

THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS

Written by

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FADE IN:

AN AIRPORT SECURITY LINE - AFTERNOON

JONATHAN RYDELL kicks off his SHOES, tears the BELT from his WELL-TAILORED PANTS, and tosses both on top of a LAPTOP in a BIN.

They disappear into the X-RAY MACHINE.

JONATHAN grabs hold of his large CARRY-ON and drags it up from the floor and onto the CONVEYOR BELT.

The CONVEYOR BELT stops: the bag is too big for the X-RAY MACHINE.

A SECURITY SCREENER glances up from her console at JONATHAN.

SCREENER

Sir, I'm afraid you're going to have to step to the side and repack that bag.

JONATHAN

Do you know how many times I've been through here? Do you have any idea?

SCREENER

If you want us to do it for you...

JONATHAN

(in a huff)
I got it.

He pushes down on the top, but the belt doesn't move. He hops up and wriggles on it, then pushes in the sides and finally manages to stuff it inside the machine.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

I told you. A hundred times I've done this.

He steps up to the METAL DETECTOR, but a SECURITY GUARD raises his hand.

GUARD

Jacket, please.

JONATHAN

(under his breath)
Like Bin Laden wears Armani...

GUARD
Excuse me, sir?

JONATHAN
Nothing.

He removes his COAT and sticks it on the CONVEYOR BELT, then steps through the METAL DETECTOR. It beeps.

GUARD
Step back, remove any metal you may have on your person and place it in a tray.

JONATHAN
Come on, man! I came through here two weeks ago. Don't you know who I work for?

GUARD
Please step back, remove any metal you may have--

JONATHAN
Yeah, yeah...

He steps back, slips off his WATCH, a CHAIN from around his neck, and a TIE CLIP...

...as the SECURITY GUARD waves through the next guy on the line:

DANNY FIORI, a guy who's about the same age as Jonathan, but whose appearance couldn't be any more different: BOOTS with thick, chunky heels, a prominent METAL BUCKLE on his belt, a WALLET attached to his belt by a CHAIN, and SUNGLASSES hanging lazily on his stubbled face. He's also carrying a LARGE, HEAVY-DUTY CASE that he doesn't put on the CONVEYOR BELT.

GUARD
Jacket, please. And the suitcase.

DANNY walks through the METAL DETECTOR without removing his jacket.

It beeps.

The GUARD glances at DANNY over the rims of his glasses.

GUARD (CONT'D)
I said...

DANNY nonchalantly opens his coat...

...revealing SOMETHING that makes the SECURITY GUARD take a big step back. Then he leans forward, tentatively, and glances at it for a moment before gulping down a mouthful of spit.

GUARD (CONT'D)
...have a nice trip. Gate 3 for Rome.

DANNY walks on.

JONATHAN walks up to the METAL DETECTOR.

JONATHAN
Can I go now?

The GUARD waves him through.

The METAL DETECTOR beeps again.

GUARD
Please step back, remove any--

JONATHAN
Hold on, wait a second...

The GUARD rolls his eyes and frowns impatiently as...

...JONATHAN digs into his pocket. He removes a leather ID case and shows it to the GUARD. The ID shows JONATHAN'S name and photograph and says that he works for the GLOBAL MONETARY FUND.

The GUARD looks at it closely, then hands it back.

GUARD
Please step back, remove any metal you may have on your person and place it in a tray.

CUT TO:

A LEGEND

Two weeks earlier.

BACK TO:

EXT. A GOVERNMENT BUILDING

...in the CAPITAL OF MINOA, a Mediterranean country with an ancient heritage. The PLAQUE on the DOOR announces that the building belongs to the MINOAN MINISTRY OF FINANCE.

INSIDE

...three ancient ADVISORS with grim faces (NICOLAOU, MORAITIS, and PANAGAKOS)-- and a younger, cagier one named TSIKIS-- perch around the edge of a circular table, open FOLDERS filled with PAGES OF STATISTICS in front of them. The oldest one of all presides over them: the MINISTER OF FINANCE.

A serious-looking WOMAN in the corner takes notes.

NICOLAOU

Standard and Poor intends to downgrade us across the board. Bond market's tanking under the rumors- I don't want to think about what'll happen when the announcement comes.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

The euro?

MORAITIS

Wouldn't call it a run just yet, but sinking fast against the dollar.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

And the Germans?

