

THE COMEUPPANCE
Somebody Always Dies

THE METHOD SERIES

Written By Jerry Bader
Produced By MRPwebmedia

Copyright 2015, Jerry Bader, MRPwebmedia

Jerry Bader

MRPwebmedia • Tel: (905) 764-1246

info@mrpwebmedia.com • Twitter: @mrpwebmedia

<http://www.mrpwebmedia.com>

<http://www.mrpwebmedia.com/books/>

<http://www.mrpwebmedia.com/books/themethod/>

New Noir Crime Graphic Novel "The Method" Now Available

The Method Web Page: <http://bit.ly/1Bs8RK7>

eBook Version: <http://bit.ly/1D934yA>

Print Versions: <http://bit.ly/1EHJaaf>

Trailer: https://youtu.be/xAMySWG_Dc0

Characters: <https://youtu.be/cdz3CHD0PNM?a>

PROLOGUE: THE STORY SO FAR

An out of work ACTOR with a knack for impersonations finds his circumstances completely reversed by a chance meeting with a look-alike stranger, ARNIE BERNARDO. After a night of drinking with his new friend discussing the opportunities made possible by their similar appearance, the stranger offers the ACTOR a ride home.

On the way, there is a horrible accident, both men are thrown through the windscreen into the lake, but only one survives, the other disappears without a trace. The SURVIVOR finds himself in the hospital with amnesia and everyone assuming he's ARNIE BERNARDO, the right-hand man for mob boss, CARMINE DESALVO.

The SURVIVOR plays the role thrust upon him, despite the fact that doubt about who he is weighs heavy on his mind. Life becomes a balancing act between the role he finds himself playing and the search for who he really is.

At the end of **The Method**, CARMINE and the SURVIVOR have hatched a plan to launder their illegal profits by investing in big budget movies. Everything is fine until people start to recognize that ARNIE may not really be ARNIE. As the story continues ARNIE'S girlfriend, LONNIE, knows the man she is living with is probably not the real ARNIE BERNARDO, but she doesn't care. She and the SURVIVOR have become increasingly close and are determined to protect each other from any trouble CARMINE might bring down on them. The likelihood of trouble becomes magnified when the remains of a badly decomposed body is discovered by a weekend fisherman.

A FISHY STORY

FADE IN

EXTERIOR: Two homicide detectives, a rugged looking man in his late thirties, and a younger attractive woman, arrive at a crime scene. The male cop is well dressed, almost too well dressed for a cop, and his female partner can't quite hide her obvious assets under a male-inspired wardrobe.

Uniformed cops hold back overzealous reporters and the paparazzi: all trying to photograph the grisly remains.

GRIST and DIME stand at the top of the embankment looking down at the remains below. Floaters were the worst and this one had to take the cake: burnt, dismembered, and chewed upon by a lake full of toxic chemicals and three-eyed fish, disgusting was the word that instantly came to mind.

GRIST had seen a lot in his almost twenty years as a cop but this was punishment duty. He looked over at his new partner, a nice looking woman, too attractive to be a cop, and too raw to be his partner.

GRIST

Did you speak to the guy who found it?

DIME

It? He was a human being once.

GRIST

Are you sure? Is that your expert opinion? How the hell could you tell what it was? Look at it for Christ sake.

DIME wasn't off to a good start but she didn't take the bait; she just wanted to get through a few weeks with GRIST so she could safely ask the Captain for a new partner.

GRIST

Well, did you speak to him?

DIME

He didn't know anything. Just a weekend fisherman that thought he hooked the big one, and instead he snagged that...

GRIST laughs or grunts; it was hard for DIME to tell the difference.

GRIST

Any identification?

DIME

Identification? Shit, there isn't even a face. I don't know what happened to the poor schmuck but whatever it was, it made sure that nothing much was left to identify.

Detective JOE GRIST wasn't a bad guy; on the other hand, he'd hardly be characterized as a saint. It's not that the job didn't get done, it did, but sometimes he bent a few rules to make it happen; and there were those nasty rumours about the missing half a million that was never recovered from the Americo Bank job. What's a missing 500k when the bad guys go to jail and the bank gets back ninety percent of their missing five million? As hard as Internal Affairs tried, GRIST kept coming up clean, nevertheless, the rumours persisted. GRIST wasn't one to worry about his reputation, but his new partner was a different story.

VELMA DIME was new to homicide and the last thing she wanted, or needed, was to be paired with a guy like JOE GRIST. He wasn't a bad looking guy, if only he took the time to shave now and then, but then again, DIME kind of liked the rugged exterior. In another time and place, he might be good for a few drinks and a tumble, but she knew she had to dump him as a partner as soon as possible.

After years of paying her dues in narcotics going undercover as a hooker, and doing every lousy job they threw at her, she figured she was entitled to someone better than a guy with a bad attitude and a worse reputation.

First day on the job and they get called out on a floater. Life just wasn't fair, but what the hell, homicide was the big time, and as long as she kept her nose clean, she figured she'd be fine. The question was could she do it riding along side JOE GRIST?

GRIST

Check the records for any fires or accidents in the area? I'll speak to the ME to see if he can figure out when and where this thing decided to go for a swim.

They headed back to their car with GRIST falling a few steps behind checking out just what his new partner was made of, not that he had any intentions of trying her on for size. He had enough problems, but then again, that never stopped him before.

