

ACCORDING TO PLAN

(first act, fourth draft)

by Patrick Griffiths

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TALKING ANIMAL

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INT. TOWER BLOCK. NIGHT

A group of gagged and bound children tremble and cry in a dimly lit room. Dotted around them are five well built men dressed in identical smart black suits and brandishing MP5K submachine guns. Suddenly, a rugged man twice the size of any of the men in the room crashes through the darkened window. He dramatically rolls, runs and leaps across the room dodging bullets as he swings around two heavy assault rifles, swiftly mowing down each of the men.

Standing over the dead bodies, the muscle man picks up one of the children and holds her gently in his arms and dries her tears with his thumb.

MUSCLE MAN

There, there, little one. You're safe now. Dry your eyes. Listen...

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

Hundreds of middle-aged men in grey suits and (to a lesser extent) women dressed in smart work attire stand, chatting and sipping coffee, as waiters weave amongst them at a breakfast buffet reception inside an imposing Brutalist conference building. They are surrounded by signage emblazoned with branding reading "Business Strategy Expo 2011".

Otis Blue, a dapper middle-aged gent, well groomed and wearing a designer suit, expensive watch and specially cobbled brogues, smugly patronises an unseen individual.

OTIS

...If a single molecule of your snot even approaches the vicinity of my Savile Row suit I will be obliged to end your life. So please, pretty please, stop crying.

A younger man, skinny and small in stature, wearing an ill-fitting suit and thick-lens glasses, looks upwards under Otis' shadow with tears rolling down his cheeks. He holds a glass of water in his trembling hand and a smiley-face badge with "Hi, I'm TOM" written on it is pinned to his lapel.

Otis waits for a response as Tom, petrified, pathetically stands his ground as his mouth tries but fails to form any words.

OTIS

OK, look, meeting you really has been one of the highlights of my

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OTIS (cont'd)

life and as much as I would love to stay and gossip about Brenda, Betty and Beyonce, exchange Twitter details and arrange regular sleep-overs in our matching pyjamas to play with our extensive Care Bear collections I think it would probably be best for both of us, however upsetting it might be, if you were to just... piss off.

As the shaking man just about manages to walk away Otis draws a clamshell mobile phone from his breast pocket.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn, a well presented secretary in her early thirties, smiles as she sits behind a computer screen at a curved table talking to someone through a telephone earpiece and microphone headset.

MARILYN

Listen, I've got to go - Otis is on the other line... Oh! Don't say that!

Marilyn giggles like a school girl embarrassed by her first crush.

MARILYN

Stop it! He's not that bad. Look, I'll call you back...

She hits a button to switch lines.

MARILYN

Hi Otis. Is everything OK?

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

Otis, uncomfortable in his environment, stands by himself in the conference venue, phone held to his ear.

OTIS

You didn't tell me this conference was run by twelve-year old girls. And I've told you before it's not appropriate to call me Otis.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn rolls her eyes.

MARILYN

What's wrong?

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

Otis walks towards a corner of the room, away from the throng of people.

OTIS

Evian, Marilyn. I asked for Finé and a conference minion tried to give me a glass of Evian. What do I look like? A drunk, pregnant council-estate hippie?

INT. OFFICE. DAY

MARILYN

Do council estate hippies drink Evian?

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

OTIS

Drunk, pregnant council estate hippies. And yes, Marilyn, yes they do. It's the drink of choice for the filthiest rung of society.

An animated Otis catches the eye of a delegate to whom he embarrassingly smiles before turning towards the wall.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

MARILYN

Just calm down, take a deep breath - it will all be over soon - one little presentation to deliver and then you can leave. Just remember why you're there; it's all part of the promotion of your book - to really drum up interest before it's published.

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

Otis takes Marilyn's advice, takes a deep breath, and calms down.

OTIS

Fine! But Evian, Marilyn. Bloody Evian.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

MARILYN

Oh, and, Otis, just remember, when you meet the compère, take it easy on the him, won't you? It sounds like he's had a really tough time, going through all of that aggressive radiotherapy, unsuccessfully, and then running a marathon, raising all of that money for underprivileged children.