PANAGAKOS

Stalling, of course. Think the Euro's overvalued. Undermining exports, compromising growth. Nothing new, but...

MINISTER OF FINANCE

We're doing their work for them. They ought to be grateful.

PANAGAKOS

I'm sure they are.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

Unofficially.

PANAGAKOS

Unofficially.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Overtures to the GMF?

A FOURTH ADVISOR shakes his head.

MINISTER OF FINANCE (CONT'D)
What's on their menu?

TSIKIS
The sane course. Divestment of public utilities and state enterprises, privatization of key sectors-- education, health and so forth.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
We're not a banana republic.

MORAITIS
If it's any consolation I'm sure they're burning up over the fact that they can't make us float the currency.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
If we say yes?

TSIKIS
200 billion.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Dollars or euro?

PANAGAKOS
Won't make much difference by the time it comes through.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Won't make any difference if we take it. Nothing to spend it on. Cut checks for the commercial banks and then what?

NICOLAOU
I'm sure they'd be grateful.

MORAITIS
And demonstrative.

This raises a few knowing smiles and chuckles around the table...

SNAP! goes the tip of the SERIOUS WOMAN'S pencil.

ELENA

Sorry.

Silence as she takes out another one and resumes writing.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

Well, if you're all done telling me that my days are numbered, there's no reason to keep you here. Thank you gentlemen.

They all close their FOLDERS and leave the table, murmuring amongst themselves...

...except for TSIKIS: he walks up to the FINANCE MINISTER.

TSIKIS

The Prime Minister wants a recommendation.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

I'll ring him.

TSIKIS

An official recommendation. For publication.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

I see. He wants me to coil the rope nice and neat for him so he won't botch it when it's time to hang me.

TSIKIS

He'd like it within the week.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

He'd have it in the hour if I'd ever learned to type.

TSIKIS

Thank you, sir.

He walks to the door.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

(to Tsikis)

Is he going to swallow them, Tsikis? The GMF demands?

They stare at one another for a long time, and the younger man breaks first.

TSIKIS
I'm sure I don't know what the PM
intends to swallow.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
That will be all, thank you.

TSIKIS closes the door.

THE SAME - CONTINUOUS

The MINISTER OF FINANCE leans back in his chair and turns
toward the window, away from the PRETTY WOMAN.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Pour me a drink, Elena.

ELENA puts her PENCIL away and closes her PAD.

ELENA
I'm a civil servant, not a hostess.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
And I'm an old man. Facing
extinction.

ELENA crosses the room. She opens a cabinet, takes out a
GLASS-- then hesitates and takes out a SECOND ONE. She pours
long measures of SCOTCH into both and brings them over to the
MINISTER'S DESK.

ELENA
The corruption story isn't going
away.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
I thought I told you to have those
journalists shot.

He sips his drink and sees ELENA sulking, not touching hers.

MINISTER OF FINANCE (CONT'D)
Just a joke. A bad one.

ELENA
Is it true? You as dirty as they
say?

MINISTER OF FINANCE
No more than most.

ELENA
So more than some.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
A little luckier, that's all.

ELENA
So what are you going to do?

MINISTER OF FINANCE
I figure I'll sit down with a nice
chat show host and explain that
when a man reaches a certain age
the hands and mouth of a *slightly*
younger woman are all that really--

ELENA
About the GMF. What's your
recommendation?

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Oh. That. Well, if I tell
Vlasopoulos to say no I'll be
kicked out of cabinet by Friday.
If I tell him to take it, he'll
hand out my home number to the
journalists and let them hound me
out of office by next Friday.

He sips his drink again.

ELENA
How hard do you want to make his
job?

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Think I could start a civil war? I
bet I could. If I recommended a
default. 'Viva Minoa! To hell
with the Yanks and the Krauts' and
all the rest.

ELENA
Is that what you want?

MINISTER OF FINANCE
What do you want?

ELENA
I think...
(she finishes her drink)
To be honest, I think we'd be
better off without the lot of you.

MINISTER OF FINANCE
Serves me right for hiring a good
judge of character.

ELENA

You didn't hire me. I came with the office. Like the furniture.

MINISTER OF FINANCE

Don't let the next guy who sits in this chair treat you like a piece of it.

ELENA

The next...?

MINISTER OF FINANCE

I imagine he'll be here on Friday. Go home-- and pray it won't be Tsikis.

He smiles at ELENA sadly.

ELENA

What'll you do?

