43) immediately pushes Coogan to  
his duly seat.

ROUGH  
This is Agent Vile.

Rough and Bronco jump inside the van and close the door.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF TWO-STORY PALACE - DAY (SUNSET)

The vehicle speeds away, burning rubber.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY (SUNSET)

The van goes at high speed.

INT. NAVY-BLUE VAN - DAY (SUNSET)

COOGAN

I demand to know what is going on  
right now! You didn't even read my  
rights!

VILE

That's not necessary, you're not  
under arrest. We just want to have  
a little, however very interesting  
chat with you.

Vile clears his throat.

VILE (CONT'D)

Nevertheless, if you choose to use  
your right and privilege to remain  
silent, that will be to your  
immense benefit.

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - DAY (SUNSET)

The van goes fast through many streets, with lots of turns  
and u-turns.

EXT. PARK GARAGE OF A LARGE COMPLEX - NIGHT

The van is finally brought to a halt inside the parking lot.

Rough and Bronco push Coogan out of the vehicle and leave as  
well.

They go into a horizontal building.

INT. FBI BUILDING - NIGHT

Rough and Bronco take Coogan through a maze of rooms and  
corridors, passing by employees, who give Coogan a sidelong  
glance.

They go into a small anteroom.

INT. ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

In the anteroom, there's a table with three chairs around it,  
a video camera by the edge of the table, and a huge one-way  
mirror on the wall.

Coogan is tired and breathless. His skin is as pale as marble, his face one of despair.

The agents make Coogan sit down on a chair, exactly the one facing the camera. They simply leave the room, leaving him alone with anguish and anxiety.

DISSOLVE TO:

Coogan is still waiting, loosening his tie, on the verge of despair.

He searches his pockets for something, but finds nothing.

COOGAN (MURMURING)  
I want to go home!

Finally, Agents Rough and Bronco come back. Bronco is carrying a folder full of papers. Rough turns the camera on, and they sit down on the two other chairs around the table.

Bronco opens the folder and examines some papers in a very slow pace. He grabs a small pile of papers and spreads them in front of Coogan.

Coogan looks at the documents. His eyes suggest he saw them before.

ROUGH  
Do you recognize these papers?

COOGAN  
Of course! They got my signature.

ROUGH  
I'm glad you noticed. Can you please tell us what these documents are about?

A quick look is all Coogan needs to recognize them.

COOGAN  
These are shipping forms with my company's seal.

ROUGH  
Shipping from where to where?

COOGAN  
From a number of outsourced providers to the island of Mogda, in the archipelago of Porventana.

ROUGH  
Nice place. Only violence and crimes over there.

BRONCO  
What kind of shipping?

COOGAN  
Construction materials, mostly.

BRONCO  
What for?

COOGAN  
Some hotels are being built in the island. My company is involved in a project to develop the region.

ROUGH  
Develop the region...

COOGAN  
That's right.

BRONCO  
These hotels you mentioned, do they by any chance belong to Homely Inn, one of the biggest hotel chains in the world?

COOGAN  
Correct.

The two agents exchange meaningful looks.

They face Coogan like he's the worst pariah in the face of Earth.

ROUGH  
What kind of construction materials are we talking about here? Let's say, cement, plaster, flagstones, mortar, metal plates...?

COOGAN  
And screws, bolts, nuts, washers, tools, ironwork, what the hell are you getting at with all this?

ROUGH  
Good to know that, because what really came to the construction sites so far were kilos and kilos of cocaine!

BRONCO  
Very pure stuff!

Coogan mutes totally. He opens his mouth in a dumb face. His eyes roll around the sockets until he finds the mirror. His skin is pale to the point of becoming transparent.



COOGAN

W... What?

ROUGH

Following a tip by an anonymous source in the island, local federal police intercepted some trucks without labels, or logos. The raid revealed they were transporting bags of cocaine hidden in cement and mortar sacks.

Coogan can't utter a single word. He remains motionless, staring at his fingers, the goddamn camera filming everything. Suddenly, he chokes and has to loosen his tie again. The two agents look at him with poker faces.

BRONCO

Do you know anything about it?

COOGAN

B-but, how do you know those trucks belong to Massive if they got no logos?

ROUGH

We don't, friend. That's why we're having this conversation. Is there any reason in particular that makes you believe those trucks belong to the company you work for?

Coogan looks as if caught in an obscene prank.

COOGAN

Those trucks can belong to anybody! This sort of thing is known to happen in that place!

ROUGH

That's for sure. The point is, this disturbing set of coincidences is making us a little, how can I say, agitated. The trucks were heading straight to Homely Inn construction sites, we checked the itineraries. And the stuff came disguised as cement, the exact product specified in your shipments.

BRONCO

Can you see our problem here? The whole thing was enough to tick the island federal police, and they thought it was a good idea to contact the Interpol, which wired the CIA, which in turn ringed the FBI, and here we are!

COOGAN

I have nothing to do with all this!  
I'm just a mere coordinator trying  
to do his job!

ROUGH

Your name is everywhere on these  
shipments, partner! Is this how you  
run your business? What kind of  
dumbass manager are you?

COOGAN

Look, just call my directors,  
okay...

Coogan is nearly weeping.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

...My three direct superiors in the  
company, I only do what they tell  
me to, alright! They'll be able to  
help you way more than I can.

ROUGH

We did that already, and they told  
us it's the other way around.  
According to them, you are the  
handyman. You are in charge of the  
shipment part of the deal and the  
only one who can answer for it.

Coogan's look is a mix of surprise and anger.

COOGAN

Please! I swear I don't know  
anything! Please... Talk to my CEO  
or the people in charge of Homely  
Inn!

ROUGH

Way ahead of you, partner. We've  
already subpoenaed that shitty  
gangster Pugliese. However, I'm  
afraid that's not enough to take  
you out of this mess.

Rough caresses his tie and rolls his eyes around the sockets.

ROUGH (CONT'D)

Oh, I forgot to mention. The police  
also found rifle and machine gun  
magazines sharing room with the  
bolts and nuts, together with a few  
semiautomatic firearms. Just out of  
curiosity, is your company by any  
chance funding rebels in the region  
for a coup d'etat?

He leans down to get closer to Coogan.

ROUGH (CONT'D)

We heard some rumors about it, but  
I suppose you know nothing about  
that either, correct?

Coogan finally surrenders to pressure and bursts in rage.

COOGAN

You have no right to bring me here  
and harass me like this! I'm a  
citizen, and I want to see my  
lawyer! I won't answer any more  
questions!