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

OTIS

(under his breath)
So that they can buy Evian?

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn ignores Otis and continues more forcefully.

MARILYN

One of his final wishes was to introduce you at the conference, Otis. To say you're a hero of his is an understatement.

INT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

OTIS

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Fine. Whatever. I remember. I'll be as sweet as an aphid's ass. What's his name again?

INT. CONFERENCE AUDITORIUM. DAY

A name badge on the conference's compère shines brightly as he stands on stage. Written on a smiley-face is "Hi, I'm TOM".

Still a little shaky, Tom stands behind a branded lectern to the side of a large projected screen on a stylishly designed stage in front of an 800-strong audience of suited businesspeople. A holding slide displays the "Business strategy Expo 2011" logo and, under that is reads "9.00am: Keynote presentation: Otis Blue, Senior Partner, Carson Business Strategists".

TOM

...so without further ado I would like to introduce the keynote speaker. But what can I say that you won't already know... A senior partner at the almighty Carson Business Strategists, a frequent feature in Forbes magazine's Most Influential Businessmen list and author of the soon to be published, widely anticipated "Exploit, Progress", ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm welcome to Otis Blue.

Otis walks on to the stage to rapturous applause - the audience members clearly know who he is - and awkwardly shakes hands with Tom before standing behind the lectern and speaking in to the microphone mounted on it.

OTIS

Thank you, Tom. It's wonderful to be here. A wonderful conference... wonderful... people...

Finding such compliments almost painful, he switches off his sheepish ass-kissing smiley face and switches on serious business mode and he proceeds to confidently, authoritatively deliver his presentation. The projected screen turns from the holding slide to the first, introductory, slide of Otis's presentation. It reads "Exploit, Progress: Exploiting African Nations to Maximize Profit".

OTIS

Exploitation! Don't be afraid of the word. It's a good word. It's a strong word. And if you embrace the word your business will progress. Today I'm going to talk about one area discussed in greater detail in my forthcoming

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OTIS (cont'd)
book. On the face of it, it might sound controversial, but let me explain to you how exploiting typically poorer nations, African nations in particular, can legitimately benefit your business and maximise your profit.

EXT. CONFERENCE VENUE. DAY

Otis swiftly exits the conference venue, pulling a smart wheeled suitcase behind him, his briefcase balanced on top. He is on the phone to an unknown business associate.

OTIS
A fax? A fax?! What epoch do you inhabit? ... Look around you ... Look around you! Do you see dinosaurs? ... I said do you see any god damned dinosaurs? No. Good. Send me a bloody email.

Otis abruptly hangs up and, not watching where he was going, bumps in to a 50-something lady dressed in a mottled fur coat who is approaching the conference venue.

OTIS
(sarcastic)
Oh, do forgive me.

FUR LADY
Why don't you watch where you're going!

Otis stops in his tracks.

OTIS
That is a wonderful coat.

The lady's annoyance fades away at the compliment towards the coat she is clearly very proud of.

FUR LADY
Why, thank you.

OTIS
The pattern is just... exquisite.

Otis displays a friendly smile which is reciprocated by the lady.

OTIS
Tell me... how many Ewoks must one slaughter to make such a fine garment?

(CONTINUED)

The lady's face drops...

FUR LADY
You awful man!

...and she storms off.

With a smug sense of satisfaction, Otis pockets his phone and continues to walk. He approaches a silver Mercedes-Benz S-Class car, next to which stands a young man, wearing a typical but ill-fitting chauffeur uniform. He nods a hello.

CHAUFFEUR
Mr. Blue.

Otis stands next to the car and watches aghast as the chauffeur grabs his suitcase, pops open the boot and throws in the bag before slamming the boot closed. He then plods to the driver's side and enters the car. Otis, unimpressed, waits for the penny to drop and a short time later the chauffeur exits the car, walks around it and opens the door for Otis to enter.

CHAUFFEUR
Sorry, Mr. Blue.

