

AN AMERICAN ATTORNEY IN LONDON  
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Written by

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1 FROM BLACK, NOISES HEARD: 1

The rising THUNDER of an approaching tube train competes with the vaguely unsettling DRONE of a station announcement. The sub-surface ROAR builds in intensity until bleeds into --

2 EXT. CENTRAL LONDON TUBE STATION - MORNING 2

The TUMULTUOUS SYMPHONY of a busy London street. Traffic RUMBLES, horns and sirens BLARE and WAIL. New York attorney ROBERT LOGAN (52), burly, square-jawed and smart-suited, emerges from the station and hurries across the road.

3 EXT. UNITED STATES EMBASSY 3

MONTAGE:

- ECU's of EISENHOWER and REAGAN statues
- Stars and Stripes flying above the embassy
- Logan approaching embassy security gate. Slows.

EMBASSY OFFICIAL (O.C.)  
Mister Logan. Step this way please.

4 INT. EMBASSY HALLWAYS 4

Logan follows the official, ADMIN OFFICER FELIX, through the building. Felix stops outside an interview room, gestures inside.

FELIX  
This is you.

\*  
\*

CUT TO: \*

5 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS 5

Logan enters, sets his briefcase on the table. The space is oppressive, low-ceilinged, like a precinct interrogation room. Two metal chairs face off across a table. Old Glory hangs limp on a pole in a corner.

FELIX  
Take a seat. We'll be right with you.

\*

LOGAN  
How long will this--?

The door is already closing behind Felix. Logan drapes his jacket over the back of a chair, sits. And waits.

## MONTAGE:

- A bored Logan yawns, cracks his knuckles. He glances at a portrait of President Barack Obama on the opposite wall.
- Slack tie, sleeves rolled up, searching his pockets for something. Giving up.
- Checking his watch, remembers he isn't wearing one. He's troubled by the dirt and the dried blood in his fingernails.

## BACK TO SCENE

The door sweeps open and CONSULAR OFFICER PORTER (40's) breezes in, accompanied by Felix. Porter wears a bland two-piece, no makeup, no jewellery. The archetypal foreign service bureaucrat.

LOGAN (CONT'D)  
About goddam time.

PORTER  
My apologies. We're very busy.

LOGAN  
Really.  
(beat)  
Nice room. You do much waterboarding in here?

PORTER  
(sitting)  
My name is Porter. I'll be reviewing your case.

LOGAN  
My case? I lost my passport, period. I got a pre-trial hearing in Manhattan the day after next, so I need a replacement, pronto.

Porter ignores Logan's impatience. Felix hands her a buff folder from a stack he's carrying.

FELIX  
This is Robert Patrick Logan, born September fifteenth, nineteen sixty-four.

Porter opens the folder, smooths the first page, reads. Felix takes a seat against the wall, observes.

PORTER  
So, I see you're a defence attorney, a senior partner at Tanner, Logan and Neary.

LOGAN

Correct. I'm in London on business,  
a witness deposition. I've got the  
paperwork right here.

(reaches into his  
briefcase)

Wait a minute--

Logan's POV: The case is empty.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

Goddamit, I thought I--

(beat)

I must've left them back at the  
hotel.

PORTER

Can we proceed, Mister Logan?  
There's quite a backlog.

LOGAN

(distracted)

Sure.

PORTER

Thank you.

(reading from file)

So, Robert Logan, from Mountain  
Lakes New Jersey, social security  
number nine-nine-seven-oh-nine-six-  
six-one-three. Married to Karen  
Logan for fifteen years, two boys,  
Josh, eleven, and Caleb, eight.

(flipping a page)

You're a registered voter, file  
your taxes on time, country club  
membership, occasional churchgoer,  
some charitable contributions, a  
little community engagement and pro  
bono work...

(beat, looks up)

Quite a resumé, Mister Logan. Or  
can I call you Bobby?

LOGAN

Knock yourself out.

PORTER

Your file tells me a lot about you.  
The usual details of course, but  
it's important that we understand  
Bobby Logan *the person*.

LOGAN

Is that so? The State Department  
does psych evaluations now?

