

MORE BENZINE FOR THE MADHOUSE

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What I'm saying is, he was a great man, paid my salary also, or there were people that clubbed together to pay it. You know, who looked after his expenses. A great man without a doubt, but he was not a man you would choose to spend time with.

You don't understand? If you can't hear what I'm saying then what am I doing here. A debriefing you called it, it's part of the deal. OK, I just want my money and off, but it's part of the deal so I'm here, I'm doing it, but what's the point of me doing it if you can't hear.

What, you're worried for me, you think I'm going to be like that one in the christian book, the one who hanged himself the very next day. You don't know what I've been through to get out of this crazy place, live a life, me and my family. Yes, and I'd like it in Euros. Any currency of my choosing is what you said. So, I've made my choice.

So you were listening after all. How can a man be great, and someone you'd avoid if you had any sense? How is that possible? Look I'm only a driver, but for one thing there was the, you know, the purity, all that. I'm a religious man, I believe, I follow my observances, but what's that to do with being hard on yourself all the time. All right for him perhaps, but for the rest of us, why? You work on depriving yourself even more than

you're already deprived, how's that going to make you a better person. Take the driving, my job. When we started out, the early days, any long journey which was often through the night, we'd make a stop on the road. You know, at a sympathiser's house, him, me, and the bodyguard. Drink tea. Refresh ourselves. Of course I'd check the engine, the tyres, but at the same time I'd relax, drink tea. Not any more.

Oh no, he wasn't stupid, I've never said he was stupid. Of course we still stopped now and then for me to check the Mercedes, the tyres, the oil. I never said he was stupid. If he was stupid, what does that say about you people. No we just didn't stop any more for tea. I had a jerry can of water in front of the passenger seat. Wouldn't have got halfway to wherever it was we were going and it would be warm or taste of plastic. And even if it wasn't like that, if it had been a de luxe Merc with a fridge, even then it's not like drinking tea. No rest for my eyes from driving one kilometre after another kilometre.

Yes, that's what I'm saying. He was always giving things up. You know, like any pleasure he can think of, everyone should give it up. But what I think is, he wouldn't have liked it if everyone gave up everything he'd given up, because then he wouldn't have been different any more. Not special. I'll tell you something I learned very young, when someone says something's for your own good, that's the time to be ready for the worst.

From who? From my mother of course.

What? Some medicine she made me swallow that was bitter and slimy. Every time I thought I'd choke.

What medicine? I don't know. I thought it was him you wanted to know about. He was a great man, no one ever did give up as many things as he gave up. And that was in spite of himself, of his efforts, of what he said he wanted, that everyone should give up what he had given up.

Yes in spite of himself, because he could talk. He convinced people. I've seen it happen. What he did was tell stories, you know, only they weren't stories and just in case they hadn't understood the lesson, he'd explain how the story told the lesson. All right for children but when you've heard them over and over, like the two brothers in the mountains and one of them goes this way, and the other takes a different path.

Yes, hundreds of time. Driver, chauffeur, that was my job, that was my salary, but with him, with those people, you're never off the job. I wasn't driving all the time, of course not, but I had to be around. Lucky for you that I was. It was supposed to be an honour being on his staff, that's how it was. Of course he wasn't stupid or the people who looked after his expenses, they're not stupid, they paid me a salary as well as it being an honour. But it was an honour so I was supposed to be around most of the time.

What lessons? Why, there's a right path and a wrong path. In a forest; in the city; in the mountains; in the desert, it doesn't matter, there's always a right path and a wrong one.

Many, because there's plenty of things you can give up. Tea; your life; dreaming about women; women altogether if it comes to it; a soft bed if you've got one which most of the people he told his stories to didn't have. Didn't stop him telling them they should do without one, because the enemy can creep up on you in the night, he said, and then you wouldn't wake up because you had been sleeping so good.

Another one, another of his stories, he really liked this one, was how you had this friend, someone you thought was a friend, and this friend didn't give up what he said he'd given up, or didn't show up when things were tough, had something else to do when you really needed them. That wasn't a loss he said, when you found out the person who you thought was your friend had let you down. No, it was a gain, because then you knew. Someone you thought had value didn't have any value.