Otis hardly has time to click in his seatbelt before the car pulls away like a dragster and swerves through the traffic somewhat recklessly, jostling Otis.

OTIS
Hey, Ayrton, let's imagine for a second that this is a road car and that we're not competing in the Dakar Rally, OK?

DRIVER
Sorry, Mr. Blue.

INT. CAR. DAY

On the motorway and restricted to straight lines, the chauffeur's erratic driving calms. Otis opens his briefcase, pulls out a glossy brochure for "Tranquillity Retreat" and flicks through it. Photographs show an exquisite luxury spa resort situated in a grand manor in the countryside with smiling, attractive models posing in white robes in various states of relaxation frequently with glasses of champagne in their hands, surrounded by pools, waterfalls, indoor palms and equally attractive spa therapists and other employees. While looking through the brochure he calls Marilyn on his mobile.

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OTIS

Marilyn. Are you sure this Tranquillity Retreat is suitable? For me? Because the people in these photos look a damned site happier than I expect I could possibly be without a share price monitor in the vicinity.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn sits, as before, at her desk in the office and talks to Otis over her headset.

MARILYN

Hello, Otis. Yes, I am sure. And let me remind you that the Partners insisted on the "break", as did your publisher. You haven't even taken a weekend off in the past year.

INT. CAR. DAY

Being fully used to Marilyn talking to him in this manner, Otis isn't as agitated as he protests.

OTIS

Mr. Blue. You really don't need to take that tone with me, Marilyn. I know I haven't taken any days off in a while and you know what I think about weekends. I break when I sleep. I'm just not confident this is up my street.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn, equally used to Otis and his ways, continues equally unperturbed.

MARILYN

Just take the ten days, relax, finish those final edits on the book and, dare I suggest it, enjoy yourself. The resort looks like a wonderful place, it is very highly regarded, there won't be any problems, it will all be absolutely fine. And. Dandy.

EXT. ROADS. DAY

Over the course of a long journey, Otis' car travels various roads of decreasing busyness. From wide grey motorways surrounded by traffic to dual carriageways alongside rows of houses and emerging greenery to deserted roads passing sporadic villages and fields of multicoloured crops and grazing herds of cattle and sheep. As the rural roads become more and more winding the landscape shows less and less man-made influence until only the road itself gives away the locality isn't undiscovered country.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE. DAY

Surrounded by countryside, Otis' car comes to an abrupt halt outside an old ivy-covered cottage. An old wooden sign reads "Tranquillity Retreat" scribbled in paint above "B&B: Vacancies" permanently printed. As Otis stares out of the window in disbelief the chauffeur wastes no time jumping out of the car.

Otis opens his door and slowly steps out, still staring at the guesthouse with a large pinch of confusion. His attention switches as the chauffeur throws his suitcase on the ground in front of him, spilling its contents on the ground. Newly confused and amazed, he is briefly dumbstruck as he watches the driver slide across the bonnet and jump in the driver's seat.

OTIS

Hey. H-hey! What the... wait a minute!

The car screeches off down the road leaving tyre tracks behind. Otis watches as it disappears in to the distance then slowly turns and plants his wide eyes on the guesthouse. Looking down at his brochure, showing a spotless, palatial 100-window fronted manor house, and back up again at a slightly dilapidated, albeit quaint two-storey cottage, the two buildings are very clearly not the same.

After picking up the contents of his suitcase Otis hesitantly approaches the guesthouse and knocks at the door. It is swiftly answered by Mia, a ten-year old girl.

OTIS

(sarcastic)
Brilliant. A midget.

MIA

(unimpressed)
I'm a kid.

(CONTINUED)

OTIS

Right. Of course. But do you think I can talk to someone who isn't... a Time Bandit?

Mia slams the door shut. After a handful of seconds without further contact Otis knocks on the door again. Mia answers once more.

OTIS

Hi.

MIA

I don't know what Time Bandits are...

OTIS

(interrupting)

Midgets.

MIA

...but are you done with the jokes now?