ROUGH

Relax, man. Like we said, you're  
not under arrest. This is just a  
formality. Something very  
unpleasant took place on foreign  
soil, and they got us into this.  
Now, we have to do something about  
it, don't you agree?

Rough and Bronco simply stand up and walk away, again leaving  
Coogan alone in the room.

COOGAN

Hey, come on you guys, where are  
you going now? When am I getting  
out of here?

He rubs his hair with both hands violently.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

I can't take it anymore! I need to  
go to the bathroom!

DISSOLVE TO:

Rough and Bronco finally return to the room.

ROUGH

Okay, it seems we're done here.

COOGAN

It means I can go?

BRONCO

As the trucks don't have any logos,  
we have nothing to connect  
possession and distribution of  
cocaine to you and Massive.

COOGAN

Thank God!

ROUGH

But don't start sucking your dick just yet, bucko. We're going deeper into this. If your name pops again, we'll hit you so strongly, not even the maggots will want your flesh.

COOGAN

Can I use the bathroom?

EXT. RIGHT OUTSIDE THE HORIZONTAL BUILDING - NIGHT

The agents kick Coogan out of the building.

COOGAN

Hey! No ride back?

ROUGH

You walk home, surely could use the exercise.

COOGAN

Can I at least have my cell phone back?

BRONCO

Nope. It's confiscated for further analysis.

ROUGH

See you around. Stay out of trouble.

They close the heavy door on Coogan's nose.

EXT. STREETS IN THE CITY OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

Coogan fumbles around, having no idea where to go.

He roams around until the road finally turns into a street, and the general landscape becomes a little more civilized.

COOGAN

Boy, I'm hungry!

He finds an old phone booth. He enters, grabs the phone, and inserts a few coins to make the call. He types numbers, waits, but is greeted by his own answering machine.

COOGAN'S VOICE ON ANSWERING MACHINE

(V.O.)

You called the greatest executive ever. That's why I must be too busy for you. Leave your message after the beep, and I'll decide if you're worth a call back.

A BEEP sound is heard.

COOGAN  
Hey Debbie? Honey? Sweetheart? You  
there, sugarplum? Ah come on,  
Deborah! I'm sure they're gonna  
rerun tonight's episode! Pick up  
the goddamn phone right now!

Nobody picks up the phone.

Coogan hits the phone back to its place.

He walks, walks and walks.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Damn it! Where did all taxis go?

He checks his wallet.

CLOSEUP of the wallet. There are lots of shining credit cards  
inside, but very little cash money.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
I can't pay for the ride anyway...

He keeps on walking. The neighborhood is surely a tough one.

Coogan passes by three hoodlum-looking folks holding against  
a dirty wall, covered with graffiti.

The hoodlums look at Coogan as if ready to beat him up to  
death.

Coogan walks faster, scared to death.

Finally, a bus stop is dead ahead. Coogan walks to it. The  
place is empty and eerie.

The hoodlums follow Coogan to the bus stop. Coogan sweats a  
lot.

A bus arrives. The hoodlums lose interest and go somewhere  
else.

Coogan breathes in relief and climbs into the bus.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Coogan has just enough money for the bus fare. He talks to  
the driver.

COOGAN  
Can you please tell me where this  
bus goes?

With an unfriendly face, the driver points to a sign on the ceiling that reads, 'No talking to the driver.'

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Great! Appreciate it! (Whispering)  
Asshole.

The bus is in motion and nearly empty. Coogan staggers his way to the back. People in the back seats don't look friendly, either. Coogan sits down in the middle of the vehicle.

The bus stops and an old couple climb in. As the bus goes again, Coogan talks to the old couple (inaudible dialogue). They are cordial, but not helpful.

OLD LADY  
Sorry, my dear, never heard of this place.

OLD MAN  
We're not very well acquainted with the suburbs, you know.

COOGAN  
Thanks anyway.

The old lady and her husband sit on the preferred seats.

Coogan sits down again and observes the landscape through the window.

The bus reaches an area that is more city-like.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Guess that's far enough.

He presses the stop button.

EXT. STREETS OF A MORE SUBURBAN AREA - NIGHT

Coogan leaves the bus.

When the bus goes away, he examines the new neighborhood. It is surely a brighter one.

He sees some taxis passing by.

COOGAN  
Oh boy! I'm one ATM machine from paradise!

Coogan searches the area.

All of a sudden, three men stop right in front of him, blocking his way. Coogan tries to walk around them, but they stand in his way again.

The group is composed by two tall men and a short guy, who is actually smiling joyfully.

SHORT GUY

Good evening, my good man! Step into my office, please.

Before Coogan can react, the two tall men grab his arms on both sides and drag him to a dark alley, with the short guy leading the way.

COOGAN

W... Wait...! W-what...?

Coogan very fast learns it's pointless to fight the two Neanderthals' grip.

The short guy and his goons are also wearing suits, with lapel flower pins.

They make Coogan stop between a wall and a trash can, with the two henchmen on each side. The short guy stands right in front of Coogan.

SHORT GUY

You must be wondering why we brought you here, for this humble, however so special occasion.

COOGAN (BREATHLESS)

Who are you?

SHORT GUY

Ah, where are my manners? Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Mister Fabrizio Pugliese's Consiglieri and that's all you need to know about me for the moment.

COOGAN

Consigliurier...

SHORT GUY

Don't worry about that now. It suffices to say I represent the Pugliese family's interests, and you have caused them a great deal of damage lately. My boss is a tad upset with you.

COOGAN

Did you... Did you say Pugliese, the owner of Homely Inn hotels chain?

SHORT GUY

That's him alright, whom, by the way, you have done some business with on behalf of your company.

COOGAN

What do you want?

SHORT GUY

It was brought to my knowledge that you made a hell of a mess of everything, even having private conversations with the feds. We've been following you since you were kicked out of the FBI's humble installations.

COOGAN

You could have at least given me a ride, then!

SHORT GUY

Oh, we thought you could use the exercise.

Coogan rolls his eyes around the sockets.

SHORT GUY (CONT'D)

Now, getting back to business, let's say our boss is very unhappy with the way you abused of his naive and innocent nature, by using his construction sites to deal drugs that are transported by your company. This is a very serious matter, buddy boy!

COOGAN

Now, you listen to me! I've already been through all this shit with the FBI, and my answer is the same - I know nothing! You got the wrong man! If you want to know what's going on in Mogda, just go there and ask your boss, for the love of God!

SHORT GUY

Whoa, whoa, no need to be rude, old buddy. You are among friends! As a matter of fact, you have to forgive me, this is all my fault. I don't think I've made myself clear. My dear boss didn't even have the slightest idea the transportation of materials had already started, since he received no goddamn permits yet!

