

DELIVERANCE

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

RUSSELL PETERSON sits at a table off to the side of a swanky dining room with vaulted ceilings, plush seating and dangling chandeliers dimmed just right. Russell's a sharp looking 50 year old whose tailored bravado masks unsteadiness and resignation. Around him is the buzz of business dealings and big money transfers. He is unexceptional in this arena.

A WAITRESS arrives to top up his wine and then exits, giving way to AIMEE LAPOINTE, mid 30's, a real head turner type. She exudes command and poise. Aimee acknowledges Russell and then sits. Their differing levels of ease is measurable. Aimee has done this before.

Russell extends a shaky hand.

RUSSELL

Russ.

AIMEE

Lovely to meet you.

(settling in)

Thank you for the wine, by the way.
Are you well?

RUSSELL

Given the circumstances.

AIMEE

Of course. Maggie filled me in.

Aimee offers a polite smile to ease his jitters.

RUSSELL

She recommended you, said you came
well regarded.

AIMEE

We've worked together for many
years.

RUSSELL

So she mentioned.

AIMEE

We did our undergrad together, as a
matter of fact. Years ago now. I'd
date myself if I told you how many.

RUSSELL
As would I.

They share a laugh. Russell pulls an envelope thick with cash from his suit jacket and sets it on her side of the table. Aimee pushes it back.

AIMEE
Not here. We'll handle it later. Do you enjoy poker?

RUSSELL
Pardon?

Aimee motions to a casino stamp on Russell's hand that's no more than a day old.

AIMEE
I'm an alright blackjack player. Always hit a soft 17, never split 5's or 10's or take insurance and never believe you're on a winning streak.

RUSSELL
What about a hard 17?

AIMEE
Stand. Statistically.

RUSSELL
Where'd you go to school?

AIMEE
Georgetown. I could've gone to Stanford but I like winter. But that's besides the point.

Aimee takes an elongated sip of wine.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Have you picked a location?

Russell nods to a key card already on the table and we see the laminate reads: SUITE 801.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
I don't mean to push but in these situations it's best we aren't seen together. Legality is finicky.

RUSSELL
Of course, I understand.

Russell pays the bill with a wad of cash, already counted down to the penny.

AIMEE (O.S)
It's a beautiful spot to see the city.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Russel and Aimee stand in the ritziest suite a person could dream up, adorned with gold decor and floor to ceiling windows that offer sprawling jetliner views of Boston.

AIMEE (CONT'D)
Did you grow up here?

Russell walks to the window and looks out. He moves like an oil soaked animal, labored and slow.

RUSSELL
I've lived in Dorchester since I was real young.

AIMEE
Nice part of town to raise a family.

RUSSELL
Sure. We enjoyed it.

Silence falls. Aimee points towards the bay.

AIMEE
Do you know how many crates of tea Bostonians dumped into that bay during the Tea Party?

RUSSELL
A lot?

AIMEE
None, actually. They didn't dump the full crates, they were too heavy. The reenactments got it wrong. They chopped them with axes.

RUSSELL

Is this how you settle your clients?

AIMEE

Factually? It depends on the client. Maggie gave me your file. You're an intellect.

RUSSELL

Used to be.

AIMEE

It's not your mind that's failing.

A cellphone rings in Russel's pocket. He pulls it out and we see his DAUGHTER's name and photo on the screen. He hesitates, then declines the call.

Aimee moves to settle on the bed.

RUSSELL

My daughter graduated college in the spring, top of her class. She's got a new job in Chicago. Her boyfriend's from out there.

AIMEE

Have you told her?

RUSSELL

No.

(beat, then)

She's closer to her mother.

AIMEE

Your wife?

RUSSELL

We don't talk much. She travels for work every other week.

Even with his back turned, his expression is visible in the window reflection.

RUSSELL (CONT'D)

I think she's having an affair with a neighbor.

AIMEE

I have a husband. He doesn't know I do this.

RUSSELL
He doesn't wonder?

AIMEE
Working odd hours is in my job
description.

Russell turns and faces Aimee.

RUSSELL
Do you enjoy it?

AIMEE
Enjoy wouldn't be the right word.
But yes, I find it meaningful.

He labors towards the bed, where Aimee is sat opening a
bottle of champagne.

RUSSELL
My father died on this day. Today's
the two year anniversary.

AIMEE
I'm sorry for your loss.

RUSSELL
He couldn't breathe or swallow,
couldn't say goodbye, couldn't
move. Nobody should go like that.
(beat, then)
It's a good thing you're doing.

AIMEE
I try to think so.

Aimee whirls a flute of champagne around, clinical. She's a
seasoned professional in this setting.

AIMEE
Champagne?

RUSSELL
Sorry, I've been stalling. We're
not here to talk.

AIMEE
No, but most people find it
comforts them. That's my job. We
can talk as long as you'd like.

RUSSELL
Would you drink with me?

Aimee pours another glass as if to say yes. Russell sits on the bed beside her, labored again. His hands tremor on the champagne flute.

RUSSELL
You've done this a lot before?

AIMEE
(nods)
More than you'd think.

Russell once again removes the envelope of cash and paperwork and hands it to her.

RUSSELL
I added a small tip to the agreed total.

AIMEE
Very kind of you.
(then)
Are you ready?

RUSSELL
As much as I'll ever be. One sip?

AIMEE
You'll find that works best.

Aimee clinks her glass to his.

AIMEE
Cheers, Russell.

RUSSELL
Cheers.

Russell finishes his champagne in one sip. He smiles. Within seconds he's convulsing, falling back on the bed, struggling for air. Aimee watches. And then as soon as it's begun it's over.

Aimee checks his pulse, waiting for the final loss of vital signs. She moves once again like a professional. She slips the envelope of money into her purse and then heads for the door.

On the way out her key card falls. We see her photograph and the name *Toronto General Hospital* typed across it before she retrieves it and exits.

Against the backdrop of the suite and Russell's body sprawled out on the bed, we hear his PHONE ring once more. It goes to voicemail.

DAUGHTER (V.O)

Hi Dad! You must be out but I wanted to call to let you know that Chase proposed and I said yes! We're getting married! Call me back as soon as you get this, I have so much to tell you!

Off Russell's lifeless face.

FADE OUT.