FADE OUT

PAIN PARK REVISITED

FADE IN

EXTERIOR: Country road, not far from the Pain Park Tavern and the site of the accident that put the SURVIVOR in the hospital with amnesia.

Despite the SURVIVOR'S objection LONNIE heads out to Pain Park to find out what happened on the night of the accident. On the way she stops off at a farmer's market to get directions and to pickup a dozen eggs. What LONNIE doesn't know is the farmer she stopped to talk to is the same farmer that was involved in the hit-and-run accident that started the whole mess.

LONNIE

Hi there... Can I get a dozen
large, Grade "A" eggs?

The farmer takes a dozen eggs and haphazardly wraps them in brown paper.

FARMER

That'll be \$1.95

LONNIE reaches into her purse and takes out a twenty-dollar bill that she waves seductively in the air. She leans forward making sure the farmer gets a good look at what's under her sexy new trench coat. The FARMER can't make up his mind what's more appealing, the twenty-dollar bill or LONNIE'S half exposed breasts.

LONNIE

You heard about the accident on
the bridge a few months back?

The FARMER looks stunned.

LONNIE

There was a whole lotta eggs
involved as I recall. Perhaps
you were there?

The colour drains from the FARMER'S face. His hands visibly start to shake. He stutters and mumbles something that's totally incomprehensible.

FARMER
(incomprehensible muttering)

LONNIE turns off the charm and tries a more direct approach.

LONNIE
Excuse me? Did you hear about
it, yes or no?

FARMER
Listen lady, I just sell eggs.
You want them or not? It's
\$1.95. You want answers, ask
Google.

LONNIE shoves the twenty back in her purse and drops two wrinkled one-dollar bills on the rickety wooden table standing between her and the FARMER.

LONNIE
Keep the change.

LONNIE picks up the package of eggs and heads off to her car to find the Pain Park Tavern. She continues on to the bar thinking about the reaction from the creepy egg farmer. She gets to the bar and starts asking questions.

She quizzes the bartender about the night of the accident and he tells her the story from what he saw.

Meanwhile CARMINE has ordered VITO to do some poking around, so VITO goes out to the Pain Park as well, to try and find out what happened. VITO enters the bar and is ushered to a table in the back. On the way to his table he notices an attractive woman at the bar that looks a lot like LONNIE. He doesn't get a real good look at the woman because he only sees a partial reflection in the bar mirror, and he's distracted by the waitress's skimpy black outfit.

While talking to the bartender about the night of the accident LONNIE notices a familiar face reflected in the mirror behind the bar - it's VITO. The bartender notices the concerned look on LONNIE'S face as she glances in the mirror behind him. He spots the tough-looking guy with an ominous bulge in his jacket checking LONNIE out.

BARTENDER

There's a rear exit in back
beside the ladies' room.

LONNIE

Thanks... I owe you.

LONNIE slips the bartender a twenty.

VITO notices the woman at the bar quickly exiting through the back and thinks to himself that the woman has to be LONNIE. He asks the waitress if she was on duty the night of the accident. The waitress tells VITO about the mistaken identity and that ARNIE and the other guy seemed to get along just fine; and that they even left the bar together, all chummy.

VITO downs the last of his drink and starts to get up to leave when he notices a nice looking woman enter the bar flashing a gold shield. VITO sits right back down. Another cop enters the bar and this time VITO recognizes who it is. VITO tries to make it to the back but before he can escape, he hears the cop call his name.

GRIST

VITO my old pal, where the hell
do you think you're going so
fast? You don't want to talk to
me? That's not very nice, and
here I was going to introduce
you to my new partner.

VITO stops and turns around to face the two cops. He checks out DIME from head to toe, not concerned her noticing him undressing her with his eyes.

DIME

Do you mind?

VITO turns to GRIST.

VITO

She's a lot better looking than
the old drunk you used to ride
with. Smells better too.

A flush of red crosses DIME'S cheeks.

DIME

What are you doing here?

VITO

What? It's against the law to go for a drink now?

GRIST

How's ARNIE?

VITO

ARNIE? Yeah, he's good. Took a while but he's better now.

GRIST

So what have you and your friends been up to, anything you want to share?

VITO

We're legit, everything on the up and up.

DIME

Bullshit!

VITO

Ain't you the little pistol. You put on something sexy and maybe I take you dancing or something.

GRIST

Take it easy VITO; cut the kid some slack. She can't help looking good.

DIME gives GRIST a cold hard look.

DIME

I don't need your help.

GRIST

I heard you guys were in the movie business. How's that working out for you?

VITO

Listen GRIST, it's been a gas,
but I got places to go and
people to see. You want to know
about the movie business, I'll
send you a copy of VARIETY.

VITO brushes past the two cops and heads for the front door. GRIST and DIME start talking to the staff trying to get a handle on the night of the accident, and if there's any connection to the remains discovered the day before.

FADE OUT

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

FADE IN

INTERIOR: Owen Roberts International Airport, George Town, Cayman Islands

SEYMOUR KRATZ and his wife CLAIRE work their way to the front of the Custom's line. Several tourists dressed in shorts and polyester Hawaiian shirts argue over taking a cab or the airport limousine. Behind them is BOBBY BLOOM, a short, balding, spark plug of a man with a neatly trimmed greying beard. Bloom, is dressed, as usual, in a charcoal grey turtleneck and black bespoke Savile Row suit. It didn't matter the country, or the season, BLOOM wore pretty much the same thing, a turtleneck and a custom-made suit.