OTIS

...OK... Is there an adult here that I can talk to?

MIA

I may be a kid but I'm not an idiot, you know. Otis Blue, right?

OTIS

Uh... right.

MIA

I'm Mia. Come in.

Mia opens the door wider and gestures for Otis to enter.

INT. GUESTHOUSE. DAY

Otis steps in to the hallway of the guesthouse and over a very excitable bouncing and barking West Highland White Terrier. Looking around him there is every reason to believe he has travelled back in time a hundred years or so with dim lighting just about illuminating old flowery wallpaper. There is nothing especially dilapidated, by any means, but it is more quaint than grand and a million times removed from the modern, luxurious images adorning Otis' Tranquillity Retreat brochure.

Mia quickly disappears, briskly walking the length of the hallway and turning a corner out of sight.

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As Otis slowly follows, a door bursts open and Dot, an elderly woman wearing a cheap small cowboy hat steps out into the hall in front of him and points a sky-blue plastic pistol in his perplexed face. She pulls the trigger and the rubber-band mechanism clicks the plastic hammer of the gun.

DOT

Die, you bastard! Die! [click,
click, click]

The lady looks at her toy gun, confused.

DOT

What a load of crap.

Stan, a similarly elderly, embarrassed man steps out of the same room and puts his arm around the woman, still very confused and focussing on her malfunctioning gun, gesturing her back inside the room.

STAN

Sorry. Come on dear.

DOT

It should have blown his head
off... His brains should be
splattered on the wall...

They walk back inside the room. The woman turns to the man as he begins to close the door.

DOT

It looks like a good gun, doesn't
it? It looks good.

STAN

Yes dear.

DOT

What a load of crap.

The door closes and Otis continues to follow the path of the hallway. As Otis approaches the corner he hears two bickering voices, one of Jane, a woman in her late thirties and the other of Julia, a man also in his late thirties.

JANE

...are you serious? Oh, you
stupid idiot.

JULIA

Idiot? Idiot? I'm an idiot?!

Otis turns the corner and sees Mia with a sour look on her face and her head in her hands sitting on the third step

(CONTINUED)

of a stairwell. Behind a waist- to neck-height square hole in the adjacent wall underneath a wooden sign painted with a floral decoration and reading "Reception", stand the man and woman, initially unaware of their guest.

JANE

You're an idiot, that's right. A big stinking fu...

Otis bends down in an attempt to make eye contact through the low hole.

OTIS

Um, hello?

The couple quickly snap out of their argument and turn, slightly bent down to see through the hole, exhibiting beaming smiles.

JANE

Oh, hello!

JULIA

Oh, hello!

OTIS

I think... there might be some kind of mistake... I'm looking for Tranquillity Retreat...

JANE

Why, you've found it! Welcome! To Tranquillity Retreat! You're not as tall as I expected...

Julia nudges Jane, suggesting she shut up.

JULIA

We've been expecting you. Can we check you in? It's Mr. Blue, isn't it? This here is my wonderful wife Jane and my name's Julia.

Otis peers at Julia in disbelief and after a brief pause Julia chuckles.

JULIA

Oh, I always get that. Blame mum. She always wanted a girl. Very disappointed when I came along she was. Disappointed when the other eight came along as well. Jessie, Jenny, Mandy, Maude, Martha, Betty, Bertha and Bitch.

OTIS

...You've got a brother... called Bitch?

JULIA

Oh, yes! Little Bitch.
Mischievous bastard.

Shaking himself out of a an odd mix of fascination, confusion and frustration, Otis holds his index finger out and upwards, signalling to the couple to wait. He stands up straight and withdraws his mobile phone. While he looks down at it and sees there is no coverage, the couple, out of sight behind the low hole, whisper, in belief they can not be heard.

JANE

Don't look at me like that!

JULIA

Taller than expected? You stupid woman.

JANE

Oh, I'm sorry! I should have given you more time to waffle on about your family history!

Otis slowly walks around the hallway, his eyes fixed on the screen of his phone which he holds up high and low in the vain attempt to find reception. Frustrated, he returns to the reception and bends down once more.