(MORE)



SHORT GUY (CONT'D)

Apparently, only your FBI friends  
got them. Do you understand my  
problem, old buddy?

Coogan's forehead wrinkles, with sweat dripping all over it.

COOGAN

How... How come you don't have any  
permit? You got to be mistaken!

SHORT GUY

No mistakes, partner.

COOGAN

But... Everything was negotiated  
through your International Accounts  
Department! Mister Pugliese's  
daughter... Laura, or something,  
came to my office to seal the deal!

The three mobsters look at one another with faces of total  
perplexity. Then, they all laugh at Coogan.

SHORT GUY

You must be taking some samples of  
that powder you've been  
distributing, partner. We don't  
have an international accounts  
department in our company, and  
Mister Pugliese can't have  
children!

Coogan opens his mouth and there comes the dumb face again.

COOGAN

W-what?

SHORT GUY

The old man's sperm is even lazier  
than you since his teenage days in  
Sicily, a sad medical condition.  
The only person who got any closer  
to be a son to him was that big  
clown Moochie - God rests his soul -  
always getting into trouble the  
stupid fucker - may he rest in  
peace - It's hard to find a good  
offspring these days. At least, the  
old 'Rib-Crusher' managed to  
produce a daughter with a natural  
knack for business.

COOGAN

I don't understand!

## SHORT GUY

Yes, I can see that. Is it me, or somebody has been making a total jackass out of you? I did have a feeling you're too stupid to pull such a stunt. Anyway, it doesn't matter. The important thing is you got seventy-two hours to fix this whole mess, or we'll be meeting again. And to show you we're not fooling around, we even brought you a present to remember us by!

The short guy turns to his goons.

## SHORT GUY (CONT'D)

Brollini, Pantuglia! Give the man his present.

They give Coogan the licking of a lifetime until nearly killing him - punches, kicks, elbows, and knees hitting each and every part of his body.

When they finally get tired of beating Coogan up, the short man leans toward his useless carcass on the floor.

## SHORT GUY (CONT'D)

Remember, handsome, seventy-two hours. Next time, we won't be this gentle. Tonight, you still got to open the present. Three days from now, the present will open you up. See you soon, buddy boy.

The short man and his two goons organize their respective clothes and walk down the alley, until disappearing in the dark of night.

Coogan moans in terrible pain, surrounded by a pool of his own blood. There's nobody around to hear his moans.

He manages to stand up, but coughing up blood.

Coogan staggers around, putting lots of efforts not to fall down again.

He finds an ATM machine and withdraws some money.

Coogan enters the first hotel he finds, a real trashy one.

## INT. TRASHY HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Coogan walks to the reception desk.

## RECEPTIONIST

Rough night?

COOGAN  
Rough girlfriend's husband.

RECEPTIONIST  
Yep, I've been there.

COOGAN  
A room, please.

RECEPTIONIST  
Let's see some money first. Thirty-eight, to be exact.

Coogan throws the money on the desk and is given a key.

Coogan drags his body upstairs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Coogan enters the room and tumbles down on the bed, scaring away two cockroaches that were sleeping in there. There are more in the sink.

But pain forces him to sit back up. He bends over his belly and makes faces of pain. Everything hurts.

He goes to the sink, turns on the faucet, and washes his face full of bruises and hematomas.

Coogan sits down on the bed again.

COOGAN  
What the heck is going on? First the FBI, then those freaking...

Coogan stares at the floor.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
And who the heck is that woman who came to my office?

Coogan grabs the room phone and types numbers. He hears the other end RINGING.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Come on, come on, come on...

Call goes to voicemail.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Damn it!

Coogan tries another number. He gets voicemail again. He tries a third number.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Come on, Carl, I know you're awake!

However, another voicemail message is what he hears.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
BASTARDS!

Coogan hits the phone against the nightstand.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Alright, get a grip, get a grip.  
They won't get rid of me that easy.

He thinks for a few seconds.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Their home numbers!

Coogan types numbers frenetically.

DISSOLVE TO:

Coogan talks on the phone.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Yes, yes, I understand, but I  
really need to talk to him! (...) I  
know he's there, honey! I can hear  
him breathing!

He hears the dial tone. Call was disconnected on the other end. He makes another call.

DISSOLVE TO:

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Look, I don't care, okay! Just put  
him on the goddamn phone!

Another dial tone hits his eardrums.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch!

He types a third number.

DISSOLVE TO:

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Look, Rita, I'm desperate, alright!  
I must talk to Carl right now!  
(...) No, it can't wait! I told you  
that already! (...) No, I'm not  
yelling at you! Look, I'm sorry,  
okay. I just... (...) No, no, no,  
please, please!

There comes another dial tone.

Coogan drops the phone, almost weeping. He lies down on the bed.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Thank you for nothing, miserable  
pricks!

Coogan stares at the ceiling.

COOGAN (SOBBING) (CONT'D)  
What am I going to do?

Coogan sits back up again, grabs his wallet, and searches inside.

He takes a piece of paper out of the wallet and examines it.

Coogan grabs the phone from the floor and types a number. It RINGS. He waits.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Hey Cesar? (...) Oh hi, it's me,  
Coogan. (...) No, no, no,  
everything is fine at the office.  
Um, look, buddy boy, I need a  
little help. (...) Great! I'll be  
at your place in fifteen.

Coogan hangs up before hearing the answer.

INT. HOCKEY'S PUB - DAY

SATURDAY

Coogan is sitting on a booth in the back of the pub, frowning at his golden Rolex.

COOGAN  
As if I don't have enough problems!

The waitress comes with the coffeepot.

WAITRESS  
More coffee, sir?

COOGAN  
Yeah, why not? My brain is already  
a caffeine depot anyway.

The waitress refills his cup and goes way.

COOGAN (WHISPERING) (CONT'D)  
They could've at least hired  
somebody prettier.

Coogan reaches into his shirt pocket and grabs a piece of paper, with an anonymous note on it.

He unfolds it and reads it.

CLOSEUP of the note. It reads, 'I can solve your problems. Meet me at the Hockey's Pub, nine o'clock sharp. And don't be late!' The message is handwritten.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

It's fifteen to ten, for crying out loud! Well, I am not late!

Finally, a woman in her early twenties walks to his booth. It's Bliss.

Coogan's face shows he surely recognizes her, although now she's wearing regular sport clothes and her hair is no longer platinum, but brunette, organized in a pony tail, giving the lady a little girl aspect. The Louis Vuitton purse is now replaced by a simple change purse, and that's all she carries.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Well, well, well. Miss Fabrizio Pugliese's daughter in all her splendor.