Despite being overdressed for the climate BLOOM felt naked without his stubby Israeli-made Barak SP-21. Some of his ex DGSE colleagues preferred the Glock, and some even the Walther P99, but BLOOM liked the way the Barak felt in his hand. Not the most elegant looking gun in the world, but no one could argue with the IWI build-quality. Being a French Jew had nothing to do with his preference, it was strictly a matter of workmanship.

After leaving the French External Security Service, BLOOM moved to LA where his French accent, exotic flavour, and spy craft skills found ready work with Hollywood producers who favoured shooting locations that could best be described as international cesspools.

BLOOM was working directly for the SURVIVOR tailing KRATZ. The SURVIVOR knew the new operation needed a movie insider to front the business but KRATZ was playing fast and loose with the production budgets getting kickbacks on everything from food service to wardrobe. No one got hired without KRATZ or his wife getting a piece.

The SURVIVOR had a history with KRATZ, knew he was stealing but was waiting for the right time to straighten him out. KRATZ was a necessary evil, an expendable component of an evolving strategy to legitimize the operation; not something that CARMINE was particularly happy about or interested in.

KRATZ and his wife grab a cab as they leave the airport. BLOOM gets in the back of another cab several cars behind. The driver is sharing a sandwich with a strange looking dog sitting in the front passenger seat. The driver and the animal turn around in tandem to look at BLOOM.

CAB DRIVER

I'm on lunch, man. You have to take the cabs in order.

BLOOM

A hundred American dollars, you follow that car. *Maintenant!*

The driver drops the sandwich on the seat in front of the dog. It quickly disappears down the mutt's throat. The driver fires-up the ignition and guns the old Chevy almost wiping out the polyester Hawaiian shirts standing in the middle of the road still arguing over taking a cab or limo.

CAB DRIVER

Hay man, you like a French James Bond or something?

BLOOM

I'd tell you *mon ami*, but then I'd have to kill you. *Mort, vous comprenez!*

The cabbie laughs at what he thinks is a joke.

CAB DRIVER

Been driving for ten years, and this is the first time anyone actually said 'follow that car.'

It takes about ten minutes for the two cabs to manoeuvre through the traffic from the airport to the financial district. BLOOM takes out his cell phone and dials BERNARDO'S number.

BLOOM

ARNIE... *oui*, we just arrived and they aren't wasting any time. We're pulling up in front of the bank "*maintenant.*"

C'est bon.

BLOOM hangs up and instructs the driver.

BLOOM

Wait here till I come back.

BLOOM gets out of the cab and goes into the bank. He sees KRATZ and his wife being ushered into the Bank Manager's office by a secretary. He gets ARNIE back on the phone while pretending to write-up a deposit slip.

BLOOM

ARNIE...

He's in with the *directeur de la banque, maintenant*. What do you want me to do? *Oui... oui... c'est bien. Au revoir bien.*

BLOOM waits for KRATZ and his wife to leave and then he tries to enter the Bank Manager's office. A secretary stops him.

SECRETARY

Excuse me you can't go in there.
You need an appointment.

The banker sees BLOOM arguing with his secretary. He gets up and goes to the door.

BANK MANAGER

Linda, it's okay. I know this man.

The secretary isn't happy but she goes back to her desk muttering something about respect.

BLOOM

How much this time?

BANK MANAGER

One hundred and seventy-five...

BLOOM

Okay, let ARNIE know.

Bloom leaves the bank and gets back into the cab.

CAB DRIVER

Okay 007, where too now?

BLOOM

Back to the airport...

BLOOM taps the driver on the shoulder and hands him two crisp one hundred dollar bills.

BLOOM

A little bonus, *mon ami*.

The cabbie laughs an enthusiastic laugh.

CAB DRIVER

You're my kind of fare, my French friend.

The dog turns around in the front seat to stare at BLOOM.

BLOOM

You couldn't find an uglier dog?

The cabbie laughs again.

FADE OUT

MOVIE MOGULS

FADE IN

A montage of clips showing the SURVIVOR making the rounds of the movie sets, CARMINE partying, BLOOM tailing KRATZ, and VITO and SID making collections from their illegal gambling operation.

As Executive Producers for a series of action pictures the SURVIVOR and CARMINE each take on new roles. The SURVIVOR is responsible for managing the financial side of the operation, moving money around in a never-ending circle of confusion, each time washing it cleaner and less traceable. He's grown comfortable in his role as ARNIE BERNARDO, and in fact, he's become a significant player in the creation of the crew's new entertainment enterprise.

KRATZ is running the day-to-day operations and he isn't doing a bad job except for the fact he's a thief; but this is the movie business, and as long as the pictures make money, a little embezzlement is a minor inconvenience.

In any case, the SURVIVOR isn't too worried since he has BLOOM keeping an eye on KRATZ, and the Cayman Bank Manager is reporting every move he makes.

While everybody else is looking after business, CARMINE is playing the movie big-shot, taking advantage of KRATZ'S easy access to a never-ending supply of starlets all looking for their big break, and willing to do whatever it takes to get on the big screen. CARMINE'S partying makes everyone very nervous. The drinking and the drugs make him even more volatile and paranoid than usual, and that isn't good for anybody's health.

