

**WEST LONDON MAN (24): DIAMONDS ARE NOT FOREVER**

by

Charon QC and Colin Samuels

Mike Semple-Piggot ("Charon QC")  
<http://charonqc.wordpress.com/>  
[mikespaw@mac.com](mailto:mikespaw@mac.com)

Colin Samuels  
<http://infamyorpraise.com>  
[csamuels@infamyorpraise.com](mailto:csamuels@infamyorpraise.com)



**SCENE 1.**

1. NARRATOR: Finally rid of their unwanted house guests, failed American vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin and her family, George and Caroline decamped West London for a three-week break over Christmas, skiing in Verbier, France. Now home, the children are staying with Caroline's parents before returning to their Montessori school next week. (BEAT) George has poured himself the better half of a bottle of Burgundy and is settling down to catch up with his reading in the financial press. Caroline walks into the drawing room with a package.
2. CAROLINE: George, we've got a package from the United States. How exciting!
3. GEORGE: Oh, hell. It's not from the Palins, is it? They stay for bloody ever and now they send us a dead animal or something as a (AFFECTING EXAGGERATED AMERICAN ACCENT) "big thank y'all!"

1. CAROLINE: I don't think so. It's from New York. Do you know anyone in New York who could have sent you a package?
  
2. GEORGE: I know a lot of people in New York, darling, but none of them would send me a Christmas present. They are bankers. They don't do Christmas. Not big on celebrating the birthday of someone who overturned money-lenders' tables in the Temple.
  
3. CAROLINE: Well, it's a sizable one. The au pair signed for it and left it on the kitchen table.
  
4. GEORGE: Well, open it and see what it is.
  
5. CAROLINE: Oh my god, George! There are diamonds... big ones! (BEAT) Lots of them! There is also a watch... a very swish watch... expensive. A solid gold Rolex with diamonds encrusted around the dial. (BEAT) And there are several pairs of mittens. What the hell is that about?

1. GEORGE: Caroline, I'm a bit busy, darling. Don't wind me up. It was a dead animal from the Palins, wasn't it?
2. CAROLINE: I am being serious. Here, look for yourself... there's a note. To you!
3. NARRATOR: Caroline walks over to George and empties the package onto the coffee table. George stares in disbelief.
4. GEORGE: Christ on a bicycle. (BEAT) Bloody hell.  
(BEAT) Oh, my fucking god!
5. CAROLINE: What is it?
6. GEORGE: This note... these are diamonds from Bernard Madoff, the guy who has just been arrested for a fifty billion dollar Ponzi pyramid fraud. The biggest fraud the world has ever known. These are diamonds he doesn't want the U.S. authorities to know about. He sent some to his family as well and they shopped him.
7. CAROLINE: Why would he send these to you? How do you know this man, George?

1. GEORGE: He's just a casual acquaintance, a dinner or two, and perhaps a couple of years back, I (BEAT) might have sent him a few millions of the firm's petty cash.
2. CAROLINE: Well, it's not as though your firm was the only one which lost money with him.
3. GEORGE: Um, strictly speaking, not everyone at the firm approved of the investment. (PAUSE) It was a bit hushed.
4. CAROLINE: How hushed?
5. GEORGE: Unapproved. (BEAT) Strictly speaking.
6. CAROLINE: Good lord! You're mixed-up in this? George, you cannot become involved! Just tell the U.S. authorities and return these things right now.
7. GEORGE: Are you crazy?! In the present climate knowing Madoff is not a brilliant idea. The money's gone. All gone. (BEAT) Poof! I'm going to have to get advice on this.

(GEORGE/CONT'D OVER)

1. GEORGE (CONT'D): I have to get these diamonds back to New York without anyone... and I mean anyone... knowing. This is serious.
  
2. NARRATOR: Caroline leaves. George reads Madoff's note: "George, I've got a bit of a problem, as you may have heard. Before the wolves reach my door, I thought I'd send you these cherished items for safekeeping. Your assistance now is, as always, much appreciated. I've always known we're kindred spirits. Yours, Bernie."
  