OTIS

Can I use your phone?

JANE

Certainly!

Jane places an old black rotary dial phone in front of Otis. He picks up the receiver and holds it to his ear before slowly looking up at the couple.

OTIS

There's no dial tone.

JULIA

Oh, there wouldn't be!

JANE

The phone line in to the village has been down for days now.

Attempting to stay calm, Otis speaks through gritted teeth.

OTIS

Then why... did you give me the telephone?

JANE

Why, because you asked for it,
Mr. Blue! We pride ourselves in
excellent service here at
Tranquillity Retreat!

Otis slams his Tranquillity Retreat brochure down on the counter. The couple look down at it, trying their utmost to maintain their gleaming smiles before they look back at Otis in unison. Otis bangs his finger on the cover of the brochure, showing a grand, luxurious building.

OTIS

THIS is Tranquillity Retreat.
This [gestures to the hall around
him] is the oversized doll house
of Laura Ashley's especially
eccentric partially blind
grandmother.

JANE

Oh, no, Mr. Blue. I don't think
we've ever had any Laura's or
Ashley's stay here.

JULIA

Now, dear, I think there was a
Laura back in the early 90s... or
maybe a Lara...

OTIS

JANE! Juli...a... Look, I was
booked in to this place [points
to brochure] and this place
[points around him] is not this
place [points to brochure]

Jane and Julia scrutinise the cover of the brochure.

JANE

Tranquillity Retreat! That's us!

Otis flicks through the brochure highlighting all of the glossy photographs that very clearly aren't photographs of the building he finds himself in.

OTIS

Oh! It is? Well, in that case,
can you point me in the direction
of the steam room? Or the
jacuzzi? How about this big hall?
With the fountain? And the palm
trees? And the top-heavy
masseuruses?

JULIA
Ma... soosis?

OTIS
Masseuses! Massage! Ladies who
massage!

JANE
Well, I can give you a massage if
that's what you want, Mr. Blue.

OTIS
I don't want a massage! I want to
be in Tranquillity Retreat. THIS
Tranquillity Retreat.

JANE
You're at Tranquillity Retreat,
Mr. Blue.

OTIS
How is THIS Tranquillity
Retreat?!

JULIA
Well... it's tranquil...

JANE
And it's a retreat!

While Jane and Julia appear very happy with themselves
Otis runs his hand over his face in frustration.

OTIS
Look, is this your brochure?

JULIA
Sure!

OTIS
And you don't think it's a
little... misleading?

JANE
Well, we used a little bit of
artistic nonsense. Is that right?
Artistic nonsense?

JULIA
Pretence.

OTIS
License! Artistic license! You
put this down to artistic
license?

Sure!

JANE

Sure!

JULIA

OTIS
(resigned)
Oh, man. Forget it. Just tell me
where I can get a taxi.

JANE
There ain't no taxis 'round these
parts, I'm afraid. Not much call
for 'em.

OTIS
Someone... with a car... who can
take me back to civilisation...?

JULIA
Not much call for cars, either.

JANE
(excited)
Oh! Old Ben's got a tractor!

A glimmer of hope, albeit accompanied by terror, comes to
Otis' face.

JANE
But I think it might be broken.

With the couple continuing to smile as if everything was
hunky-dory and an exasperated Otis unsure what to do,
Julia breaks a prolonged silence.

JULIA
Can we check you in? I'm sure you
will have a wonderful stay! It's
a wonderful place. Wonderful. And
tranquil.

OTIS
There isn't the tiniest of
remotely infinitesimally small
chances that I'm going to check
in.

INT. GUESTHOUSE. DAY

Mia drags Otis' case up the final few stairs of the
stairwell she was previously sitting on, followed by Otis,
looking with some disdain at the quainter than quaint
décor. They approach a guest room.

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MIA

Here's your room. Careful you don't trip over Kong and break your neck falling down the stairs if you get up in the night.

OTIS

The dog?