MINISTER OF FINANCE

Who knows. Maybe I'll go to America.

She turns and walks out the DOOR, and down:

A SERIES OF LONG HALLWAYS

...until a SHOT stops her dead in her tracks.

She races back to the MINISTER'S DOOR...

...throws it open...

...and sees the MINISTER OF FINANCE at his desk, lying face down in a PUDDLE OF BLOOD with a PISTOL in his hand.

A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE

...pops its CORK, which sails inches away from the face of:

JONATHAN RYDELL

...as he saunters through the door of:

THE GLOBAL MONETARY FUND OFFICE - DAY

He dives for cover and the CORK bounces harmlessly off the wall.

GMF CROWD

Surprise!

A few of the PARTYGOERS help the stunned man to his feet. As he looks around he sees BALLOONS hanging from the ugly, functional FLUORESCENT FIXTURES, and a hand-lettered SIGN glaring down at him from just above the door. It reads: WELCOME BACK FROM SAN PEDRO, DOCTOR DEMOCRACY!

JONATHAN

Christ- thought I was back in San Pedro for a second there...

ERIC FREEMAN, an older man who carries himself with authority, steps up to JONATHAN and offers his hand.

FREEMAN

You smell like you never left.

JONATHAN

(shakes Freeman's hand)
No time for a shower.

FREEMAN

See the papers yet?

JONATHAN

Just the duty free catalogue.

FREEMAN

Two days out and inflation's down by half. Even the market's are starting to settle.

JONATHAN

Only doing my job.

FREEMAN

The Washington Consensus never had a better pitchman. Two weeks ago we were looking at another Venezuela. Today?
(smiles)
All thanks to you.

JONATHAN

Same story everywhere. People have bad information and they make bad decisions. I just point them back in the right direction.

FREEMAN

Too bad our friends in San Pedro aren't the only ones with bad information.

JONATHAN raises his eyebrows, but FREEMAN just claps him on the shoulder.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

Enjoy the bubbly for now. We'll talk next week. Upstairs. Give my love to Kelly.

ON A TREE-LINED STREET - NIGHT

A SLEEK SPORTS CAR pulls up in front of a GORGEOUS HOUSE with a PERFECTLY MANICURED LAWN.

JONATHAN cuts the ENGINE, humming an upbeat tune to himself, then POPS the TRUNK, hops out, and grabs his BAG. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out his KEYS as he bounds up the steps to the front door. He slides the KEY into the LOCK...

...only it doesn't fit.

He tries a different key and it doesn't fit either. He looks at it, tries it one more time, then frowns and shoves the KEYRING back in his pocket.

He drops his BAGS on the PORCH and pushes his way past a SHRUB into the GARDEN PATCH in front of the shuttered MAIN WINDOW. Then he bends down and picks up a ROCK. He flips it over and wipes off the BUGS, GRUBS, and DIRT-- revealing a COMPARTMENT. He slides the MOCK ROCK open and finds:

AN ENVELOPE bearing the name of legal firm ANDERSON AND LITTLE LLP. A small note in a neat, feminine hand says: TALK AT BRUNCH TOMORROW, K.

JONATHAN

This again.

He shoves the LETTER into his BAG.

AT A COLLEGE CAMPUS - LATER

JONATHAN'S CAR zips down a TREE-LINED THOROUGHFARE, past the imposing COLLEGE LIBRARY.

He parks in front of a more modern OFFICE BUILDING.

JONATHAN'S OFFICE

...greeted him like a neglectful parent when he unlocks the door: the BOOKCASES groan under the weight of their OVERSTUFFED SHELVES, and the PAPERS on his desk render it practically invisible. The only sign of life is the COMPUTER SCREEN, which presents a running slideshow of JONATHAN'S high-flying career. Each new photo shows him with his arm around a US PRESIDENT, a FOREIGN DIGNITARY, or a ROCK STAR.

He tosses his BAG on his CHAIR. He opens a DRAWER, takes out a BOTTLE OF MOUTHWASH, and gulps some down.

He gives the MOUSE a shake and the SLIDESHOW stops. He fires up the WEB BROWSER, navigates to a VIDEO NEWSFEED, then moves a few CHAIRS around to make an uncomfortable-looking BED.

He lies down as the NEWSFEED shows a fluff piece on a celebrity tantrum...

...but the CHAIR where he places his head wobbles. He reaches up to the bookshelf, grabs a copy of CAPITALISM AND FREEDOM, and shoves it under the WOBBLY LEG.