FADE OUT

SCRAMBLED EGGS

FADE IN

INTERIOR: The police station interrogation room. The room is dark with one overhead light aimed directly into the egg farmer's eyes.

The farmer finds it hard to breathe in the small claustrophobic room with sound-deadening panels on the walls. He was already a nervous wreck before the uniformed cops showed up and impounded his freshly painted truck.

The pieces of the puzzle were starting to come together for GRIST and DIME. The farmer was obviously involved in the accident. The mess of eggs on the bridge combined with the newly painted truck were enough circumstantial evidence to pressure a confession. The two cops figured they could get the jerk farmer for hit and run, but what about the floater?

If BERNARDO survived the accident, who was the floater; was he the guy BERNARDO was seen drinking with? Nobody at Pain Park had ever seen the guy before that night. Was he in the car with BERNARDO? Was he just walking on the bridge? Or was he totally unrelated to the whole convoluted mystery. The DNA tests were inconclusive because the corpse was so degraded from the fire, water, and animals.

The door to the interrogation room opens. DIME enters with a stack of file folders in her hand. GRIST, holding a cup of coffee, follows her. DIME sits in a metal chair facing the egg farmer with a wooden table between them. GRIST moves around the table behind the farmer. The farmer squints trying to see DIME'S face.

FARMER

I can't see. The lights are in
my eyes.

The two detectives ignore him. The farmer turns to look behind him to see GRIST leaning casually up against the wall sipping his coffee.

FARMER

You're making me nervous. Can
you move?

GRIST pushes his body off the wall and stands directly behind the farmer, making him even more nervous.

GRIST

Better?

FARMER

Why the hell is it so damn quiet in here?

GRIST

So they won't hear us beating the crap out of you.

DIME fires a dirty look in GRIST'S direction. She takes a photograph of the bridge after the accident out of a folder and slams it down on the table in front of the farmer.

DIME

Fucking eggs everywhere. Your fucking eggs!

She reaches into the folder and pulls out two more photographs: one of his truck at the repair shop before it was fixed, and the other after.

DIME

It seems they take before and after pictures so that assholes like you can't bitch about what was fixed. See that there...

She points to the photograph of the damaged truck and what appears to be paint from another car. GRIST leans over the farmer's shoulder bumping him as he points to the damage.

GRIST

That's paint from what used to be ARNIE BERNARDO'S Caddie, and that my friend, is egg shit all over... everything.

The farmer starts to quiver.

DIME

Do you know who ARNIE BERNARDO is?

The farmer nods his head. Everybody who could read a newspaper knew BERNARDO'S name and reputation.

GRIST

Do you know what he does to guys who try to kill him?

FARMER

It was an accident. The Caddie had already hit the side of the bridge. It was dark, rainy, and there was fog. I didn't see it until I was right on top of it. I swear it was an accident. Not my fault. I could have been killed.

GRIST

So naturally, you smash into this mobster's big shiny Caddie knocking it and him into the lake, get up, dust yourself off, say to yourself, what the fuck, and merrily go on your way.

FARMER

Listen, I'm the innocent victim here. I lost a whole load of eggs, and I had to get my truck fixed. It was expensive.

DIME

Okay asshole, that's enough bullshit, we're arresting you for hit and run...

GRIST

And vehicular homicide for the body we found.

FARMER

What body? Jesus Christ! It was just a car. Nobody was in it. What was I suppose to do?

DIME and GRIST just look at one another.

GRIST

Read this asshole his rights and
get him the hell out of here
before I throw-up.

FADE OUT

GRIST AND DIME

FADE IN

EXTERIOR: CARMINE'S place.

GRIST and DIME pull-up in front of CARMINE'S place. DIME knocks on the door. A half-naked actress wearing only an open silk shirt answers the door. DIME shows the woman her badge. The actress waves them in with one hand, the other busy nursing a half-empty bottle of Mumm Champaign. She points to the living room and stumbles off giggling as she informs CARMINE of the cops' arrival

STARLET

Carmey sweetie... the fuzzy-wazzies are here.

DIME

Classy. Very classy..

GRIST

Keep it casual. These guys don't respond to righteous indignation. We're just filling in the blanks, finishing up the paper work, that's all.

CARMINE is on the couch with two other half-dressed models.

CARMINE

Why don't you girls go powder your noses while I talk to these nice police officers.

The two women get up and leave the room.

GRIST

I hope the powder they're using is make-up and not something else.

CARMINE laughs.

CARMINE

Always a comedian GRIST...
always making the jokes.

Maybe I'll put you in a movie;
maybe even something nice for
your partner there. I could see
her on the big screen. I could
see a whole lot of her.

DIME

You want me to check out the
women, see if we can nail this
pig on a narcotics charge?

GRIST

Nah, don't bother. I rather get
him on murder.

CARMINE

MURDER! What the fuck are you
talking about? I'm a Producer -
strictly legit.

DIME

Bullshit. You bumped off your
boy, BERNARDO, and had him
replaced with a double. Real
nice setup, asshole, too bad the
egg creep got in the way.

CARMINE

I don't know what the hell
you're talking about. ARNIE is
down at the office; go talk to
him. Talk to LONNIE for Christ
sake. If ARNIE isn't ARNIE,
she'd be the first to scream.
Those two are stuck together
with Crazy Glue.

GRIST

Tell you what CARMINE, you enjoy
the ladies now, cause in prison,
your bunkmate won't be quite so
lovely.