You get the picture, how hard it was for me to keep my job. Because you didn't have to do much, or not do much to let him down. He was waiting for it to happen, it was like he wanted it to happen. But then he wasn't stupid. Or the people who pay his expenses, they're not stupid, they knew a driver when they saw one, knew there's not many can match me.

To be a good driver? Well I proved it didn't I, you, your units, you never captured us. Two or three times it was close but you never captured us, not with my driving. Me, like I told you, I like a stop for tea, I like sleeping too, but I've driven sixteen hours non-stop

and never thought of it, never felt its velvet envelope not for a moment, not when the job had to be done. And you never did capture us. I've driven over rocks, over goat tracks...

Why did they listen to him, his little stories? You want the truth, or I can tell you he was the greatest storyteller ever, as good as Scheherezade.

Oh, that's a debriefing is it, OK then. They listened those people because you, your lot with everything there is to give in this madhouse, you gave them nothing. And rubbed their noses in it, the way you people live. And they listened because they knew he'd done it himself. It wasn't just words, anything he asked them to give up, he'd already done it. He wasn't asking them to do things he hadn't done himself.

Who are you? Who is this person, he wasn't part of our deal. Tell him this is serious business.

All right, it's true, it was the one thing he hadn't given up. And it's true also there were people he'd told his stories that did, that gave up their lives. Plenty, but then you know that better than anyone. And now he has given up his life and I helped him do it if that's the way you want to put it, but it's not a joke, this is serious business.

A debriefing you called it, this is different. He wasn't a man you'd want to sit down and have a smoke with, drink tea, that's all I'm saying. Not that you ever could, he never smoked and then he gave up tea. I've got no dirt on him as you put it, I've just told you

why I didn't like him that much. What more do you want, what is it, for your propaganda? More benzine for the madhouse. I wouldn't sit down and drink tea with you either, not if I didn't have to.

Look I'm only a driver. I'm a good driver, that's what I do. I don't know why he turned out the way he turned out.. Maybe there was a girl he thought he was in love with when he was a young man and this girl was crazy with courage, and said she didn't want him. I don't know. Or the children called him names at school. Look I've done what I was asked to do. I've kept my side of the deal so why don't you just pay me as agreed and I'll be off.

OK, OK, if I'm ever to get away from here. let me tell you a story. A few generations ago there was this family X. They were hard workers, generations of them. Till one day there was just enough extra for them to open a store. You know, a general store, sacks of this, sacks of that. They made their percentage, of course they did, but they never swindled anyone, they never stole. Not more than ten percent their profit when there was always the risk, no matter the storage, sacks could go rotten. Which after a while they did do with some help from the family Y. Lazy people, and with no excuse. They had more resources than the family X, a lot more, but they were lazy, too busy talking. Always talking. And they couldn't stand it, seeing the success of that store which the family X worked hard at to make a success. They couldn't stand it, though they used it themselves. Where else would they get their sacks and not get short measure. Any other family, they'd have been pleased to have a local store to get their provisions without being swindled. But the family Y, they couldn't stand it so they poisoned some sacks. Not all of them you

understand, just enough. So a few people got sick and the family Y spent their time talking more than ever. This is how it went: people getting sick, it's fate, God's will; but no, wait a minute, lets think about this, where did that food come from; oh, those sacks from the store; poor family X, cursed for who knows what reason, some black spot, some sin lost in the mists of time. That's how they talked, that family of talkers. And it worked, the store ended up in their hands.

You again, the joker, the clever one. Of course he was from the family Y. You've got the records haven't you. They ended up with the store. OK that's what happened, only when a man from the family Y becomes the Incorruptible One, it sticks in the throat.

Yes it was years later, what's that got to do with it, it still sticks in the throat and since you're the clever one who does his homework you'll know of what family I am.

Did he know about me, my family history? Probably. I've thought about it a few times. The first time I thought his head's so far in the clouds, so taken up with his mission, he just doesn't notice who's close to him, who they are. Later I started to think that he did know, that he's so sure of himself, of the rightness of what he's doing, the rightness for everyone, that even some poor soul from the ill-fated family X was bound to see the truth and justice of what he was saying.