He closes his eyes.

On the COMPUTER SCREEN, a perfectly groomed ANCHORWOMAN announces INTERNATIONAL NEWS.

ANCHORWOMAN

And now the latest from San Pedro, where the recent austerity measures implemented to curb the country's astronomical inflation rates have resulted in a backlash from leftist and communist terror groups. Bryce Delaney has more from the capital.

A SERIES OF SHOTS show indigenous people carrying PROTEST SIGNS in the ZÓCALO, STUDENTS AND WORKERS with HEAD SCARFS and BALACLAVAS clashing with enormous POLICE CORDONS, TANKS and ARMORED VEHICLES rolling through the city's streets.

BRYCE (V.O.)

The trouble began two days ago,
when the government announced
massive cuts in public spending to
help bring San Pedro's spiraling
inflation rates under control.

The PROGRAM CUTS to LIAM RIVERA, PRESIDENT OF SAN PEDRO,
speaking at a press conference.

LIAM RIVERA

San Pedro is sick and needs to take
its medicine. Nobody expects it to
taste like candy--

(laughter from the PRESS
CORPS)

--but fiscal responsibility demands
that we introduce certain measures
and we can't-- we *won't*-- allow
terrorists to prevent our country
from getting healthy again.

The PROGRAM CUTS to SECURITY CAMERA FOOTAGE of a CAR
EXPLODING near the PRESIDENTIAL PALACE.

BRYCE (V.O.)

Following the bombing of the
Presidential Palace by terrorists
thought to be linked to the
People's Liberation Army of San
Pedro the government has instituted
martial law...

The PROGRAM CUTS back to shots of POLICE CORDONS, MILITARY
VEHICLES, and PROTESTORS retreating from the SQUARE.

BRYCE

...with strict enforcement of
curfews in areas suspected of
harboring terrorists and the
closure of two media outlets
accused of inciting violence. Back
to you, Sue.

The PROGRAM CUTS back to the ANCHORWOMAN.

ANCHORWOMAN

Well I'm sure that the people of
San Pedro are grateful that the
government is taking these threats
to its fledgling democracy
seriously.

(MORE)

ANCHORWOMAN (CONT'D)

And now, two problems you don't usually hear about together: sex addiction among the obese. Medical correspondent Cyrus Patel has more...

As the PROGRAM CUTS to a shot of TWO ENORMOUS BELLIES pressed together...

...JONATHAN snores.

DANNY FIORI

...walks down a busy MANHATTAN STREET and turns into:

A CROWDED BOOKSHOP - DAY

...where he pushes his way through a crowd of people at THE BAG CHECK COUNTER and then through a TURNSTILE.

He walks to the back of the shop, following SIGNS marked FICTION, with ARROWS pointing the way to the shelves.

He walks down the aisle marked EC-FU and pauses in front of a SHELF.

He picks out a novel by FREDERICK FORSYTHE: DAY OF THE JACKAL. He cracks it open...

...and removes a red PLASTIC CARD stamped with the NUMBER 22.

He closes the BOOK and puts it back on the SHELF.

He walks back through the TURNSTILE to...

THE BAG CHECK

...where he hands the clerk the PLASTIC CARD.

The CLERK reaches back to a BANK OF CUBBYHOLES and grabs a BAG from one of them. He tosses the PLASTIC CARD into the space where the bag was a moment ago and gives the BAG to DANNY.

DANNY

Thanks.

OUTSIDE THE BOOKSHOP

DANNY opens the bag and sees an IPOD sitting atop a FLANNEL SHIRT.

He puts the IPOD in his jacket pocket.

DANNY

Bonus.

Then he takes out the SHIRT...

...and stuffs it into a GARBAGE CAN on the corner.

At the bottom of the bag he finds A ROLL OF MONEY. He puts it in his pocket too, then stuffs the bag into the GARBAGE CAN.

ON THE SUBWAY

The TRAIN rattles through a DARK TUNNEL before emerging into the EXURBS: a GRIM LANDSCAPE of FACTORIES and WAREHOUSES with BROKEN WINDOWS, and endless ROWS OF IDENTICAL HOUSES. DANNY watches as this scenery passes by and smiles. He's home.

DANNY takes the IPOD out of his pocket and plugs in a set of EARPHONES.