A tall, lanky, gormless teenager suddenly appears and stands between him and Mia, who is opening the room door.

MIA

The brother.

Mia enters the room as Kong stares into Otis' eyes at close proximity and drools.

OTIS

Your brother. Kong.

Realising Otis is no longer following her, Mia comes back out of the room.

MIA

Don't ask.

OTIS

Don't worry. I've learned my lesson.

Otis steps around Kong and follows Mia in to the room. Mia lets the suitcase fall to the floor and she jumps up and sits on the bed.

MIA

You know, you don't strike me as being the happiest of people.

Otis barely pays attention as he walks around the small room looking over the mismatching furniture in mild disgust.

OTIS

Hmmm.

MIA

I mean, I know my parents aren't exactly, um, stable, but you were a grade-A cock back there.

Otis, surprised at Mia's profanity, turns to look at her.

OTIS

What's that got to do with how happy I am? I'm a very happy man.

MIA
No you're not. If you were happy
you'd be nicer.

Otis sits on a barely padded wooden chair at a small
wooden desk.

OTIS
Are you sure about that?

Mia shrugs her shoulders.

MIA
Just a hunch.

Otis pulls out a laptop from his briefcase, places it on
the desk and switches it on. Mia's eye light up at the
sight of the computer and she jumps down from the bed to
stand behind Otis and peer at it.

MIA
Oh! Too cool!

OTIS
Don't you have to be somewhere?
Like, somewhere that isn't here?

Mia just stands and stares at the computer as it flickers
and beeps to life.

MIA
Nope.

OTIS
Fantastic.

MIA
I asked my parents for a computer
but they said they couldn't
afford one, what with the recent
money troubles. They got me an
old typewriter for Christmas
which was sweet, I guess, but
it's not great for Facebook.

Otis attempts to connect to the internet.

OTIS
No... internet...

MIA
You mean you've not been able to
connect to our high-speed
broadband connection?

Otis realises that, of course, the guesthouse has no internet connection and slouches in the chair in a huff before standing up, his seat quickly taken by Mia, still transfixed by the computer.

OTIS

How did you get so smart?

MIA

Someone had to.

Otis slowly walks around the room and then out in to the hallway holding his phone at various heights trying but failing, again, to find a drop of reception.

MIA

You know, maybe you should just chill out and give us a chance.

OTIS

I don't intend to stick around long enough to give anyone a chance.

Otis throws his phone on the bed in frustration.

OTIS

There must be a working phone somewhere in the village.

MIA

(negatively)

You'd think, wouldn't you?

OTIS

Well where is the nearest working phone? Or do I need to send a message out by carrier pigeon?

Mia chuckles, more at Otis' helplessness than at his joke.

MIA

Turn right out of the house and there's a phone box just up the road.

OTIS

"Just up the road?"

MIA

A short walk.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE. DAY

Otis steps outside of the guesthouse and looks down the road towards the village. As advised, he walks the other way through a winding hedge-lined road.

The road drags on and on, corner after corner, hill after hill, with the only signs of animated life coming in the form of scarping rabbits and relaxed birds chirping with apparent smugness.

Walking across miles of undulating countryside, predominantly, but not exclusively, on the pot-hole-lined old road, it gradually becomes painfully clear that Otis' fancy brogues were not designed with hiking in mind. He frequently stops in discomfort, to catch his breath and to huff in annoyance.

Nearly two frustrating hours after he started his journey, almost ready to admit defeat and turn back, Otis spots an old fashioned red phone box at the top of a hill and picks up his pace. On reaching it he opens its door and steps inside.

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

Confronted with a receiver, keypad and coin slot, Otis takes out his wallet and from his wallet a black super-prime credit card. He peers around the metallic contraption looking for a card slot, which he fails to find. Returning the card to his wallet and the wallet to his pocket he stares at the keypad and receiver as if he has never seen a telephone before. After a brief hesitation, he lifts the receiver, holds it to his ear and is relieved to at least hear a dial tone.

OTIS
(whispering to himself)
Helloooo, dial tone.