DIME

Time is running out for guys
like you, CARMINE. Tick Toc.

CARMINE

That's MR. DESALVO to you young
lady.

DIME

Tick Toc asshole. Tick Toc!

The sounds of women arguing come from the other room.

MULTIPLE WOMEN

Give it too me!
Give it back!
Bitch!
Slut!

GRIST

Come on partner, let's leave
before this turns into a
domestic disturbance call.

GRIST and DIME head for the front door and leave. The threat to CARMINE was strictly a flyer to see if it caused any repercussions. They had nothing on him. They had no evidence that the guy claiming to be ARNIE BERNARDO wasn't BERNARDO, and they couldn't prove the floater was involved in any of it. All they had was the egg farmer, and that was small potatoes compared to nailing CARMINE DESALVO.

FADE OUT

CARMINE'S BIG MISTAKE

FADE IN

INTERIOR: CARMINE'S office.

VITO and CARMINE are sitting discussing what VITO found out at the Pain Park Tavern. VITO is concerned about CARMINE'S partying and increasing paranoia, something that could very easily become a problem for all concerned.

CARMINE

So, what did you find out?

VITO

Nothing conclusive. It seems ARNIE met with this look-alike and from what I could find out, they became pretty friendly, drinking, laughing and listening to the music. They were sloshed when they left.

CARMINE

They left together?

VITO

Yeah, but according to the girls, they were all buddy-buddy.

CARMINE

I don't like the sound of it... this whole thing stinks.

VITO

There was something else boss, but I don't think you're going to like it.

CARMINE

WHAT! Let's hear it already. I'm in a hurry. I got a couple of people coming in for interviews.

VITO knew what an interview meant and he wasn't pleased. There was a time for dames and a time for business, and it seemed CARMINE couldn't distinguish between the two.

With CARMINE otherwise occupied, VITO was left to look after all the gambling activity while the SURVIVOR handled the movie operation. VITO and the SURVIVOR discussed the CARMINE problem and neither one was happy about it.

They both agreed they should gradually legitimize the operation. They figured they were already living "the life" on borrowed time. Even with KRATZ skimming, the movie operation was making big money, and once the laundry venture cleared the backlog there'd be enough dough to legally expand taking advantage of their growing entertainment expertise. The plan was good, but CARMINE wasn't on-board.

VITO

As I was leaving Pain Park, I ran into GRIST and his new partner, a nice looking broad hiding underneath all that gabardine.

CARMINE

Jesus, the shit I have to deal with. Those two were just at my place hassling me too.

VITO

Oh yeah, I could have sworn I saw LONNIE there at the same time.

CARMINE

WHAT!

VITO

Couldn't really tell, I could only catch a glimpse of her in the mirror as she skulked out the back before I could get a good look.

CARMINE

Fuck this shit. Put an end to it, you understand. I'm tired of all this bullshit. KRATZ is running things just fine. We don't need ARNIE anymore. Get rid of him.

VITO

But boss, ARNIE'S really running things, and KRATZ is a crook, he's been skimming every chance he gets.

CARMINE

Fuck him too. Get rid of both of them.

VITO

And who's suppose to run the production company?

CARMINE

I'm the boss, I run this operation! So don't forget it! Besides, what the fuck's so hard? It's the movies for Christ sake. We have a problem we use a little muscle.

VITO

But boss... this isn't right.

CARMINE

Do what the hell you're told, or you'll be next.

VITO

Okay boss, but it will take some time to workout the details.

CARMINE

Just get it done.

There's a knock on the door and two attractive women appear in the doorway. CARMINE looks at the women and then at VITO.

CARMINE

Get out, and get it done.

VITO reluctantly gets up and heads for the door. He's pissed: you don't put a hit out on your own people, especially if they haven't done anything. ARNIE wasn't the problem, CARMINE was; besides if CARMINE felt he could order ARNIE killed, who'd be next - probably him. Once outside VITO let's his anger boil-over.

VITO

Fuck this, I'm not doing it.

FADE OUT

THE MEETING

FADE IN

INTERIOR: ARNIE'S penthouse. The SURVIVOR and LONNIE are sitting on the couch screening the rough cut of a movie on a large flat screen television. The buzzer rings. The SURVIVOR goes to the door and picks up the intercom.

SURVIVOR

Send them up.

The SURVIVOR turns to LONNIE...

SURVIVOR

It's VITO and SID.

LONNIE

What do they want?

SURVIVOR

I don't know, must be trouble...

There's a knock on the door. The SURVIVOR opens it. VITO and SID are standing there with worried expressions on their faces.

SURVIVOR

What's wrong? Is it CARMINE?

VITO

Can we come in?

The two men stand there like statues not moving. LONNIE senses something is wrong, these men would normally just walk in like they owned the place. She gets up and moves to the bar on the far side of the room.

SURVIVOR

Well come in for Christ sake.

LONNIE

You boys want a drink?

VITO

Yeah, I could use something,
something strong.

SID just nods. LONNIE reaches under the bar for two glasses and ice. She makes sure the semi automatic was where the SURVIVOR told her to keep it. The SURVIVOR moves to the couch and sits. LONNIE continues to fix the drinks with one hand, while the other casually fondles the semi automatic, releasing the safety. The two men continue to stand.

SURVIVOR

You guys just going to stand there or are you going to sit down and tell me what's going on.