Bliss sits down.

BLISS

Sorry I'm late. I was detained by some last minute issues, but I guess you know how it is.

COOGAN

Certainly. Your hair changed.

BLISS

I wore a wig when I came to your office. I knew you'd be too busy staring at my legs to notice it. Men like you are easy to manipulate.

COOGAN

What happened to the purse?

BLISS

I threw it away. I bought it from a street peddler for five dollars, just for the occasion. Amazing how it is identical to those you find in the boutiques. Poor fancy ladies.

COOGAN

You also travel light, I can see.

Coogan points a forefinger at her change purse.

BLISS

If it's only to carry items, I  
don't think it's wise to invest  
money in something so easily  
depreciated as purses.

COOGAN

If only my wife thought like  
that...

BLISS

Okay, enough amenities. I guess we  
can cut to the chase now.

COOGAN

Oh, that's for sure. Now, you  
listen to me, young lady! You'd  
better explain to me right now  
every little thing you've been  
doing, or I'll call the police!

BLISS

Go ahead. While you're at it, don't  
forget to call your FBI friends,  
too. We may even have a party.

She opens a sardonic smirk.

Coogan's face is red in anger. The veins on his neck swell to  
the point of popping.

COOGAN

You... Bitch!

BLISS

I can see you're one of those who  
gets moody in the morning. I think  
it's better if we cancel this  
meeting. Good luck with your  
problems. Bye.

She stands up and walks away.

COOGAN

Wait! Please!

She doesn't even look back.

Coogan has to stand up and screams his lungs out.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, okay! Please, come back!

The girl stops and turns back to him.

She faces Coogan with disdain, like everybody else in the  
pub, because of the scene they're making.

Coogan flushes, visibly embarrassed.

Easy like Sunday morning, the lady returns to the booth, and they sit down again.

The other customers also go back to their businesses.

The waitress comes.

WAITRESS

What are we having today, miss?

BLISS

Coffee, please. And another one for my friend here.

COOGAN

Oh no! Not again!

The waitress serves them and goes.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Who are you?

BLISS

You just call me Bliss.

Coogan stares at her with eyes wide open.

COOGAN

Wait a minute! I know who you are! You're that girl my employee Cesar met during his mission in Mogda!

BLISS

Your powers of observation are amazing.

COOGAN

You're doing this for him, right?

BLISS

I'm impressed. You're definitely not as dumb as you look.

Coogan stares at her with angry eyes.

COOGAN

Now, I see. You and Cesar set me up real good. What do you people want from me?

BLISS

First of all, let's get one thing straight, this is a solo operation. Cesar has no knowledge whatsoever of these little transactions of ours.



COOGAN

Yes, I believe you. Cesar is indeed too decent to be involved in things like this.

BLISS

I'm glad you've finally realized that! Yes, sir, you're mucus compared to him. Unfortunately, so am I. Cesar still doesn't have much to show, but everything he has, he achieved with hard work. Nothing came easy to him. As for you, all you got is a job position you didn't even earn. You bought it with cheap adulations and mean schemes plotted to mislead hard workers that trusted you!

COOGAN

Cesar did help me with a little problem I had last night.

BLISS

So typical of him. That's just the man he is. I need to talk some sense into him. But tell me, why did you have to resort to him? Any problems contacting you dear, estimated superiors in the company?

She fixes intense eyes on him, but he's unable to return her look.

BLISS (CONT'D)

They let you down, didn't they? After all your dedicated work, always so committed to the company's success! Poor baby. Looks like you have been kissing the wrong asses.

COOGAN

Why are you doing this?

BLISS

Let's say I'm your redeeming angel, who came down from the sky to purge your sins and bring you back to the path of light.

COOGAN

What do you want?

BLISS

In the short term, you'll pay Cesar everything you owe him for all benefits, rewards, bonuses, and packages your company promised him, but never kept your word.

Coogan faces her.

BLISS (CONT'D)

You're also gonna pay him compensation for all flight tickets that should've been first class, but never were, and for all five-star hotels he should've stayed at, but never could. He had to sleep in a hellhole because you got cheap on him, which almost made him sick. Ah, that reminds me. You'll also pay him another additional for all diseases he could have gotten during his time in Mogda.

Coogan studies her.

BLISS (CONT'D)

Consider this a late international health insurance, yet another right your lousy company denied him!

Coogan opens a mild smirk.

COOGAN

I can't do this. It's impossible.

BLISS

I'm not done yet. I know you got other projects abroad and more workers to send on missions. And you'll make sure they'll all travel first class.

COOGAN

This is crazy. Now, you listen to me, okay! It just can't be done! We're talking about a hell lot of money here! I need approval from my Board of Directors. They'll never agree to this!

BLISS

You have the authority. Just sign the papers and send them to your financial department.

COOGAN

But... If I am caught doing this...

BLISS  
Your problem, pal.

COOGAN  
What if I don't?

BLISS  
Then, my spontaneous consulting services to take you out of this mess end here. I'll also have to tell your wife you're banging your secretary.

Coogan has to loosen his tie, and he swallows hard.

COOGAN  
What?

BLISS  
You heard me, Romeo. And the inevitable divorce brought about by your little escapades, combined with a possible legal action for adultery, will also cost you a hell lot of money. So, you'd better start saving, now that you've just found out you're about to lose your job.

COOGAN  
You have no proof.

BLISS  
I don't need any. Miss Rose, your gorgeous assistant, didn't spare me the sordid details in the little chat we had right after I left your office that day. She'll be more than happy to testify against you. Apparently, you've been giving her a lot of affection, but no financial compensation. Her salary is still crappy. You have no idea how much she complained! And the things she said about you! Oh my!

Coogan hangs his head, frowning.

Across the table, Bliss serenely enjoys her coffee, not taking her eyes off him.

COOGAN  
I'll see what I can do for Cesar.

BLISS  
I can't hear you!

COOGAN

I'll pay him everything you asked,  
damn it! I'll also arrange first  
class tickets for the others, you  
son-of-a-bitch!

BLISS

Thanks.

COOGAN

What about my mafia-related issues?

BLISS

Oh, that. You've been making a lot  
of bad things lately, naughty boy!  
Drug dealing, funding of rebels  
with the purpose of overthrowing a  
sovereign government, supply of  
weapons to the same end, not to  
mention your little friction with  
Mister Pugliese, who believes you  
used him as a pigeon for all that.

Bliss pauses to study his face.

