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THE JOURNEYMAN



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WEDNESDAY AT HOME

Chris Brown woke up to the alarm clock's ring. Jane lay still. This was a game she played each morning. Chris rolled over against his wife and gently kissed her on the shoulder, her left shoulder. "Good morning, love." Jane rolled over and gave her husband a big hug. "Good morning," followed the hug. As usual Chris got up and started the shower. Jane liked to step into the shower as if it were automatic.

"What happened to you last night, Chris? I was awake until after eleven," Jane said.

"I know, love, and I meant to get to bed early. This thing with Marie Al Fozie is getting complicated."

"In what way?" Jane questioned. Jane handed Chris the soap and asked him to do her back.

"I'll wash anything you want, love," Chris replied.

"Never mind, pal, you had your chance last night and you blew it."

Chris looked at Jane and simply replied, "Damn!"

At breakfast Jane asked Chris exactly what was going on with Marie. Chris told Jane about the two calls and the Fax. "What's next, Chris?" she responded.

"I'm not sure, love."

"Who is Michael Murphy?" Jane asked. "What does he do?"

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“He is a Journeyman Wireman,” Chris answered.

“What is a Journeyman Wireman?” Jane pursued.

“I’m not sure yet,” was Chris’s reply.

“Where does he live?”

“Now that is the good news,” Chris seemed more positive. “He makes his home about forty miles from here...a town between Rhinebeck and Albany.”

“What is his connection? Where does he come into the picture?”

“Michael Murphy happens to be employed in Saudi Arabia. He works as an electrical inspector for an oil company,” was all Chris knew.

“So how do you go about contacting him?”

Chris looked at Jane for a moment, “Wait a minute, love, how far are we going to take this?”

“Well, we said we would help her,” she argued.

Again Chris looked at Jane, “Do you realize what we are getting ourselves involved in, Jane? This fellow Murphy, do you think he will just drop everything and help Marie? We don’t even know where her daughter is.”

“Marie said she was in Dhahran.”

“So we find this fellow Murphy. We tell him our problem, Marie’s problem. Do you think he will just pick up little Marie and put her on the next plane out?” Chris thought to himself: there it is again and so simple.

“Where is Mr. Murphy now?” Jane asked.

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“I don’t know. All I know is this guy Murphy gets around. For God’s sake I don’t even understand his job description. He could be anywhere.” Chris waved his hands in the air.

“Do you know his address here?”

“Yes.”

“Can you call him?” It seemed like work getting this out of Chris.

“Jane, please. I need time to think about this. I want to call Steve Roach back. I have no answers. Perhaps he can give me some ideas. I will call Marie when I get to the office, although I don’t know what I’ll tell her.” Chris was already sorry for getting involved.

“Tell her to call the police,” Jane was second guessing this decision as well.

“Right!” Chris said.

Jane looked Chris straight in the eyes. “Chris, we told her we would do what we could. But if we pursue this we are getting others involved.”

“Yes, we have already gotten two people involved and Murphy would make three.” Chris got up from the table. He gave Jane a peck on the cheek and started for the door.

“Don’t forget the awards dinner tonight,” Jane said. “Seven o’clock.”

“No problem. I’ll see you at the office.” Chris got into his car, inserted the ignition key, then caught himself staring at the windshield. I thought that this week was going to be a cakewalk. The term foreign intrigue entered his mind...damn!

COMPLETION OF WEEK ONE

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of week number one went well. Murphy's projects seemed to be on cruise with some of the best manpower in the Kingdom doing the installations. He had decided on Monday to wait on his incentive promotion until Wednesday afternoon. Tuesday he made an arrangement to borrow a pair of bolt cutters from the foreman on the housing project: his investigation of the second yacht would require cutting the lock on the companionway. No questions were asked and he didn't volunteer any reason for needing the tool.

Murphy arrived at his office Wednesday afternoon. He would fill in his log and inspection request forms which were completed. Checking his mailbox Murphy found only one request form for Thursday, the office complex. The electricians had started installing conduit in the ceilings and that usually went well. Murphy would ride along on top of a scaffold which one or two electricians would push. At his signal they would stop in order for him to inspect the pipe runs and junction box installations.

If he arrived on the site by seven a.m. he could blitz and blow. Blitz and blow is the term used when one attacks the task, completes the task, and heads for home. In the States the term means a shorter than usual day but with a full day's pay. For Murphy it would mean being done by nine o'clock, maybe as early as eight-thirty.

Peter and Paul were their usual effervescent selves. As always they would laugh at the slightest thing Murphy or anybody would say. They wanted to know how Mr. Michael's week went and was there anything he may need. They inquired about Mr. Larry, since he had been so busy that they had not seen him in two days. Murphy laughed and simply said,

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“My motto is, let sleeping dogs lie.” After looking at each other for a second they started laughing once again.

“Enough of this small talk guys, let me ask you something. Have you had any luck finding Fozi?”

Peter was the first to speak. “It’s not going well, Mr. Michael. I made two calls Monday and one Tuesday.”

Paul followed up with the same type of answer. “I made a call to my brother and although he is trying to help, nothing yet so far, Mr. Michael.”

Murphy thanked the guys for staying with it. He excused himself and said he would be right back. Upon his return he was carrying a package which he set on Peter’s desk.

“What is this, Mr. Michael?”

“This is for you guys, your help is appreciated, and I know of no better way to say thank you.”

When Peter opened the package, his eyes lit up and an ear-to-ear smile came over his face.

“Mr. Michael, 501s, Levi’s, Oh, Mr. Michael.”

The one thing Filipino men would kill for was Levi’s, 501s especially. Peter pulled three pairs from the opened package and his smile only got bigger.

“You’d better check the sizes before you get too excited, Peter. I hope they fit.” Murphy knew he had hit the jackpot.

Inspecting the labels on the back of each pair, virtually beaming, Peter commented, “They are fine, sir!”

MICKEY THOMPSON

Michael added, "One pair is for Paul, you know."

Upon hearing that, Paul's smile widened, "Oh, thank you, Mr. Michael."

"You see that there are three different sizes there, right?"

"Oh yes, sir, these will fit me and the others will fit Paul."

Murphy looked at Paul. "If neither of you can fit into the other pair, you can sell them and split the money. Perhaps your brother will fit into them, Paul."

"Don't worry, Mr. Michael, we will find someone they will fit."

"If things work out I'll see if I can get some more shipped in from home," Michael said hopefully.

Both Filipino men said in chorus, "Things will work out, sir, not to worry. You go ahead and send for more."

Murphy laughed and smiled, "I knew you would say that."

"We shall try over the weekend, Mr. Michael." Peter assured Murphy that it was only a matter of time.

Leaving the office Murphy headed out to his pickup. One thing for sure; he'd made their day.

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