VITO and SID don't answer. They remove their suit jackets and toss them on a chair in the corner of the room. The SURVIVOR laughs a half-hearted nervous laugh.

SURVIVOR

Sure guys, make your selves comfortable.

Both men simultaneously reach for their shoulder holsters and remove their guns using only their fingertips.

SURVIVOR

What the fuck is this?

They place the guns on the coffee table with the handles facing the SURVIVOR and the barrels facing them. They sit down opposite the SURVIVOR.

VITO looks over at LONNIE who has the semi automatic in her hand aimed directly at his chest. Even from across the room there was no way she could miss.

VITO

Hay kid, how about those drinks.

LONNIE

Talk first, and then, if I don't blow your brains all over my carpet, I'll make you a drink.

VITO

She's one of a kind ARNIE... but you're not ARNIE are you?

The SURVIVOR starts to speak but VITO raises his hand.

VITO

Understand this, I don't care.
SID... he don't care. Taking us
legit is the only way any of us
will ever reach old age. And
that wasn't something ARNIE ever
cared about.

Isn't that right LONNIE?

LONNIE doesn't respond but moves closer, her finger itching
to pull the trigger.

VITO

ARNIE was a reckless son-of-a-
bitch, determined to die young,
and it seems like he managed to
do it on that bridge.

There's a time to get out and
you're the only one in this
organization that could have
figured it out.

ARNIE was okay, but there was
only one way he was quitting,
and that was horizontal.

SURVIVOR

But...

VITO

CARMINE'S gone whacko. If he
ain't screw'n wannabes he's
snorting some shit.

And he wants you dead, and he's
ordered me to do it.

LONNIE

You fucking breathe funny and
I'll pull this trigger. And that
goes for you too SID.

SURVIVOR

Take it easy honey. I think the
boys are trying to tell us
something.

VITO

That's only half of it.

SURVIVOR

There's more?

VITO

I tried to convince him you weren't the problem. I told him KRATZ was skimming... figuring he'd go after him instead of you.

SURVIVOR

And?

VITO

He wants me to kill him too.

VITO looks up at LONNIE

VITO

Jesus LONNIE, put the piece away and sit down, nobody's getting whacked, but God knows what that nutcase would do to you with ARNIE out of the way.

The SURVIVOR looks at LONNIE and motions for her to sit. She lowers the gun and moves to the couch close to the SURVIVOR.

VITO

So I guess we still call you ARNIE?

SURVIVOR

As far as anyone is concerned that's who I am, and besides, whoever I was before the accident is gone for good.

SID as usual remains quiet. He hardly ever speaks. Whatever ARNIE and VITO want to do is okay with him. He'll just wait for instructions. He reaches into his shirt pocket and removes a piece of paper that he begins to fold.

The SURVIVOR and LONNIE look at him wondering what the hell he's doing.

VITO

Just ignore him. He saw "Blade Runner" last night for the tenth time. He thinks he's Gaff.

Don't worry about SID. He's good with whatever we decide.

SID nods absentmindedly concentrating on whatever he's doing with the piece of paper.

VITO

We need to do something about CARMINE. He expects me to do you and KRATZ, and he wants it done fast or I'm next.

SURVIVOR

I've been holding off dealing with KRATZ until the time was right, but I guess now we'll have to figure out what to do fast.

VITO

One more little item...

LONNIE

There's more?

VITO

Did you think you were the only genius that thought about heading out to Pain Park?

It was like a fucking cops and robbers' convention. After LONNIE snuck out the back, GRIST and his new lady partner came in.

SURVIVOR

Jesus LONNIE, I told you someone would recognize you.

VITO

Well she is kinda hard to miss.
Anyway, it's a good thing she
got outta there before GRIST
showed up.

Seems some fisherman hooked more
than a fish and they're trying
hard to tie the floater to your
little swan dive off the bridge.

The phone rings. LONNIE gets up and crosses the room to
answer it.

LONNIE

Oh hi CARMINE...

Even SID looks up from whatever he's doing. The colour in
LONNIE'S face drains, but she manages to keep her
composure.

LONNIE

Sure, sure, ARNIE and I can be
there by noon... No he's not here
right now... Oh, okay, it'll be
our secret.

LONNIE hangs up the phone

LONNIE

I'm going to kill that fucking
bastard! He wants me to meet him
at his place tomorrow. No ARNIE.
Just the two of us he says.

SURVIVOR

Jesus, it just keeps getting
better and better.

The SURVIVOR turns to LONNIE.

SURVIVOR

You're not going anywhere near
that lecher.

VITO

He'll get suspicious if she doesn't show up. Think you can handle him till we get there?

LONNIE

Yeah, I can stall for a while, but you better not be late.

SURVIVOR

I don't like it. Not one bit.

VITO

Don't worry ARNIE, we'll be right behind her.

SURVIVOR

SID, get BLOOM to tail LONNIE while we deal with KRATZ.

SID looks up from his folding and nods.

SURVIVOR

Okay, it's settled then. Tomorrow's the day.

We drag that putz, KRATZ, out of bed first thing in the morning, straighten him out, and get back the money he's skimmed. And then, we all pay CARMINE a visit.

VITO

I guess it was only a matter of time. CARMINE'S gotta go.

SID stops fiddling with the piece of paper, and places an origami corpse on the coffee table.

