

**WEST LONDON MAN (26): THE ADVENTURE OF THE FINAL PROBLEM**

by

Charon QC and Colin Samuels

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

Colin Samuels  
<http://google.com/profiles/colinsamuels>  
[colinsamuels@gmail.com](mailto:colinsamuels@gmail.com)

## CHARACTERS

Narrator

George

An early middle-aged, London-based banker whose rakish behavior often gets him into and out of professional and personal scrapes.

Henry P. "Hank" Mason

An acquaintance of George's, currently a corporate attorney in a large American law firm.

Bernard Madoff

A disgraced American financier wrongly believed to be imprisoned in the United States.

**SCENE 1.**

1. NARRATOR:

When last we saw George, he had been detained by American authorities at La Guardia Airport, initially for a rather poor diamond-smuggling effort. Subsequently he was implicated in the various crimes committed by disgraced financier Bernard Madoff. As George composed an overwrought and ill-advised prison memoir, his attorney, the noted New York criminal defense lawyer Scott Greenfield, prepared his defense and worked to secure his release. To their surprise and many others' as well, just days after his indictment Madoff pleaded guilty to all charges. He claimed full responsibility for what prosecutors alleged was a far-ranging conspiracy and accepted a sentence of 150 years.

(NARRATOR/CONT'D OVER)

1. NARRATOR (CONT'D): With this unexpected turn-of-events, George soon found himself back at La Guardia, albeit this time not as a pantomime Hasidic diamond merchant but as a deportee. (PAUSE) With his adventures in America reaching an ignominious end, George prepared himself for an uncertain return home. For many weeks his letters to colleagues had remained unanswered, his wife, Caroline, had ceased responding to his Transatlantic reverse-charged calls, and his e-mailed messages to his children, Jocasta and Peregrine, had been returned by their separately-retained solicitors. Waiting in International Departures with an accompanying officer, however, George could scarcely imagine the course his life would soon take.

(NARRATOR/CONT'D OVER)

1. NARRATOR (CONT'D): Only months after his unexplained disappearance from nearby the espresso cart across from the third men's room along in the International Terminal, can that story finally be told by George's friend, American attorney Hank "Perry" Mason.

**SCENE 2.**

1. MASON:

(V.O.) It is with a heavy heart that I take up my pen to write these, the last words in which I shall ever record the singular gifts by which my friend George was distinguished. In an incoherent and, as I deeply feel, an entirely inadequate fashion, I have endeavored to give some account of my strange experiences in his company in the months since his unfortunate difficulties in New York. (PAUSE) After Bernard Madoff was sentenced and George was released pending his deportation back to Britain, I heard nothing of him for several weeks. It was with some surprise, then, when late one evening a dilapidated taco truck rear-ended the brand-new Mercedes in my driveway.

(MASON/CONT'D OVER)

1. MASON (CONT'D):           Needless to say, this is not an everyday occurrence. In fact, we see very few taco trucks in my neighborhood. I was even more astonished to see my old friend George sprint from the wreck and into my garden shed. (PAUSE) George?
  
2. GEORGE:                   Perry! Thank God it's you! Hide me and give me a stiff drink.
  
3. MASON:                   What's happened to you? I can't believe they let you back into the country.
  
4. GEORGE:                   I never left. I was forced to make an escape from the airport and have been "on the lam", as it were, ever since. (PAUSE) My life is in grave danger, Perry. I know too much.
  
5. MASON:                   You know... oh God, George.

1. GEORGE:

I couldn't risk ringing you. I had to come to see you. Fortunately, whilst I was "in the big house", I made the acquaintance of a Russian gentleman. His family were extraordinarily helpful in arranging my journey across your godforsaken country. By way of exchange, I delivered a few packages for them along the way. They introduced me to another gentleman in Texas who was assisting Mexican immigrants with their documentation difficulties and he was able to prepare some new identification papers for me as well. Look at this! (PAUSE) I'm as American as you! I'm from (BEAT) Idaho, wherever that is. It's all for naught now, though. Your failure to park your car more sensibly has undoubtedly attracted attention we can ill afford. We've no choice. We must flee, Perry. They're onto us now.

1. MASON: Flee! (STAMMERING) I can't. Who. Who's "they", George?
2. GEORGE: (LOW) Madoff, Perry. The arch-criminal himself. His agents are numerous and splendidly organized. We must go now.
3. MASON: Madoff's in prison, George. This is insane. You're insane. You need help.
4. GEORGE: I do need help, Perry. Yours. (PAUSE) Madoff in prison?! Ha! I'll admit that I was nearly taken-in, but I suspected. When I saw him at the airport, though, I knew I was right. (PAUSE) The man steals billions and then meekly accepts a prison sentence? Just throws up his hands and (AFFECTS EXAGGERATED ACCENT) you got me! It's a fair cop, what!
5. MASON: He's in prison. Everyone knows...

1. GEORGE:

(INTERRUPTS) Everyone's wrong. His dupe is in prison. A patsy paid to take the fall. Madoff is free and still pulling the strings. I know the truth and he knows that I know. But I know that he knows that I know. Sadly, he knows that I know that he knows that I know, and thus we must escape now! I'm his nemesis and he wants me dead. (BEAT) He's told me in no uncertain terms.