PORTER

This process is very thorough. For example, would you describe yourself as a decent person? Honest? Compassionate?

LOGAN

Excuse me?

FELIX

It's a simple enough question.

A long beat as Logan drills them both with a courtroom glare.

LOGAN

All due respect - it's Porter, right? It's none of your goddam business if I beat my wife and piss in my neighbour's pool, and sure as hell not the federal government's. You've confirmed my ID, so let's cut the touchy-feely crap and hustle up that passport.

PORTER

You're impatient to be on your way, I understand, but it's not that simple. I need to be satisfied. Before you can be allowed to travel.

LOGAN

Allowed? What does that mean?

PORTER

It means you should think carefully before answering my questions.

Logan leans back in his chair. His eyes narrow.

LOGAN

What do you earn, Porter? No, wait, let me take a shot; mid-level management gig, government salary, health plan - no way six-figures. Probably closer to mid-five. Am I right?

\*

PORTER

This is not about money.

LOGAN

Sure it is. You know who I am. You know I work the high profile cases. You probably seen me on TV too. I'm an important guy. But right now I'm here, in your house, so maybe you wanna fuck with me a little.

PORTER

And why would I do that?

LOGAN

Who knows? Maybe you failed the bar exam. Maybe you don't like the kind of people I represent. Fact is, I don't care, but know this, just in case it's not in your precious file: harassment suits are a speciality of mine. And I always win. Big. So either give me my passport or I start making calls. Chop, chop.

A long beat. Porter holds Logan's belligerent stare.

PORTER

As I said, I need to be satisfied.

LOGAN

(relents)

Sure, whatever. Ask away, goddamit.

PORTER

Remember, it's important you answer truthfully. This will be your one and only opportunity.

LOGAN

Really? Well let's just assume for a moment that I don't cooperate. That I decide my constitutional rights are being infringed. What happens then?

PORTER

Then you'll have to answer to others.

LOGAN

(wary)

What others?

PORTER

Can we continue? As I mentioned, there's quite a backlog.

A beat as Logan recalibrates, prepares for battle.

LOGAN

(straightening)

Sure. Let's do this.

Porter studies the file.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

PORTER

On the tenth of November two-thousand and fourteen you argued for the successful acquittal of your client, one Salvatore Gallo, a senior member of a New Jersey organised crime family. Gallo had been indicted on nine counts of racketeering and four counts of murder in the first degree.

LOGAN

Correct. That's a matter of public record.

6 FLASHBACK - INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

6

MONTAGE:

- Three men are enjoying dinner, two smartly-dressed wise guys and a US Marshal in civilian clothes.

PORTER (V.O.)

State's evidence relied heavily on the testimony of two informants. At the time both men were being held in protective custody, courtesy of the witness protection program.

- A man ENTERS the restaurant, gold chain glinting beneath his black leather jacket, a Giants baseball cap pulled low. He spots the trio, moves out of frame.

PORTER (V.O.)

Through a series of corrupt law enforcement contacts you acquired the address of the witness safe house and passed it to a member of the Gallo family.

- The camera PUSHING into the table. Baseball Cap MOVES QUICKLY INTO FRAME, his arm extended, gun in hand, pointed at the skull of the unsuspecting Marshal. The wise guys look up. Panic.

CUT TO BLACK

From black, we HEAR the repeated CRACK of an automatic pistol, the SCREAMS of the diners, the CRASH of cutlery and broken glass.

BACK TO SCENE

7

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

7

PORTER

Shortly thereafter the witnesses  
were murdered, along with a US  
Marshal. Because of you.

Porter drills Logan across the table as he processes the  
information. A long beat. Then:

LOGAN

That's a serious accusation,  
Porter. If I were you I would think  
long and hard about--

\*

PORTER

(over)

The Marshal was married, with three  
young children. You robbed them of  
their father. You. Personally.

LOGAN

The next words out of your mouth  
better be a retraction or this  
meeting is over.

PORTER

You may not have pulled the trigger  
but their blood is on your hands.

(beat)

Think very carefully, Bobby. This  
is your only chance to cooperate.

LOGAN

(standing)

Bullshit. We're done here.