He flips through the music on the IPOD-- almost all of it some variety of POP or RAP-- until he reaches RICHARD WAGNER, GOTTERDAMMERUNG.

He hits play and OPERA MUSIC shrieks through the headphones.

He FAST FORWARDS to the end. The OPERA continues, then abruptly cuts out.

MALE VOICE

Next Sunday. LeCarre. The Spy Who
Came In From The Cold.

A HOUSE IN THE BOROUGHES - DAY

DING-DONG. A WOMAN who'd be pretty if she had the time to make herself pretty opens the door and finds DANNY smoking a CIGARETTE on the front stoop. He flicks the BUTT into the street.

DANNY

Any room at the inn?

JESSICA
I don't know if I trust the looks
of you.

DANNY
Smart, Jess. Just like Dad taught
us.

JESSICA
Hope you're hungry. When I told
Stef you were coming she made me do
a carbonara.

DANNY
Nah- gotta watch the ol' waistline.

JESSICA
Yeah, right.

A cute TEN YEAR-OLD GIRL dashes past her mother and jumps
into DANNY'S arms.

STEF
Uncle Danny!

DANNY
Stef! How's my favorite niece!

JESSICA
When did I give you another one?

AT A PICNIC TABLE

...in a tiny BACKYARD with sparse patches of grass breaking
up the dirt, JESSICA dishes out a few bowls of PASTA.

STEF
I don't understand why you can't be
a policeman here. In New York.

DANNY cracks open a BEER.

DANNY
It's a tough thing, Stef. A lot of
the bad guys don't live in New
York.

JESSICA
Can't afford it.

STEF

But a lot of them do! Someone robbed the deli last week and they never found out who did it. But I know you could.

DANNY

You gotta be smart to catch those guys. Lot smarter than me.

STEF

So the bad guys outside America are stupid?

DANNY

Not stupid, no. Just...

JESSICA

More careless?

DANNY

Yeah. More careless. And more dangerous. So maybe you don't have to be so smart, but you sure gotta be brave.

STEF

Like a soldier.

DANNY

Exactly like a soldier. You know, I was a soldier. A long time ago.

STEF

If you're all brave and stuff, why'd you stop being one?

DANNY darts a glance at JESSICA, who rises from the TABLE.

JESSICA

Help me get dessert ready, honey.

STEF

Mom...

JESSICA

Now.

STEF drags herself to her feet and starts to follow her mother--

--but DANNY catches her by the elbow.

DANNY

I'll tell you why. Cause not everybody loves this country the same way we do. Look at your mom. She works hard for everything she gets. So do you. At school.

STEF

Christina Aguilera doesn't work very hard.

DANNY

Sure she does. She just likes her job. Nothing wrong with that.

STEF

Do you like your job?

JESSICA

(from inside)

Stef!

STEF

Well?

DANNY

I do what I gotta do. For this country. For all of us. Now go help your mom.

STEF rolls her eyes and trudges inside.

AT A FANCY RESTAURANT - DAY

KELLY stirs her BLOODY MARY with a CELERY STALK as a WAITER clears the empty plates from the table.

KELLY

You're like a shark, Jonathan. You can't stop moving.

JONATHAN

A shark. Right. Thanks, Kel. No, really. That's great. I just never heard of a shark trying to help stabilize the currency in a part of the world where the only thing rising faster than inflation is the infant mortality rate. But OK. I'm a shark.

KELLY

I'm not blaming you.

JONATHAN

I don't see anybody else here-- oh, what am I thinking? 'It's not you, it's me.' Right?

KELLY

I thought things would change when you took the job at the university. I was wrong.

JONATHAN

Yeah. Nothing changed. Nothing much. Youngest tenured professor in the history of the economics department. Greenspan and Geldof and Bono on speed dial. Nothing much there. Nothing special. Turned a Stalinist backwater into a functioning democracy last weekend, but hey. Missed 2fer cocktail hour at Elaine's.

KELLY

And my first gallery opening. My first sale. You read my first review in the *New Yorker* on Facebook.

JONATHAN

It's not a big seller in Bogota.

KELLY

You were in Paris.

JONATHAN

I'm sorry.

KELLY

I know.

JONATHAN

Want me to open a vein, write you out an IOU? I mean it. I'm really sorry.

KELLY

I know you are.

JONATHAN

Then what? Stop travelling? Put the work on hold? Maybe it's time I got to work on the book I'm always talking about.

KELLY
Maybe it is.