FADE OUT

SEYMOUR GETS SCHOOLED

FADE IN

INTERIOR: SEYMOUR KRATZ'S bedroom

SEYMOUR and his wife, CLAIRE, are asleep in bed unaware that VITO and SID are standing on either side with their guns drawn. The SURVIVOR walks into the bedroom sipping a cup of coffee. He nods to the two gangsters. VITO puts his gun to SEYMOUR'S head while SID puts his hand over CLAIRE'S mouth.

SURVIVOR

Good morning SEYMOUR.

SEYMOUR and CLAIRE awake with a start. SID stifles the scream that attempts to come out of CLAIRE'S mouth. She tries to sit up but SID pushes her hard back down on the bed. SEYMOUR'S eyes are as wide as the expensive dinner plates the SURVIVOR noticed while making his coffee.

SURVIVOR

Nice coffee maker SEYMOUR. Makes damn fine coffee if you don't mind me saying. You gotta tell me where you got that, cause I love my coffee.

I think it would be a nice little present for LONNIE, don't you?

You know making coffee is an art. Now I'm not talking about that instant shit, that stuff just rots your gut. I'm talking real coffee.

Sid, you like coffee don't you?

SID nods.

SURVIVOR

Yeah, you gotta get yourself one of these, even makes that foam stuff on top. Pretty slick my friend. You and VITO can learn a thing or two from these fine folk, they know how to live. They got the best of everything.

VITO

No kidd'in?

SURVIVOR

I'm not lying. Every fucking thing in the house is top notch. I'll bet the Queen, herself, don't have some of the shit these two got.

VITO

Is that a fact?

SURVIVOR

That my friend is the God's honest truth. I have to tell you, I'm kinda jealous. Sid, you jealous?

SID nods, and gives CLAIRE a little extra push back onto the bed as she tries to sit up. CLAIRE'S nightgown starts to slip down revealing more than it should.

SURVIVOR

SIDNEY, we don't want CLAIRE to catch a cold. Why don't you adjust her gown for her?

CLAIRE tries hard to protest, but SID pushes back again with one hand and adjusts her nightgown with the other.

SURVIVOR

That's better. Now we can talk.

VITO... you know how SEYMOUR here can afford all these fine furnishings?

VITO

Can't say as I do boss.

The sound of VITO calling the SURVIVOR boss, adds a little chill to the proceedings. SEYMOUR'S eyes dart back and forth between VITO and the SURVIVOR.

SURVIVOR

Well, I'll tell you. SEYMOUR, here, gets paid pretty well, earning the big bucks as the head of our little production company. We don't even say a word about the commissions he keeps paying himself on the talent he supplies from his old agency.

Oh I know CLAIRE'S name's on the business, but really, let's be real. Left pocket, right pocket, isn't that right SEYMOUR?

VITO

Jeez boss, I'm not sure even that would cover the nut these two got.

SURVIVOR

VITO, my friend, you are very perceptive. You want to maintain this kind of life style, you've got to supplement.

VITO

Supplement boss, how they do that?

SURVIVOR

It seems SEYMOUR has an offshore bank account. You know one of those numbered deals, no names, all hush-hush anonymous stuff.

VITO

Is that so?

SURVIVOR

Damn straight. But the most interesting thing is where the money comes from.

VITO

Yeah, that be interesting, I'd like to know.

SEYMOUR tries to speak but VITO hits him hard across the face. Blood trickles down from his nose.

SEYMOUR

(groans in pain)

CLAIRE starts to protest but SID grabs her throat hard enough to make her gag and cough

CLAIRE

(gags and coughs)

SURVIVOR

CLAIRE my dear, you got something to say.

SID removes his hand from her throat.

CLAIRE

I know who you really are. Did you think I wouldn't recognize the man I was...

SID slaps her hard across the face. The force of the blow snaps her head back against the headboard. The tears run down her cheeks and into her mouth.

CLAIRE

(sobs)

SURVIVOR

I'm sorry... you were saying something about knowing something...

CLAIRE continues to sob shaking her head violently from side to side.

CLAIRE

(sobs)

SURVIVOR

I guess I must have
misunderstood.

VITO moves away from the bed to retrieve a laptop on the desk in the corner of the room. He drops the computer onto the bed.

SURVIVOR

Where were we? Oh yes, SEYMOUR'S supplemental income. It seems that the money, and I mean a lot of money, came straight out of our pockets.

SEYMOUR here just dipped his hand right into our pockets and took whatever the fuck he wanted. No please or thank you; not even a little squeeze for good measure.

And that, VITO, is how you can afford one of those fucking fine coffee makers.

SEYMOUR

I've been saving that money for years... it's our life savings!

VITO hits him again, hard across the face with the back of his hand.

SEYMOUR

(groans in pain)

SURVIVOR

So, here's what we're going to do...

Oh yes, before we do that I should tell you that CARMINE wanted us to terminate your employment, as in permanently.

But we thought that was a little harsh, so we're going to keep you around. You can even keep your job as long as you continue to behave, but in the meantime we're going to transfer the twelve million bucks you skimmed into three new accounts.

VITO

Three accounts ARNIE?

SURVIVOR

I figure you and SID deserve a little bonus to start off our new executive committee.

VITO

That's mighty nice of you boss.

SID just smiles. The SURVIVOR gives SEYMOUR a hard look.

SURVIVOR

Okay asshole, access that account. We're in a hurry, LONNIE'S waiting.