BLISS (CONT'D)

And man, you don't want to mess  
with those types! However, it was  
also brought to my knowledge that  
you've already had a taste. Better  
look into the matter before the  
deadline they gave you, or not even  
the coroner will be able to sew  
your body parts back together.

COOGAN

Very well...

His voice trembles.

COOGAN (CONT'D)

What do I do?

BLISS

The way I see it, you have a few  
choices. Four to be exact - One,  
you are sued by the government,  
indicted, and get life for dealing  
cocaine; two, lethal injection for  
financing the ousting of a foreign  
president; three, fall in the hands  
of the mobsters...

COOGAN

Four...?

BLISS  
Once in your life, do the right  
thing! Tell the truth!

COOGAN  
I don't follow.

BLISS  
Go to the FBI, this time  
voluntarily. Tell them what's going  
on. Pin the drug dealing stuff on  
Pugliese, the feds will believe  
you. As for the weapons and the  
coup in Mogda, blame your company!  
It's just fair, ain't it? After  
all, you were just following orders  
from your Board of Directors,  
right?

COOGAN  
Yes, but...

BLISS  
Then, let them take the rap and  
save yourself.

COOGAN  
If I do this, they'll definitely  
hit me with everything they got, my  
family, too!

BLISS  
Not if you get into the Witness  
Protection Program.

Coogan mutes. He looks at Bliss.

She looks back at him with eyes of pity.

COOGAN (MURMURING)  
I don't know.

BLISS  
Well, looks like you have a  
decision to make. And time is of  
the essence. It's up to you, now.

She takes a breath in satisfaction.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
That concludes my services. See you  
soon, boss!

Bliss stands up and tosses a wad of bills on the table.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
Breakfast's on me.

She walks away.

INT. COOGAN'S OFFICE - DAY

MONDAY

Coogan is frenetically signing paper after paper.

He checks his wristwatch.

CLOSEUP of the wristwatch. It's 9:30 AM.

Using the multi-functional printer on his desk, he scans the papers he just signed.

He grabs the desk phone and types one number.

COOGAN

Miss Rose? (...) I'll e-mail you  
some spreadsheets I scanned, please  
forward them to the financial  
department with priority one. (...)  
Yes, actions are to be taken  
immediately, all transfers shall be  
completed within the hour. All  
particulars are in the papers.  
(...) Thanks.

He hangs up.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSEUP of Coogan's wristwatch. It's 4:15 PM

A sweaty Coogan is sitting in front of the laptop, drumming fingers on the desk.

COOGAN (MURMURING) (CONT'D)

Three days... Those goddamn  
gangsters will be all over me in a  
few hours...

He takes a deep breath.

Coogan opens his desk drawer and takes a memory stick out of it. He plugs it into the laptop. He types on the keyboard.

CLOSEUP of the laptop screen. There's a progress bar at work, with percentage increasing slowly. Above the progress bar, a message reads, 'copying files.'

COOGAN (CONT'D)

Come on, come on, come on.

The desk phone RINGS, Coogan answers the call.

COOGAN (CONT'D)  
Yes, Miss Rose?

MISS ROSE (V.O.)  
Mister Massive wants to see you in  
his office, pronto. The three  
musketeers want a word with you.

COOGAN  
Okay, thanks.

He hangs up.

COOGAN (WHISPERING) (CONT'D)  
Now they're talking to me.

INT. MISTER MASSIVE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Coogan steps into Mister Massive's office and closes the door.

The three musketeers are there, staring at him with unfriendly eyes.

The CEO walks to him with furious resolution.

MISTER MASSIVE  
Coogan, you idiot, what kind of  
tomfooleries have you been doing  
now!?

COOGAN  
I'm not sure I get your meaning,  
Carl.

MISTER MASSIVE  
It's 'Mister Massive' to you!  
Larden, show this imbecile what we  
found out!

Larden comes to Coogan decisively, stepping hard on the carpet. His face expression is one of indignation.

He waves an Excel spreadsheet to Coogan's nose.

The third director (Tubster) is holding against the big table in front of the window. He faces Coogan like an old teacher who has just caught a student in the act doing something really bad.

LARDEN  
Read this and tell me what the hell  
it means!

Larden spits as he speaks.

Coogan takes the Excel spreadsheet and examines it.

COOGAN  
These are numbers.

LARDEN  
I can see that, you nincompoop! It says here that you approved a stratospheric transfer of our money to a single employee, with the most absurd justifications, such as, 'trip bonuses,' 'daily allowance credit overdue,' something you called 'retroactive reward for first class ticket,' and what the hell is this thing, 'Five-Star Hotel fund?'

COOGAN  
We owed this amount to the referred employee.

MISTER MASSIVE  
Have you always been a moron, or it's your new thing? All expenses related to the mission in Mogda have already been registered and paid in full. We don't owe anybody a goddamn thing! Do you still remember this, or you also turned stupid?

LARDEN  
Come on, tell him!

MISTER MASSIVE  
Shut up!

Mister Massive turns to Coogan again.

MISTER MASSIVE (CONT'D)  
And what on earth possessed you to approve first class tickets to all workers assigned to the next missions abroad!?

COOGAN  
The trips are long. They'll need energy to produce more.

Massive's and Larden's eyes turn into fireballs.

Tubster changes his look to one of pity.

MISTER MASSIVE  
You do realize, of course, that it's no longer possible to take back all the money transferred to the employees' bank accounts.  
(MORE)



MISTER MASSIVE (CONT'D)

The transfers have already been processed officially. Human Resources will never allow it, and the Union will fall upon the company like a storm if they try it. That money is gone!

COOGAN

Yes, I do realize that, Carl, I mean, Mister Massive.

Mister Massive comes closer to Coogan, his angry eyes seem ready to pop.

MISTER MASSIVE

I swear I don't know what the heck is wrong with you, but you're fired, you blundering incompetent. And we'll make you pay us back each and every penny of those expenses you signed without our permission! And don't you think for a minute this ends here, you freaking moron!

Coogan stands there in comfortable stupor.

COOGAN

Have a good day, gentlemen.

Coogan turns his back on them, leaves the office, and closes the door.

INT. COOGAN'S FORMER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Coogan comes back to his now former office, but he's strangely grinning.

He checks his soon-to-be-retained laptop.

CLOSEUP of the laptop screen. The progress bar reached a hundred percent. File copying is complete.

Coogan removes the memory stick from the laptop and waves it with a big smirk.

COOGAN

Thanks for making my decision just that easy, assholes!

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. INTERSTATE IN TEXAS - DAY

A Porsche is showed from above, going fast on the Interstate.

Camera zooms in on vehicle. It's possible to see the car bears the Massive Industries' logo on its side.