\*

PORTER

How did it make you feel when you  
heard the news? Did you feel  
regret? Remorse?

LOGAN

(pulling on his jacket)

I want the name of your superior.

PORTER

Joseph McVeigh.

LOGAN

(searching his coat  
pockets for a pen and  
notepad)

He's what, your head of department?

PORTER  
(re: file)  
Joseph McVeigh, a thirty-one year  
old community worker from  
Hawthorne, New Jersey.

CUT TO:

8 FLASHBACK - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

8

Dark, devoid of life. A Bruce Springsteen song leaks from a nearby bar. LOW ANGLE TRACK between TWO PARKED CARS to reveal a younger Bobby Logan repeatedly kicking and stamping on an unconscious McVeigh as he lies prone on the asphalt.

\*

PORTER (V.O.)  
In the summer of nineteen-eighty nine you beat Joseph half to death in the parking lot of the Rail Yard bar because, and I quote, *he looked like a fag*. You were drunk and angry that night, for no reason at all. You just wanted to hurt someone. Anyone.

9 BACK TO SCENE

9

A stunned Logan slowly retakes his seat.

FELIX  
You played football in college, right Bobby? Quarterback? On the night of the attack you outweighed Joe by a hundred pounds. Big guy like you, wailing on a guy like that? That ain't right.

\*  
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PORTER  
When he finally regained consciousness Joseph told the police he couldn't remember his attacker, but that was a lie. In fact he was deeply traumatised by the incident. He started drinking heavily. He lost his job, then later his home. Relationships with family and friends broke down. He became a heroin addict, and ended up on the streets.

(beat)  
A promising life ruined. By you.

LOGAN  
How the hell did you--?

PORTER

(over)

In the fall of nineteen ninety-seven Joe robbed and stabbed a young woman to death in Philadelphia. The victim, Monica Salas, had been planning to marry her high school sweetheart. Had that union taken place she would've had children--

LOGAN

Bullshit. There's no way you can know that.

\*  
\*

PORTER

(tapping the file)

It's all right here. You see where this is going, Bobby? This lack of remorse, this disregard for the consequences of your actions? It's been a pattern throughout your life.

(beat)

My advice to you right now is to take responsibility. Own your mistakes. Regret them.

LOGAN

I'm not saying another goddam word, lady. You want to bring the Feds in here, charge me with some bullshit, go right ahead. Otherwise, you'd better lawyer up.

PORTER

That's regrettable, because there's much to answer for.

(re: file)

In February oh-nine you impregnated thirty-one year old Rachel Ryan, a paralegal at your office. When Rachel begged you for help you terminated the relationship, demanded that she abort the child, had her physically threatened by your mob friends--

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

LOGAN

(over)

That's enough.

PORTER

Naturally you didn't tell your wife, but Karen knew.

(MORE)

PORTER (CONT'D)

The pain of that betrayal  
devastated her, but she couldn't  
confront you because she was  
frightened of what you'd become--

Logan EXPLODES out of his chair and SLAMS his big hands on the table. He looms over Porter, jabbing a thick finger in her face, his temper finally boiling over.

LOGAN

Shut your goddam mouth! And stay  
the fuck out of my personal  
business, you understand me?

(beat, low)

You think I'm going to fess up to  
any of your bullshit, Porter? You  
want me to cry like a pussy? Show  
remorse? Not a chance in Hell,  
lady. Now give me my goddam  
passport so I can get the fuck  
outta here. You hear me?

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\*

Porter doesn't flinch. Felix drills Logan with unblinking eyes. Logan falters, glances down at the file on the table. The pages are BLANK. He spins it around, skims through it. Every single page is blank. He SWEEPS it onto the floor, his eyes flicking from Porter to Felix.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

What the hell's going on here? What  
is this?

\*

FELIX

Sit down, Bobby.

(beat)

You know what this is.

He glances at the painting on the wall, only now OBAMA has been replaced by a GRINNING RONNIE REAGAN. In the corner, OLD GLORY has morphed into a mop and bucket. Logan folds into his seat, the wind snatched from his sails.

LOGAN

Am I dreaming? This is a dream,  
right?

PORTER

(shakes her head)

It's easier if you just accept it.