3. GEORGE: (LOW) Oh, fuck.
  
4. NARRATOR: George makes a couple of panicked phone calls and books a flight to New York for the next afternoon. The next morning, he assures Caroline that he will set things to rights before they get more out-of-hand. He tells her that he is flying to New York to see a lawyer and that he has sent the diamonds to the lawyer by courier.

(NARRATOR/CONT'D OVER)

1. NARRATOR (CONT'D): In fact, George still has the diamonds, concealed in a briefcase. He makes his way to Heathrow and arrives several hours later at La Guardia Airport in New York.

**SCENE 2.**

**AMBIENT AIRPORT NOISES, INCLUDING  
INDISTINCT CONVERSATIONS AND OCCASIONAL  
ANNOUNCEMENTS, ARE AUDIBLE IN  
BACKGROUND.**

2. IMMIGR. OFF.: What is the purpose of your visit, sir?
3. GEORGE: Purely social. I'm meeting up with a friend... a personal friend... on personal business. (BEAT) I mean just... casual... informal. You know.
4. IMMIGR. OFF.: Uh huh. I see that you are a regular visitor. How long will you be here this visit?
5. GEORGE: Oh, just for a day. Then I'm flying back to London.
6. IMMIGR. OFF.: Just one day? You flew all this way to see your friend and you're just staying one day?

1. GEORGE: (OVEREXCITED) Yes! I'm just going to see my friend. I... um... missed him... my friend... uh, terribly. (BEAT) Dear friend. Like a brother.

2. IMMIGR. OFF.: O.K., O.K. I don't need your life story. Enjoy your stay, sir.

**SCENE 3.**

3. NARRATOR: Flustered, George makes his way to a nearby washroom and changes into a long black coat and black hat and puts a false beard on. He calms somewhat when he sees the results. He thinks his Hasidic diamond merchant disguise is quite convincing. George regards his reflection in the washroom mirror.

4. GEORGE: Hello, Rabbi!

**SCENE 4.**

**AMBIENT AIRPORT NOISES, SIMILAR TO THOSE IN SCENE 2. BUT LOWER IN VOLUME, ARE AUDIBLE IN BACKGROUND.**

5. CUSTOMS OFF.: Anything to declare?

1. GEORGE: Absolutely nothing, nothing at all. I'm a diamond merchant.
2. CUSTOMS OFF.: You're a diamond merchant and you have nothing at all to declare?
3. GEORGE: (OVEREXCITED) Wait! I'm a diamond dealer.  
(BEAT) I have this one diamond to declare!  
For which I am fully prepared to pay all the appropriate fees, of course.
4. CUSTOMS OFF.: Of course.
5. GEORGE: I deal in diamonds. And I'm Hasidic! A Hasidic diamond dealer!
6. CUSTOMS OFF.: (SARCASTICALLY) I see that, sir. Got any other diamonds with you?
7. GEORGE: Other diamonds? Oy vey! Ha, no, no other diamonds. None at all. (CLOSE) This place is crawling with thieves. I'm not... um... messhugah. I just have the one diamond.  
(PAUSE) I'm here to buy some other diamonds, though. Just a mensch with chutzpah looking to buy some diamonds, officer... um...  
(BEAT) "Goldstein." Splendid.

1. NARRATOR: At this point George turns suddenly. The false beard catches on his coat button and falls off onto the floor.

2. CUSTOMS OFF.: How about you collect your beard and come with us? Let's kibbitz about whatever's in that case of yours.

**SCENE 5.**

3. NARRATOR: George is taken to a small room by two armed officers. They quickly discover the remainder of the diamonds and the gold Rolex watch. Some hours later, he is allowed a phone call and dials Hank "Perry" Mason, an old friend who's now a lawyer practicing in California.