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Cesar drives with a long face.

He turns on the radio.

RADIO ANCHORMAN (V.O.)  
...in what media already considers the biggest corporate scandal of the decade, involving an immense international conglomerate. Massive Industries' entire board of directors is in jail. The charges are many, including tax evasion, illegal diversion of funds and even initiatives to finance a rebellion, with the purpose of overthrowing a sovereign government in foreign soil.

Cesar listens carefully.

RADIO ANCHORMAN (V.O.)  
Everything was brought to the authorities by an anonymous tipster, most likely a disgruntled former employee. A possible connection between the giant multinational company and the organized crime is also under scrutiny by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Cesar's face tightens.

RADIO ANCHORMAN (V.O.)  
Fabrizio Pugliese, owner of the gigantic hotels chain Homely Inn, was also indicted. However, authorities indicate that he was arrested for an unrelated matter of cocaine dealing, which took place in the very same country where Massive tried to foment a coup d'état. Acting CEO of Massive Industries, Cesar Belmonte, recently declined...

Cesar turns off the radio.

EXT. INTERSTATE IN TEXAS - DAY

The Porsche reaches a huge portico delimiting public road and private property. Above the entrance, on the beautifully adorned portico, letters that read, 'RAZZINI SOUTH STAR,' shine and reflect the sunlight. Below such inscription, there's another one in smaller letters that reads, 'WHERE YOUR EVERYDAY IS BLISS.'

INT. PORSCHE - DAY

Cesar nods negatively.

EXT. RAZZINI'S LARGE ESTATE - DAY

As the gates are open, the Porsche goes into the vast land.

Razzini's large estate stretches as far as the eye can see.

The vehicle stops in front of the main house.

Cesar leaves the company Porsche and walks a few yards toward the gate of a corral that keeps many horses.

A few cows graze here and there in the near distance.

The semiarid landscape of cactuses and colorful mountains produces a nostalgic impression of a western movie.

But such view does not improve Cesar's somber face.

Bliss comes to him, slowly and shyly.

BLISS

Hi.

CESAR

Hey.

An uncomfortable silence follows. Cesar turns to her abruptly.

CESAR (CONT'D)

Do you think you helped me with all this? All you did was destroying me! When you gave me attention in that bar in Mogda, I knew it was too good to be true. Meeting you was the worst thing that ever happened to me!

BLISS

I understand that. I know I wasn't truthful with you, and I hurt your feelings. Believe me, nobody is more miserable than I am right now.

(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

But, it's important that you know that everything I did, with no exception, I did for you.

CESAR

Why? I mean, how could you?

BLISS

Because what I feel for you is something I never felt before, for anybody else! I gave you attention that night alright, and for a very good reason! The truth is... I fell in love with you right from the start!

CESAR

Very strange way to show it! By dragging me to your dirty world of crimes, schemes, lies, and manipulation...

BLISS (FURIOUS)

You were already in one! You just didn't want to accept it! I know you had your reasons, but...

CESAR

I was just trying to make an honest living!

BLISS

And they took advantage of you! Face it! All they wanted was getting work from you and your fellas with the least possible cost!

CESAR

The Company needs to protect its interests!

BLISS

Oh, and they do that alright, even better than you think!

CESAR

What do you mean?

BLISS

Your workmates, for once. Most of them comes from the third world.

CESAR

Maybe because they are very competent.

BLISS

But mostly because they're cheap!  
Workers from the first world are  
more valuable than your mates, or  
they lose their jobs for being too  
expensive. Your company uses the  
privilege of remote communication  
to move entire departments to  
underdeveloped countries. Welcome  
to the globalized world!

CESAR

They have to think of the cost-  
benefit!

BLISS

I call it greed. They choose their  
destination countries very  
thoroughly. They can find a very  
competent workforce in the third  
world, who works for a nickel and  
dime. And for what? Just to flash a  
multinational company badge with  
their picture on it!

CESAR

Working in a multinational company  
is a great opportunity!

BLISS

It is, I give you that, when it's  
done right and proper. But it's  
not! The way they do it, it's a  
decoy! Come on, Cesar, can't you  
see? They promised you all sorts of  
benefits to make you accept a  
mission in a place that even worms  
avoid! Now, you tell me, did they  
actually pay you something other  
than your crappy salary, before I  
intervened?

CESAR

Well, I do believe that...

BLISS

YES or NO!?

CESAR

No.

BLISS

Because they've never meant to! All  
they wanted was a job well done to  
win the customer for a nickel! And  
they even took ages to deliver the  
materials to do the job and blamed  
you for the delays!

Cesar meditates for a while.

CESAR

Very well, let's say you're right.  
What's your interest in all this?

Bliss takes a deep breath and lets the air go slowly.

BLISS

That day, when I visited your workplace... I felt things that... You gave me the happiest moments I've ever had. I grew up dealing with animals. For the first time in my life, I was surrounded by decent, simple people with real values. You didn't even look real to me. Not to mention what I felt... feel for you. I couldn't stand seeing you guys working in conditions that even the hogs in this farm would reject!

CESAR

But, why didn't you let us try to solve the problems through legal means, as you suggested by the way?

BLISS

I had second thoughts, because I realized that justice in underdeveloped countries is slower than snails. Big companies know that, yet another reason why they choose those countries to do business with.

Cesar faces her.

BLISS (CONT'D)

I understood your hands were tied. If you sue the company, you win the case in seconds, but they'll stall you till the end of times before paying you any due compensation, if they pay you at all.

Bliss swallows hard.

Bliss (CONT'D)

There was only one thing I could do, helping you the only way I know.

CESAR

And you risked my neck doing it!

BLISS

I was prepared to protect you with my life. You have my word.

They both silence for a few seconds.

CESAR

How did you set the whole thing up?

BLISS

Right from the start?

CESAR

I got time.

BLISS

As a matter of fact, going to that island on business is not among my regular duties.

CESAR

And what kind of business you have in there? I've already got that all your talk about exportation and agriculture is bullshit.

BLISS

Yes, you're right about that. My family owns a transportation company named Globeliveries. We act on some distribution routes in the island. Officially, we work with logistics and transportation of mining equipment, used to extract the valuable mineral resources of the place.

CESAR

And unofficially?

BLISS

We use those routes to deal drugs, weapons, some controlled medications for impatient tycoons, sometimes even toys that failed security inspections, among other things.

CESAR

Are you proud of this?

BLISS

I was never proud, but there were times when I thought it was justified.

CESAR

How so?