LOGAN

I can't. I just--

(beat)

I don't want to, goddamit.

PORTER

You don't have a choice.

LOGAN  
Why here? Why this place?

PORTER  
Expectation. Familiarity. It makes  
the transition easier. You were on  
your way here when it happened.

LOGAN  
I don't remember.

PORTER  
Of course you don't. The  
subconscious will fight to block  
the process. It's a perfectly  
natural reaction.

Logan's shoulders sag in defeat.

LOGAN  
(low)  
What the hell happened to me?

CUT TO:

10 FLASHBACK - INT. LONDON TUBE STATION - MORNING 10

Logan hops off the down escalator. As he heads towards the platform, he COLLIDES with another commuter.

PORTER (V.O.)  
You'd call it fate, but nothing is  
preordained. It's the way  
everything works. Universal  
collisions. \*

The commuter, a dishevelled and deeply troubled DANNY COLLINS (40) stares at Logan's departing back. Then follows him.

PORTER (V.O.)  
It was physical contact, nothing  
more than that. The briefest of  
moments.

Collins hurries after Logan.

LOGAN (V.O.)  
Who was he?

Logan stands on the platform, close to the mouth of the tunnel, his hair ruffled by the wind of the fast-approaching train. Below his feet, the tracks SING.

PORTER (V.O.)  
His name was Daniel Collins, a  
paranoid schizophrenic. He'd been  
off his meds for over a week.

SLOW PAN AROUND an oblivious Logan to see Collins standing directly behind him. Collins raises his hands as the ROAR of the train builds and the station announcement DRONES.

PORTER (V.O.)

He was determined to kill someone that day. It just happened to be you.

CUT TO BLACK.

We hear the SQUEAL of train wheels, the SCREAMS of passengers.

11 BACK TO SCENE 11

12 INT. INTERVIEW ROOM 12

Logan is crushed. Frightened.

LOGAN

This isn't right. I'm not ready. It should be that nut job sitting here, not me. I got kids for Chrissakes.

PORTER

Your children are fine. Thriving in fact, thanks to your demise. Karen found a good man--

LOGAN

(over)  
Already? Cold bitch.

PORTER

Your concept of time has no meaning here. You've been dead for several years already. Karen remarried, and she's very happy. Josh is at Cornell, and Caleb an honour student at Mountain Lakes High. Your death transformed their lives.

LOGAN

What about me? What happens to me?

PORTER

That's always been the problem, hasn't it? What's best for Bobby Logan?

(beat)

Human beings are capable of so much good, yet you chose a very different path.

LOGAN

I can't help who I am, goddamit.  
None of us can. It's encoded,  
genetics, DNA, whatever the fuck.

PORTER

Not true. You had choices. Even  
here, in this place, you had the  
opportunity to atone for the lives  
you've destroyed. To alter the  
outcome. That opportunity has now  
passed. Your journey will continue  
of course, but the path will be  
very different from the one you  
might have imagined.

Porter and Felix stand, linger by the open door.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Someone else will be with you  
shortly. \*

They leave the room. Logan slumps in his chair utterly  
defeated.

After several beats the lights begin to flicker. A frightened  
Logan looks up as he hears a confusion of sounds beyond the  
door; distant, unintelligible SHOUTING and WAILING. Other  
tortured souls.

ON LOGAN - SLOW TRACK RIGHT as a PALE FIGURE is revealed \*  
sitting in the shadows behind him - a demon from the \*  
underworld, a harvester of corrupt souls. It stands and walks \*  
slowly towards Logan. \*

TIGHT ON LOGAN - as he feels this new presence in the room. \*  
Too terrified to turn around, he is rooted to his chair. The \*  
overhead lights begin to blink and stutter. \*

The demon stops directly behind Logan. As the overheads \*  
flicker manically the demon rests an ancient hand on Logan's \*  
shoulder. Logan glimpses the eternity of pain that lies ahead \*  
and opens his mouth in a final, silent scream of terror. \*

The hands squeezes. The room is plunged into darkness. \*

Moments later, when light returns, Logan and the demon are \*  
gone, leaving behind an empty room and a vortex of swirling \*  
blank paper. \*