

GILBRIDE

An original screenplay

By

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GILBRIDE

A SYNOPSIS

What happened to Stuart Gilbride could happen to anyone - except Stuart Gilbride wasn't just anyone. Motivated by greed, power and the adrenaline surge he dragged from life, Gilbride became unwittingly entwined in the mysteries that surround political intrigue and international financial crime. Like many businessmen before him, Gilbride paid for his crimes; being blackmailed by the British Government as an undercover "courier". In the early seventies Gilbride stumbled headlong into this trap. However, circumstances and his own guile allowed him to turn the tables on the very Government that entrapped him.

GILBRIDE – the screenplay is based on a number of actual events spanning across three decades. His story is told partly in flashback; captured whilst in a London hospital during his consultation with a South African psychiatrist, Dr Danei Calitz. Commencing earlier that year with Gilbride's attempted suicide from the roof of a London office building. Gilbride is in possession of sensitive papers, which if released could destabilise the British Government, shake the foundations of the British establishment, whilst discrediting many international businessmen - together with dislodging many African politicians from office.

Gilbride roots are humble, from the East End of London where his family lived in post war poverty. His Northern Irish mother subjecting him to horrendously Dickensian treatment. The only saving grace being his cockney father, who idolised the boy. At fourteen, having stolen his getaway fund, he leaves the East End to rebuild his life away from the memories of his painful childhood. Gilbride transforms his life, recreating himself as a cultured well-spoken businessman.

In 1972, England is in the grip of draconian exchange control regulations. Businesses making substantial cash incomes are naturally reluctant to pass their hard-earned profits to Edward Heath's failing government. These businessmen seeking ways to remove their cash from England to safer havens. Gilbride, an entrepreneurial accountant, devises ingenious methods to solve the problem. His clients coming from diverse backgrounds - the British landed gentry, London's rag trade, and famous Italian movie personalities. Millions are secreted in hidden compartments of his Mercedes Cabriolet, driven to Switzerland, where the illegal funds are stashed in numbered accounts for him and his clients. Regular trips are made, often accompanied by his young Italian mistress, who quickly rumbles his scam.

As the cash flows in, Gilbride becomes increasingly greedy, helping himself to increasing slices from his client's cash. When Jamie Boynton, London's rag trade king discovers Gilbride's theft, there's a major crunch. There's nothing Boynton, the landed gentry, or the Italian film stars can do by reporting him to the authorities. Seemingly Gilbride is fire proof. His enemies are dangerous, threatening vengeance; so Gilbride makes his enemies aware he has placed information with a Swiss lawyer, only to be released in the event of his untimely death.

Gilbride is unaware his activities are being monitored by British Customs & Excise. On a flight from Los Angeles to London in 1973, returning from a legitimate business trip, he meets an American woman, Casey Stanton. They arrange a dinner date in London, which has unexpected consequences. On arrival at Heathrow, Gilbride is taken to a Customs office where Casey introduces herself as a CIA agent, on temporary secondment to the British Government. Gilbride is shown a detailed record of his money laundering activities and told of the custodial penalties to follow. To his surprise he's released, told he will be contacted later by her colleagues. Gilbride meets Casey at an

anonymous looking office in South London, where a British Government agent explains that in return for amnesty from conviction, Gilbride will act as their courier, delivering and collecting packages around the world. There's no indication which Government department this work is for, or the identity of the agents. Gilbride visits many countries, on occasions meeting Casey as his contact. For each trip Gilbride is provided with a plausible cover story for his business colleagues. His legitimate business prospers, building a network of valuable contacts around the world.

In 1974 Gilbride flies to Cape Town, where on arrival he is to meet Mickey Patterson. Gilbride and Patterson travel to the main Cape Town rail freight depot. There, they uncover British goods sold to South Africa companies, being trans-shipped to Ian Smith's illegal regime in Rhodesia, all in contravention of British Government sanctions. They are spotted by armed guards, just managing to escape, but not before photographing the illegal cargoes.