BLISS

Consumer market, my dear. We just give the buyers what they want and pay shameful amounts of money to get it. We receive the drug from South America and distribute it through godforsaken places like Mogda, an island nobody cares, and law over there is a joke.

CESAR

And what is the final destination of the stuff?

BLISS

The first world, young man! All our paying customers are here. I bet the sons and daughters of your directors are our regulars.

CESAR

Have you... Have you ever done drugs?

BLISS

Never. My mind needs to be clear for the business.

CESAR

Then again, when it comes to foul play, what your family does is not very different than what Massive does!

BLISS

Wrong! There is a difference. At least in my family, we follow a loyalty code! We protect each other, with our lives if necessary. When shit happens in your company, they isolate some poor bastard to take the rap, like they did to your branch manager.

She pauses to collect her thoughts.

BLISS (CONT'D)

They call us organized crime, but Massive also commits crimes, only they are disorganized.

CESAR

But you both evade taxes and got politicians in your pockets.

BLISS

Business as usual, my dear.



Cesar looks at Bliss, as if studying her.

CESAR  
Please, continue.

BLISS  
As I said, I wasn't supposed to be in the island. We already had a man in Mogda to take care of business, a middleman named James Cogley Mazzarino, we call him Jimbo. My father had to send me there because we suspected that Jimbo was selling out to our rivals in Chicago, the Pugliese family.

CESAR  
The owners of Homely Inn hotels chain.

BLISS  
Precisely.

CESAR  
What did they want, exactly?

BLISS  
The old routine, more power by stealing my dad's territories, preferably sending us all to the joint, or the body bag, in the process.

CESAR  
And what is your family? You never told me!

Bliss hesitates.

BLISS  
Razzini, from New York.

CESAR  
Lord Almighty!

Cesar almost falls down.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
Are you telling me you're the daughter of that 'Bone-Crusher' guy, who made number one in the list of America's most wanted, but was never caught due to lack of evidence?

BLISS  
That's him alright!

Bliss acts as if trying to hold back laughter.

BLISS (CONT'D)  
And by the way, it's 'Rib-Crusher.'  
Bone Crusher is a former boxe  
fighter.

CESAR  
What the hell I got myself into?  
The girl can't take it anymore and laugh aloud.

CESAR (CONT'D)  
What? Are you...? God, I don't  
believe this!

BLISS (LAUGHING)  
I'm sorry! I can't help it... You  
should see your face...  
And she explodes in more laughter.

It is so contagious that the young man has no choice but to  
surrender. He laughs as well.

CESAR  
And what the Pugliese had in mind  
to complicate you?

BLISS  
They also sent a middleman to the  
island, a mean rapist murderer  
known as Moochie, to pull Jimbo's  
strings.

CESAR  
They were trying to find a way to  
expose your drug and weapons  
dealing to take you out of the way,  
so they could take over.

BLISS  
Basically, yes. But to do that,  
Moochie needed to manipulate Jimbo  
into recruiting our main  
facilitator in the region.

CESAR  
Which is?

BLISS  
The chief of police, Colonel Thomas  
Odile and his squad of crooks.  
You've met some of his puppets in  
that roadblock we've been.

CESAR  
I'm still trying to forget that!

BLISS

Anyway, Odile was our man in the island, always taking bribes to look the other way every time our trucks roamed around the routes. Without him to cover us, we would be exposed to the action of the Federal Police.

CESAR

Federal Police?

BLISS

Even in the most hostile places, there is always the police that can't be bought.

CESAR

Right. And the Puglieses were willing to make this Odile character a better offer.

BLISS

Exactly. And they had already started the whole thing when I came. Truth is, we took too long to realize what Jimbo was doing. We even thought it was too late.

CESAR

And?

BLISS

I came up with a plan that could take us out of that mess.

CESAR

Let me guess. Do to the Pugliese what they tried to do with you.

BLISS

That was the general idea.

CESAR

And you used my manager as a scapegoat.

BLISS

Or fall guy, as we call.

CESAR

How?

BLISS

For years, the Homely Inn dreamt to turn that hellhole into a rich folks' resort.

(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

They even bought several pieces of land to build their hotels on. And your company, Massive, was already negotiating the transportation of materials with them.

CESAR

And you took advantage of this.

BLISS

I had no other choice. The Pugliese already had Odile in their pocket, but they made a mistake - they underestimated his greed. As soon as I knew what was happening, I contacted our good colonel, and he didn't hesitate in telling me everything. After all, he was eager to hear our counterproposal.

CESAR

Did you have one?

BLISS

Of course! Naturally, we offered him more money and the chance to become a national hero!

CESAR

How come a guy like that can become a national hero?

BLISS

We replaced the trucks with the Globeliveries' logo by others of the same size, only clean. We began to use those trucks to deliver our usual bad stuff, also using Homely Inn's construction sites as refueling and redistribution points.

CESAR

So everybody thought the drugs belonged to the Pugliese!

BLISS

That's right! They wanted our routes, they got them. Once the theater was set up, all Colonel Odile had to do was stopping a few trucks, apprehending some narcotics, saving the world for democracy, making a name for himself before the Federal Police... Can you believe he got promoted? A crook bastard like him!

(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

These third world countries are definitely beyond hope!

CESAR

Okay but, all bullshit aside, this whole story is full of holes! How could you possibly know how to get to the construction sites? What about the itineraries? The truck drivers would need manifests, right? Or, at least, shipping forms! Where did you get them?

BLISS

That was part B of the plan, when your distinguished company stepped in. I lured your branch manager into sending me the construction permits for all hotels in the region! I went to his office disguised as one of those flamboyant executives, pretending I worked for Homely Inn. I even told him I was the daughter of Don Fabrizio, the Capo di Tutti Capi. It was surprisingly easy!

CESAR

And to think I admired that man.

BLISS

The permits got everything in them, itineraries, shipping forms, the whole shebang.

CESAR

Not to mention my manager's signature in each and every paper.

BLISS

That's right! Then, with the help of some informers we have in common with the police, little by little we slipped the permits into the caring hands of the FBI.

CESAR

How the FBI knew what was going on in Mogda?

BLISS

Simple. When Odile reported his heroic apprehensions to the Federal Police, they got worried.

(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

And if you combine this with rumors of a foreign conspiracy to overthrow their government and take the only natural resource they have in abundance, it surely made them nervous enough to contact international authorities. Then, the snowball grew bigger - UN, Interpol, CIA, FBI, you take your pick.

CESAR

And now I know Massive was behind this conspiracy. How could they?

BLISS

I told you to be vigilant. And now you know how the story ends.