Probably that's how it was because he wasn't alone. There are those people who paid his expenses, you can be sure they checked family histories. Enough of this talking, I'll take

my money now. All that matters is that I *was* close to him. I was and I stayed that way, that's why I told you I could do the job. I did my job, and now I want my money.

Don't make jokes. Really, don't make jokes, this is serious business. A man has been killed, and not just any man, a man known by millions. Any currency of my choice right, that's what you said.

I don't believe what I'm hearing, The Treasury Says, The Treasury Says. What have they got to do with it, we had a deal. I've done my job, and now it's my turn. Any currency you said. So I want Euros.

The Treasury Says?! who are you people?! You're the tough guys aren't you, you've just killed a man. You planned to kill a man and you have killed him. Just pick up the phone and tell them this is serious business.

Retroactive legislation, what's that, what trick is that?

Then why have laws at all. Don't try and trick me with big words, I'm not stupid.

The economic crisis arose unexpectedly? I can't believe what I'm hearing. What's the matter with you people, there's been an economic crisis all my life. There was a crisis when we made our deal, there's always a crisis in case you hadn't noticed..

Don't tell me how to be, don't tell me how I should be. Be patient? I am being patient. I don't know how I'm not crazy.

...

I am crazy.

...

Let me be clear about this, you are saying it's local currency or nothing.

You can't do this to me. I offer local currency in Paris, in Spain, in Deutschland, they'll laugh at me. You know it because your money won't be in local currency. I know for a fact it isn't, it was one of the things he told us, that you're undermining the country with your foreign exchange deals, with your corruption. He was always telling us things we already knew. In your case there will be exemptions to those Stringent Currency Restrictions yes, so you can get an exemption for me.

...

Otherwise it's a death sentence.

Don't exaggerate?! Are you stupid?!

You are stupid, I can't believe how stupid you are. When we arranged this thing, the way it worked, it gave me a bit of time to get my family out of this madhouse. You killed him but arrested me so people could see you'd arrested me and, so it looked good, you arrested the bodyguard without killing him. Very good, but you think that's going to make any difference if I can't get out of this place with my family. You release us in this

country, me and the bodyguard, and we'll be dead. For a day we'll be heroes and then the people who paid his expenses will have us killed.

I can't be hearing this. You seriously think that if you treat me and the bodyguard exactly the same it'll be all right. You think just because he's innocent, he didn't know anything, didn't know about our arrangement that nothing will happen to him? You really think so, and that it means so nothing will happen to me?! You went to college, passed exams and this is what you think?! You're crazy, just give me my Euros.

No.

You couldn't have done this without me. You tried enough times. You couldn't have done anything if I hadn't stayed around him all the time. You know how hard that was. Till finally, one day, like I promised I didn't just do the driving, I knew where we were going to drive. And then you knew where we were going to drive. Him on a plate.

I don't want your thanks, I want my Euros.

No. No no no. I can't bear it, he was right. All those stupid stores but he was right about you people, that you never keep your word, that you have never kept your word. You can't even honour one simple deal.

It's Not Your Fault. You think I care about that. Ring your Treasury, ring them now.

What do you mean, it won't make any difference, I thought you were serious people.
Now I know you're not. You're stupid. You think killing him is going to make any
difference. It was just a stupid joke when you said it, but you were more right than you
think. I did help him, because now he has truly given up everything. Practiced what he
preached down to the final sacrifice and that counts with people. It will count.

Oh, you again, the joker, Dead Men Don't Tell Tales, is that right. You're like a child,
frightened and whistling in the dark. Maybe not tomorrow but you will lose, you people.
He was right. I didn't like him so help me, but he was right. Just give me my money.

...

He'll come back at you from the grave, don't think he won't. His voice will be louder than
ever because he's done what he said he would do, and now you can't touch him.

...

Give me my Euros. Dollars, I'll take US dollars if that makes it easier.

...

Give me my money

...

Please, give me my money.