Patterson flies Gilbride north on the pretext of returning him to Johannesburg. They over-fly Johannesburg entering Rhodesia, where they land at an isolated farm near Fort Victoria, to meet up with the farmer and his wife, who are spies for the British government. Four members of PATU, Ian Smith's anti-terrorist security force and Casey have arrived first. The farmer, his wife and most of their workers are killed by the PATU, but Gilbride and Patterson escape a bloody fire-fight. Four PATU soldiers are shot dead, but Casey escapes, running away into the bush. Gilbride chases her in a PATU Tusker, inadvertently running over her, squashing the American agent beneath the vehicle. Casey had been working undercover in Rhodesia, for both the British and American Governments. Gilbride removes sensitive documents she had taken from the farm.

Communist terrorists attack the farm, killing all except Gilbride. He's taken prisoner and trekked back to the Rhodesian border, where they attempt to cross the Limpopo at night, back into South Africa. But a young Edwin Mulato attempts to help him escape from the terrorists, in the process Gilbride pulls him from the flooding Limpopo. Gilbride has retained the secret files he took from Casey's body which contain details of illegal arms suppliers, British companies breaking sanctions, and copies of secret Rhodesian government documents. Gilbride hides the documents in deposit boxes in Johannesburg and New York - where they still remain.

Back in London, Gilbride considers his position. He's making legitimate profits under the guise of the Government cover. Eventually, Gilbride decides to expose his hand, enough is enough - it's time to blackmail the blackmailers. There's no reply, no further contact is made by the British agents. Gilbride becomes nervous, uncertain whether he's overplayed his hand. The years pass, events slip from his mind as he concentrates on his international business and an endless stream of young lovers.

In 1997 he returns to Zimbabwe to complete a substantial business deal with a leading government Minister and high ranking officials. He's invited to the home of the now Minister Edwin Mulato, who recalls to Gilbride the horrific events of 1974. Gilbride is initially unaware this is the same man who helped him escape from Rhodesia in 1974 and whose life he saved. Mulato decides to manipulate Gilbride suggesting the Zimbabwean police may still wish to interview him regarding mass murder. In return for overlooking the event, Gilbride is asked by Mulato to launder substantial sums of money stolen from Government contracts. With his knowledge of the international banking system, Gilbride hides their money in untraceable accounts. A leopard doesn't change his spots, and as in the seventies he removes extra cash for himself. Unhappy with the lack of financial information Gilbride offers them, the Africans force a meeting with him.

Gilbride is trapped. His past surrounding him, the noose tightening. For the first time in his life he accepts that many people would be happier with him dead, silenced for good. Those having tasted Gilbride's morality; amongst them establishment landowners now peers of the realm, Boynton and his cronies and several of the Italian movie Mafia. Not to mention sections of the British Secret

Service, the CIA and many South African businesses. Now there were more - powerful black Africans, amongst them Mulato, scammed by his latest escapade.

But Gilbride's fortunes change again. President Mugabe comes to his rescue. Several of the high ranking Zimbabweans whose money he'd laundered are trapped by the Presidents regime. Leading political figures are under "house arrest", save they rebel against the President in forthcoming elections. Gilbride contacts Mulato whose has long been a critic of the President. Mulato and his family fear for their lives. Gilbride arranges their escape from Zimbabwe and makes a cash-fighting fund available for Mulato who is determined to overthrow the President. Mulato pays the price. Gilbride's fee cleans out Mulato's remaining money, so once Gilbride's friend he vows to kill him.

The story closes at the hospital. But unsuspected by Gilbride he has inherited yet another enemy. Dr Calitz, whose parents were killed in the carnage on the Rhodesian farm in 1974. The hospital becomes a war zone as various henchmen close in for the kill. Gilbride escapes the hospital together with his backpack and the documents.