CESAR

Yep. It didn't take the Pugliese too long to learn about the alleged connection between my manager and the whole thing. And they threatened him!

BLISS

Something that encouraged me to blackmail him into dropping all that extra money in your bank account, including a good tip for your friends, too.

CESAR

Blood-stained money!

BLISS

No way! You worked hard for that money, you earned every penny!

They both silence for a few seconds.

BLISS (CONT'D)

What are you going to do now?

CESAR

I have not decided yet. I only know I'm not gonna be acting CEO for too long. After everything this company did, I don't want anything to do with their corruption.

BLISS

Like the good man you are.

CESAR

I'll only stay long enough to make sure the nationalization of Mogda's mineral resources takes place without any further interference from abroad. It's about time the locals receive the portion they are entitled to. I'll also see that no honest worker loses his or her job when the new board of directors takes charge.

BLISS

This is a good thing.

CESAR

As far as I know, the three owners of Massive, including Mister Massive himself, will be in jail for a long time. I even heard talks of life sentence. I was also told that Don Fabrizio is waiting for trial in liberty. Lucky bastard!

BLISS

Nope, it's terrible for him. He would be much safer behind bars.

CESAR

Why is that?

BLISS

The other families don't like a boss who gets caught. He may feel tempted to cut deals with the cops, maybe even rat on other bosses to beat the rap. They can't afford to let the old man breathe for too long. Sooner or later, they'll catch up with him. But, it's okay. He's old anyway. Besides, that will appease the families' mood. Nobody wants to go to war now.

CESAR

Is it true that Don Fabrizio is financially ruined?

BLISS

Yes, he totally blew it. Don Fabrizio bought a hell lot of Massive's stocks a little after he spread rumors that Globeliveries was involved in drug dealing. As a consequence, our company's stocks went down the drain, while Massive's ones skyrocketed. But, see what's happening now!

(MORE)

BLISS (CONT'D)

With its entire board of directors  
in jail, Massive's stocks plunged  
right to the bottom of the sea!  
What a shame. Poor old man. Now,  
he's sinking in debts!

CESAR

Everything went according to plan,  
right?

BLISS

I did what I had to.

CESAR

Tell me something, Bliss...

BLISS

Sure.

CESAR

Have you ever killed somebody?

BLISS

Never.

CESAR

Have you ever had somebody killed?

BLISS

Usually, my father handles this  
part, with the help of our  
Consiglieri, Paul. In this crisis,  
I asked some men to eliminate  
Moochie, but nobody will miss him.  
I actually believe I did humanity a  
favor. As he wanted to cause  
irreparable damages to my family, I  
consider it self-defense.

Cesar looks at her with reproaching eyes.

CESAR

Have you ever tortured somebody to  
get information?

BLISS

About that...

CESAR

YES or NO?

BLISS

I had to do it sometimes, but I've  
never hurt anybody! Everybody knows  
I don't approve this sort of thing,  
even my father!

(MORE)



BLISS (CONT'D)

When it's necessary, I come with the job already in progress, but I've never resorted to violence to get what I wanted!

CESAR

How do you call it, then?

BLISS

Psychological pressure!

CESAR

This is as bad as if you torture them yourself!

BLISS

Yes, maybe you're right. But, Cesar, you have to believe me. In my world, everybody who is tortured or killed knows why. It's the life we chose.

CESAR

Aren't you afraid that those things may happen to you?

BLISS

Every single day. That's why I'm out.

Cesar stares at her with eyes wide open.

CESAR

Are you serious?

BLISS

I'd never kid about a thing like that.

CESAR

But... What are you going to do?

BLISS

I don't know. Maybe I'll open a pet shop or something. Some misled folks already accused me of being good at business.

CESAR

An honest business this time!

BLISS

I can live with that.

Cesar studies Bliss' face.

CESAR

Do you really believe that will make up for all crimes you committed? You can't erase the past.

BLISS

No, but like everybody else, I'm entitled to a new beginning. And now that you're retiring from your wage-earning job, I thought we could try something together, a partnership of some kind.

CESAR

What about the others, your family? Do you think they'll just let you quit? You know too much.

BLISS

Not that much. Besides, my dad will back me up a hundred percent, and nobody messes with him.

CESAR

Speaking which, have you talked to him about it yet?

BLISS

I'm working on it.

CESAR

Bliss, Bliss... When are you gonna stop playing games?

BLISS

When I have a good shepherd to bring me back to the flock and keep me out of trouble.

CESAR

Bliss, Bliss... Now, it hit me. Is that your real name?

BLISS

Well, now that you mentioned, you can start calling me Tatiana, or Tati. Bliss is my alias in case I get caught. I don't need it anymore. Come to think of it, I've always found it a bit corny.

CESAR

What about your family name? You can't possibly open a company with the name Razzini and get away with it!

BLISS

I've already arranged the proper documentation to have my name officially altered.

CESAR

And what is the honorable new name you've chosen?

BLISS

Belmonte. It's firm and respectable. Tatiana Belmonte! It has such a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Cesar's face turns pale.

CESAR

Just wait a minute! This is my family name! Did you know that?

BLISS

Yes.

CESAR

And what does that mean, could you please tell me!? Is this some kind of sick marriage proposal?

BLISS

It's up to you! What do you say, partner? Do I get a 'yes?' And don't bother with the ring. We can borrow it from my dad. He has one around each finger, he doesn't need that many. Some of them will need a little cleaning after so much kissing, but I'll handle this, too.

Cesar is lost in thoughts all of a sudden.

BLISS (CONT'D)

What?

CESAR

I can't help wondering, what the heck happened to the fall guy?

EXT. PARK IN NEW YORK LITTERED WITH GARBAGE - DAY

Coogan frowns at all that trash in front of him. A grayish beard covers his face.

COOGAN (MURMURING)

Man, these people can't tell the floor from a garbage bin.

He stops by a bench with a homeless person sleeping on it, covered with today's newspaper.

CLOSEUP of the newspaper. A headline reads, 'Dream Trial of Massive Industries and Homely Inn starts Monday.' Below the headline, the subtitle reads, 'Star witness kept under wraps by the FBI.'

Coogan smirks at the headlines.

TEAM LEADER

Yo, skinny! You're not paid to goof around! Get your ass back to work!

COOGAN

Yes, boss.

Coogan organizes his garbage man coverall with a name tag on it.

CLOSEUP of the name tag. It reads, 'Pink Fleud,' Coogan's new name.

PINK FLEUD (MURMURING)

Yep, you got to love the Witness Protection Program.

Pink lifts two heavy garbage cans and slowly takes them to the garbage truck.

FADE TO BLACK.