JONATHAN
Jesus! Help me out here! Throw me
a line. What can I do? Tell me.
Please. What do you want from me?

KELLY
See, that's the thing Jonathan.

JONATHAN
What is?

KELLY
I don't think I want anything.

The WAITER drops the CHECK on the table.

KELLY puts some money down as she gets up. She pushes a SET
OF SHINY NEW KEYS across the table.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Get your stuff. I'll be at my
brother's.

Speechless, JONATHAN watches as she walks to the door.

He SLAMS his fist on the table and rises quickly, knocking
against the leg...

...and knocking over the BLOODY MARY, which falls to the
FLOOR and SHATTERS.

JONATHAN
Bullshit! Everybody wants
something. That's the way the
world works! Everybody always
wants something.

KELLY
Maybe. Just not from you.
Goodbye, Jonathan.

She leaves the RESTAURANT.

AN ATM - DAY

The screen shows several ACCOUNTS: SAVINGS, CHECKING, and one
called STEF-COLLEGE that has the HIGHEST BALANCE by a good
amount.

DANNY hits the button for STEF-COLLEGE, then sticks a thick envelope in the slot.

The ATM spits out a receipt.

DANNY
Ready to go?

STEF doesn't even look up from her HANDHELD VIDEO GAME.

STEF
Uh-huh.

They walk together down the STREET.

A MAN IN A SUIT overtakes them from behind but doesn't stop. In his hand he carries a HARDBACK BOOK:

THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD.

IN THE BOOKSHOP - LATER

DANNY walks through the turnstile. STEF follows a few steps behind, awkwardly trying to keep playing her video game.

DANNY
Give it a rest, huh Stef?

She looks around and for the first time notices they're in a BOOKSHOP. She frowns.

STEF
Where's the DVD's?

DANNY
No DVD's. This a real bookstore.
For reading.

STEF
Booooring.

DANNY
Watch out, honey.

He gently pulls her away from the TURNSTILE so a man can get through: the MAN IN THE SUIT. He smiles down at her and walks past. He no longer has the book in his hand.

DANNY (CONT'D)
There's the history books. Go find something you like.

STEF

Whatever.

She fiddles with her GAME as she trudges off.

DANNY heads for:

THE FICTION SECTION

...where a few CUSTOMERS browse through the L's: A BOOK COLLECTOR and his BUDDY.

DANNY walks up to the shelves and looks for LeCarre. He finds him alright- but there's no trace of THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD.

BOOK COLLECTOR

I bet it was supposed to go to rare books.

BUDDY

Upstairs?

BOOK COLLECTOR

(nods)

First edition. Made LeCarre's reputation. Perfect condition- very valuable.

DANNY bites his lip.

BUDDY

Wasn't there a movie?

BOOK COLLECTOR

Yeah. Richard Burton. Wouldn't have been my first choice, but he did a great job.

BUDDY

How much?

BOOK COLLECTOR

Doesn't say. Just an old bookmark, I think. Hmmmm...

(feeling naughty)

Got a pencil?

BUDDY

Nope. Sorry.

DANNY

I think I got one.

BOOK COLLECTOR
Do you? Great. Make it light.
Don't want to damage it.

The BOOK COLLECTOR hands DANNY the BOOK. He opens it up, then reaches into his coat pocket. But before he takes anything out, his head snaps back and he gasps for air before unleashing:

THE SNEEZE OF THE CENTURY. SPIT, SLIME, and chunky bits of SNOT cover the page.

DANNY
Bronchitis, man. Brutal. Thought
I kicked it.

The BOOK COLLECTOR grabs his BUDDY by the arm and hurries down the aisle.

BOOK COLLECTOR
Well, thanks anyway.

DANNY
No problem.

DANNY opens the book to the page with the BOOKMARK.

It's an airplane ticket to ROME.

DANNY turns the page and sees several UNDERLINED LETTERS that spell out TTSS. He drops the BOOK on a STOOL.

He looks back at the SHELF and picks out a battered copy of TINKER, TAILOR, SOLIDER, SPY. He sets it to the side, then reaches toward the back of the shelf, where he finds...

...a BAG CHECK CARD.

He slips it into his pocket.

THE SAME - MOMENTS LATER

DANNY walks through the bookstore, glancing down each AISLE. He nearly misses STEF...

...who sits on a STOOL, fiddling with her GAME.

DANNY
Find something?