**PHONE RINGING.**

4. GEORGE: (V.O.) (LOW) Pick up! Pick up!

5. MASON: (D) Hank Mason, good morning.

6. GEORGE: Perry! Thank God you are in. I've got a problem. I'm at La Guardia. I've been arrested.

1. MASON: (D) You've been arrested?! Why have you been arrested, George?
2. GEORGE: They claim that I was smuggling diamonds.
3. MASON: (D) Smuggling diamonds? (RELIEVED) Obviously a mistake! Jeez, George, I thought you'd really done something. Just tell me what happened and we'll go from there.
4. GEORGE: My false beard fell off.
5. MASON: (D) What?! Your false beard fell off? What the fuck were you doing wearing a false beard?
6. GEORGE: I wanted to look like one of those Hasidic diamond merchants... black hat, long coat, look like a diamond dealer. Told them I was buying diamonds in New York. I thought that would be a good story. Good business for America in these troubled economic times.  
  
(BEAT) I can tell you, your customs guy was not amused when the "f"-ing beard fell off and he found all the diamonds and the gold Rolex watch.

1. MASON: (D) (LOW) Oh, fuck.
2. GEORGE: They're not mine, Perry! They belong to Bernard Madoff You know, the....
3. MASON: (D) (INTERRUPTS LOUDLY) La, la, la, la! Shut the fuck up, George! Not another word! You need a lawyer. Another lawyer. One who knows a bit about criminal defense and isn't in California.
4. GEORGE: I couldn't agree more! I can almost hear these guys getting the water board ready! I'm in hedge funds, Perry. I short-sell bank stocks, gas, electricity. I'm not a bloody criminal!
5. MASON: (D) Christ! My firm doesn't have anyone who does this kind of thing, much less over there. I'm going to have to make some calls, George.
6. GEORGE: If it helps, I was able to Google a few names.

(GEORGE/CONT'D OVER)

1. GEORGE (CONT'D): There's a fellow here in New York who's not only a top criminal defense counsel, he also has a blog and according to something called, uh, "Twitter," he also happens to be a member of the English peerage... an Earl of some sort. That might help. His name's Scott Greenfield. Can you call him? I don't know whether I'll get another phone call from these customs gentlemen.
2. MASON: (D) O.K., relax. I'll call him right now. Do you need me to call Caroline?
3. GEORGE: Caroline? (BEAT) Oh, Caroline! Yes, would you? Let her know that I'm, um, detained and I may be a bit longer here in the States.
4. MASON: (D) A bit longer, yeah. Listen, George, stay where you are. I'm calling Greenfield now.

1. GEORGE: Fine, I'm not exactly going anywhere. I've got manacles around my ankles and my left wrist is chained to another chain around my waist. (BEAT) They even took my beard, Perry.

**SCENE 6.**

2. NARRATOR: Hank calls Greenfield's office.

**PHONE RINGING.**

3. MASON: (PAUSE) Yes, thank you, thanks. (PAUSE) Mr. Greenfield! Thanks for taking my call. My name is Hank Mason. I'm an attorney out here in California and I have a friend who's been arrested. He's from Britain and he's in the clink at La Guardia. (PAUSE) Well, he was (BEAT) smuggling diamonds and dressed as a Hasidic... (BEAT) yeah. Yeah, and it gets better. They were sent to him by Bernard Madoff. (LONG PAUSE) Why you? Well, you come highly recommended and.... (BEAT) (CLOSE) Look, I think he just found your blog Googling on his cell phone.

(MASON/CONT'D OVER)

1. MASON (CONT'D): For some reason, he thinks you're a British lord. Please, just go see him and do what you can? (PAUSE) The consulate? I dunno if they've been notified. (BEAT) OK. And in the meantime, I'll arrange for your fees.

(PAUSE) Thank you! Thanks so much. I know this is a little weird. OK, more than a little. I really appreciate it. (BEAT) George is a good guy. I think he's just having a really bad day. (PAUSE) What's that? (BEAT) (CONFUSED) Well, I need to call George's wife right now, but then I'd be happy to call this "O'Keefe" fellow and tell him that we hired you because of your blog.

**END**