The SURVIVOR turns his gaze on CLAIRE.

SURVIVOR

Looks like you backed the wrong horse, sweetheart. Tough break.

FADE OUT

THE COMEUPPANCE

FADE IN

INTERIOR: CARMINE'S living room

LONNIE is standing in the entrance to the room clutching her purse. CARMINE is on the phone. He motions her to the couch. LONNIE takes a seat on the couch and places the purse close to her hip. CARMINE finishes his call and hangs up the phone.

CARMINE

How we doing today doll?

LONNIE

I'm good CARMINE. You know me always the positive attitude.

CARMINE

That's good, cause I got some bad news for you.

LONNIE

Is that right? Bad news? What kind of bad news?

CARMINE

Oh we'll get to that in a minute. I just want you to know that every cloud has a silver lining.

LONNIE

Really CARMINE, every cloud has a silver lining? What are you a fucking Hallmark card?

CARMINE

Know what I like about you LONNIE?

LONNIE

Other than my ass, I haven't a clue.

CARMINE laughs.

CARMINE

You're a feisty little bitch.
That's what I like about you.
Those broads I've been screw' in
got no style. You got style
doll, the kind of style an
important man like me deserves.

LONNIE

Is that so?

CARMINE

Yes my dear, that's the way it's
going to be.

LONNIE

Really? Don't I have anything to
say about it?

CARMINE

Not a fucking thing.

LONNIE

Well maybe ARNIE will disagree.

CARMINE

Maybe ARNIE would have, but then
ARNIE'S dead. They fished what
was left of him out of the lake
last week.

LONNIE

You don't say?

CARMINE

I'm afraid so doll. Your lover
boy's been fish bait ever since
he went off that bridge.

LONNIE

I think the fellow who wakes up
beside me every morning might
think otherwise.

CARMINE laughs.

CARMINE

Him? Oh I wouldn't worry about him.

CARMINE looks at his watch.

CARMINE

Right about now VITO and SID are digging a nice big hole for imitation-ARNIE, and I don't think he'll put up much of a fight.

So here's what we're going to do: first, you're going to make us a drink. After that, we're going up stairs to see if you're actually worth all the trouble.

Now move that pretty little ass!

CARMINE is standing over her as she tries to stand up. She stumbles as she rises because CARMINE is too close. He grabs her and presses her hard against his body.

CARMINE

No need to be nervous doll. You play ball and everything will be just fine.

He lets go. LONNIE picks up her purse from the couch and moves to the bar. She half turns to CARMINE.

LONNIE

Why don't you put on some music to get us in the mood?

CARMINE

Now you're getting the idea. I knew you'd play ball once you knew the score.

CARMINE turns and walks to the stereo at the far end of the room. Music starts to fill the room. CARMINE reacts to the music by doing a little two-step that he thinks is cool. He finishes his dance with a pirouette facing LONNIE who is standing in the middle of the room with the semi automatic aimed directly at his head. CARMINE smiles.

CARMINE

And what do you think you're
going to do with that?

LONNIE doesn't answer. She just pulls the trigger. BANG!

A dark red hole appears in CARMINE'S forehead. As the blood flows down his face, his smile turns to surprise. He drops to his knees and then forward on to the floor. Blood starts to seep into the carpet as it pools around his head.

LONNIE goes back to the bar and finishes making herself a drink, her hand shaking. BLOOM appears in the entrance to the living room holding the Barak. LONNIE turns around with the drink in her hand, and takes a sip.

LONNIE

Someone's going to have to clean
up this mess.

BLOOM looks at LONNIE and then at CARMINE face down on the floor with his head surrounded by a large dark red stain.

BLOOM

"Quel Bordel!"

LONNIE

I told them I could handle the
old bastard.

BLOOM

"Merde!"

FADE OUT

EPILOGUE

FADE IN

INTERIOR: CARMINE'S living room

GRIST and DIME are standing in CARMINE'S living room staring at the large red stain on the carpet.

DIME
Where's the body?

GRIST just shrugs his shoulders. DIME turns to the crime scene techs dusting for prints.

DIME
Find anything?

CSI TECH
Nothing. The place was sanitized by someone who knew what he was doing.

GRIST
Probably BLOOM.

DIME
Who?

GRIST
Does it matter?

DIME
Of course it matters. There's been a murder. We're supposed to be homicide cops, or have you forgotten?

GRIST
All I see is a big red stain. Probably blood, probably CARMINE DESALVO'S.

DIME
Exactly!

GRIST

Maybe he had a nosebleed.
Wouldn't surprise me with all
the shit he's been shoving up it
lately.

DIME

Jesus, he's been killed,
probably by his own guys,
probably by ARNIE BERNARDO and
his band of miscreants.

GRIST

You've been reading those big-
boy books again, haven't you?

DIME shakes her head in frustration.

GRIST

Without a body, it's unlikely
the DA will file, especially
when the crime scene's been
cleaned.

DIME

It's a murder!

GRIST

It's CARMINE DESALVO we're
talking about; maybe somebody
did the city a favour.

DIME

We have to do something.

GRIST

If you insist... we'll pay
BERNARDO and his girlfriend a
visit. Maybe we shake a few
trees to see if any nuts fall
out, but I wouldn't count on it.

FADE OUT

Coming Soon

GRIST FOR THE MILL
Everything Means Something