Without looking up she hands him her find:

THE REAL TRUE TOTALLY UNCENSORED STORY OF CHRISTINA AGUILERA.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 At least you're reading. I
 guess...

AT THE BAG CHECK

He hands the CLERK the RED PLASTIC CARD.

The CLERK grabs a HEAVY-DUTY case and swings it around to the desk.

DANNY reaches for it, but the CLERK doesn't take his hand away. Instead he glances at DANNY, then looks at the CASE.

DANNY
 Boss forgot it.

The CLERK smiles.

CLERK
 Ah. 22.

DANNY
What?

CLERK
 22, man.

He points to a faded poster: THE SECRETS TO HAPPINESS. It shows a SUN setting over an anonymous BODY OF WATER, with a long list of numbered PIECES OF WISDOM. Number 22 reads:

NEVER WORK TOO HARD FOR YOUR BOSS. THEY'RE ONLY IN IT FOR WHAT THEY CAN GET OUT OF YOU.

CLERK (CONT'D)
 Am I right?

DANNY
 It's the truth.

The CLERK tosses the CARD into the EMPTY CUBBY HOLE.

DANNY walks out of the BOOKSHOP and onto:

THE STREET

...where he finds STEF. Her VIDEO GAME hangs out of her BACKPACK as she sits on the LEDGE OF THE BUILDING reading her BOOK.

DANNY smiles.

He goes up to her, musses her hair, and they walk off together.

FREEMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

ERIC FREEMAN pours a PAIR OF SCOTCHES, then thinks better of it and makes them both DOUBLES.

FREEMAN

We have an opportunity, Jonathan. Unprecedented. Closest we've come to a blank slate in Europe since the Treaty of Versailles.

He carries them back to his desk along with the BOTTLE and gives one to JONATHAN. The younger man washes half of it down in one go.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)

The Soviets are gone. No more caving to demands for expansion of state enterprises. Public sector unions are the new Dodo-- and frankly I think they know it. No doubt about it. The Minoan Finance Minister's untimely death couldn't have been more...

JONATHAN

Timely?

He finishes his drink.

FREEMAN

Exactly. He was a fossil. A relic. A weak party's concession to its deluded base. And now we've got them right where we want them.

JONATHAN

I'm not going to Minoa.

FREEMAN

Don't tell me you've gone all soft and anti-market.

JONATHAN

I may believe in the market but I'm not the kind of guy who thinks you should be able to drown the government in a bathtub. Or blow its brains out at point blank range.

FREEMAN
Moral qualms?

JONATHAN
Personal.

FREEMAN
I see. Why don't you help yourself
to another?

JONATHAN
Think I will.

He pours himself another drink.

FREEMAN
Kelly?

JONATHAN grins sheepishly and drinks.

FREEMAN (CONT'D)
Never around to do the dishes?
Walk the dog? Make the bed?

JONATHAN
Don't have a dog.

FREEMAN
No. Only a career most people
would kill for. I don't mind
telling you there've been whispers.

JONATHAN
Good thing Kel changed the locks.

FREEMAN
From the Nobel Committee.

JONATHAN chuckles, then outright laughs.

JONATHAN
Economics or Peace?

FREEMAN
Let's not be children, Jonathan.

JONATHAN
Hey, if Kissinger won...

FREEMAN
That was forty years ago. Today
it's the consolation prize. For
whoever swallows the bitterest
pill.

JONATHAN

And I take it I'm the sugar-coating.

FREEMAN

Hayek and Friedman were never on the cover of Rolling Stone.

JONATHAN

I said I'm not going.

FREEMAN

Yes, I heard. Three minutes ago. And you're already using the past tense.

JONATHAN

Anybody could do it.

FREEMAN

And anybody could be the next president of the World Bank. Or the youngest Chairman in the history of the Fed. You know. The one who has the power to implement whatever sort of fiscal irresponsibility he wants. Social spending. International aid. But you're right. Could be anybody at all.

JONATHAN

Eric.

FREEMAN

Jonathan.

JONATHAN'S phone RINGS.

KELLY'S name flashes. ANSWER: YES or NO?

It RINGS again.

And again.

Again.

Again.

It stops.

FREEMAN pushes a SLIM PAPER across the DESK.

JONATHAN drains his glass and picks it up.

A TICKET TO ROME.

JONATHAN

Never been.

FREEMAN

Too bad. Filthy place. But
charming. You, however, will be in
Fiuggi.