**SCENE 3.**

1. GEORGE: (V.O.) By merest chance, he managed to corner me in an abandoned piñata factory outside Albuquerque a few weeks ago.
2. MADOFF: You crossed my path in 2009. In March last year, you incommoded me. In mid-April, I was seriously inconvenienced by you. Since then, your actions have placed me in positive danger of losing my liberty. The situation is becoming an impossible one.
3. GEORGE: Save your breath, Madoff. Danger is my middle name.
4. MADOFF: (PAUSE) It has been a duel between you and me, but I tell you that you will never beat me. If you persist, I'll blah, blah, blah, and so on.

**SCENE 4.**

1. MASON:                   Blah, blah, blah?
2. GEORGE:                   Well I don't recall exactly, but it  
was nothing good, I assure you.  
Christ, Perry, focus please. From  
there I escaped that madman Madoff and  
his gang in that ethnic food vehicle.  
I made my way here and now you and I  
must fly, lest we be murdered where we  
stand.
3. MASON:                   (LOW) Good God.
4. GEORGE:                   We'll need all of your credit cards, a  
change of clothes, and as much liquor  
as you can carry. Gather your things,  
Perry. We're men without a country  
now.

**SCENE 5.**

1. MASON: (V.O.) In case she cared, I left a note for my wife, saying that I had to rush to a conference and would call when I could. In as roundabout fashion as we could manage, George and I made our way to the train station and from there to a whistle-stop town somewhere in Oregon. A day later, we rented a car in a nearby city and drove to an airport hundreds of miles away. We flew to Miami via Phoenix, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Nashville. Only then did George tell me our ultimate destination.

2. GEORGE: Switzerland, Perry. I have accounts there. My firm has an office there. I can keep my head down and send for Caroline, Jocasta, and (BEAT) that other one. En route, I will tell you all that I have learned of Madoff's activities.

**SCENE 6.**

1. MASON: (V.O.) For days we traveled across Europe, arriving finally at a Sherlock Holmes-themed hotel in Meiringen, Switzerland. George had had his fill of travel by this point and we decided to remain there for a bit, until he could be certain that Madoff was no longer on our trail.

2. GEORGE: I tell you, Perry, these wretched Swiss gouge you for everything. Have you seen this bill? At a proper hotel, perhaps, but at this bloody "Sound of Music" rat-trap? And this chocolate! It's passable, but hardly worth a note home. The mobile coverage is rubbish. Still, if you're going to stash your ill-gotten gains, these are your people! Those Nazis knew as much, eh?

1. MASON: (LOW) They speak English, George, and they seem to disagree with some of your constructive criticisms.
2. GEORGE: What? Oh, no matter. (LOUDLY) You! How much for your quaint mountain yokel walking stick? (PAUSE) I fancy a hike, Perry. What say you?
3. MASON: (V.O.) We followed a well-worn path from the hotel to the nearby Reichenbach Falls. We'd been there for only a few minutes, scarcely enough time for George to offend some Japanese tourists, when a boy came running up the path we'd followed. He called-out that a fax had arrived for me back at the inn.
4. GEORGE: What? Now? It's a piece of paper, Perry. It's not going anywhere.

1. MASON:

I've been gone a week-and-a-half. At this point, everything's urgent or I'm unemployed. Enjoy the falls, George. I'll see you for dinner.

**SCENE 7.**

1. MASON:

(V.O.) I returned to the hotel, passing a man who was walking very briskly toward the falls. When I arrived at the front desk to claim my fax, the clerk knew nothing of it. I realized at once that the boy's message had been a ruse to draw me away and I returned to the falls as quickly as I could. There I found George's walking stick leaning against the rock where I'd left him earlier. There was no sign of him. I shouted his name repeatedly, but heard only echoes in reply. From the rock I saw that two sets of tracks led away, toward the falls, and ended in a spot marked by signs of recent struggle. No tracks returned from the edge of the falls. As I went to collect George's walking stick, I found a few pages of notepaper nearby. It was a message from George.

1. GEORGE:

(V.O.) (ANGRILY) Perry, you git! I hope you realize before long that no one's sent you a bloody fax in bloody Switzerland! After all this, I'm reduced to writing this note to buy a bit of time for you or someone to bumble along and do something to assist me. (PAUSE) Yes, I've been found by Madoff. You passed him on the path and didn't notice him. The man's face is in every newspaper for months, he chases us halfway around the world, and you still can't recognize him when he's right in front of you. Incredible. (BEAT) I will say this, though-- that Madoff is quite spry for a fellow his age. I suppose he's a bit more nimble than the average person, not being weighed-down by any sense of remorse, and I'm somewhat out-of-form for all this wretched Swiss chocolate. Bloody Swiss.

(GEORGE/CONT'D OVER)

1. GEORGE (CONT'D): I'm trying to draw this out, but  
Madoff's starting to become impatient.  
(BEAT) Though you've turned out to be  
a useless prat now when it really  
matters, I have enjoyed traveling with  
you these past few weeks It's been  
like old times, Perry. Will you give  
my regards to Caroline? Please see  
that she gets whatever remains in my  
Swiss accounts, as well as those  
property titles in my deposit box at  
the Canary Wharf Lloyd's TSB. (BEAT)  
She doesn't know anything about them,  
of course, so tell her that I was  
saving it all for her to open another  
bloody shop or something. Christ, what  
a waste she'll make of it all. (BEAT)  
Yours, George.

**END**