He reaches towards the keypad but stops short of pressing any of the keys.

OTIS
Number... number... what's the
number? Of course! On my phone!

He awkwardly pads his pockets with one hand while holding the receiver in the other. He continues to pad and re-pad his pockets before remembering that he left his mobile phone back at the guesthouse. He head butts the receiver three times, frustrated partly at his own mistake but mostly as a continuation at the predicament he finds himself in. He calms himself down with a deep breath, stares at the keypad once more, dials an unseen number, casually returns the receiver to his ear, and waits a few seconds for a response.

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OTIS

Police. Definitely police...
Well, it's a bit of a long story
but, essentially, I'm stuck in
the middle of nowhere and, uh, I
really need to get home...
Danger? Danger...? Well, define
danger... Yes, I'm serious!...
Yes! It's the mother of all
emergencies!... I would love to
call someone else but I don't
know the number!... Operator.
100. Got it. Thank... you.

Otis hangs up and dials again.

OTIS

Oh, hello! I haven't got any
money, well of the metallic kind,
anyway, and I need to make a call
to a number I don't know... Yes.
It's hilarious. Tell me, are you
from a family of comedians or did
three old men bring you gold,
frankincense and The Compendium
of Astoundingly Witty Comments
when you were born?... Yes... I
would really like you to help me.
I'm very sorry, it's been a tough
day... Carson Business
Strategists, in London. The
name's Otis Blue. Ask for my
office, they'll accept the
charges...

The joy on Otis' face is apparent as he is connected with
his office.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn stands at her desk, adjusting the headpiece having
just put it on.

MARILYN

Otis! Is everything OK?

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

Otis is delighted to be speaking to his secretary.

OTIS

Marilyn! Damn, you have no idea
how good it is to hear your
voice. Don't call me Otis.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn smiles and sits down.

MARILYN
How's the resort?

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

OTIS
Oh, it's positively delightful!
Wonderful! I'm finding it hard to
put in to words just how
brilliant, how magnificent, how
magical this luxury resort
really, truly is!

INT. OFFICE. DAY

MARILYN
So... there's a problem?

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

OTIS
Yes. There's a problem. Where did
you find out about this place? It
bares absolutely no resemblance
to the brochure... it's a bloody
shack inhabited by madmen and
munchkins.

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn glances over an identical copy of the Tranquillity
Retreat brochure on her desk.

MARILYN
It can't be that bad! It looks
wonderful. I wish I was there...
I know you were never that keen
on the idea but the partners
insisted...

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

OTIS
Screw their insistence! And I am
keen! Right now I'm keener than
keen to be AT THE PLACE IN THE
BROCHURE. If you want it, you can
take my place! You can have the
week off!

INT. OFFICE. DAY

Marilyn rolls her eyes knowing full well that won't happen.

MARILYN

So you think it would be best if I arrange a car to come pick you up.

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

OTIS

Yes. I think it would be best if you arrange a car to come pick me up... Tomorrow? No no no no! Today!... Are you kidding me? Too late in the day?!

Otis looks at his watch.

OTIS

It's only six o'clock! Get me a car! Now! There is absolutely positively no way on earth I will even come close to considering staying a single night in this crazy, backward, especially hellish hellhole!

INT. GUESTHOUSE FRONT ROOM. NIGHT

Otis sits almost in the middle of a cozy common room for guests on an old tea green chair with a doily draped over the top. He is far from happy and stares in to space as the family members - Dot, Stan, Jane, Julia, and Kong stare at him, Dot and Kong out of intense fascination, like two baby monkeys witnessing fire for the first time, and the rest with a degree of awkwardness. Mia is the only person not staring at Otis, instead focusing on a game of solitaire on Otis' laptop, sitting on the floor.

JULIA

I'm sure your meal will be ready soon, Mr. Blue.

Otis continues to stare in to space without a word. A short while later Jane walks in to the room.

JANE

Slight problem with the cooker, Mr. Blue. Dinner might take a little while longer than I thought.

(CONTINUED)

Otis barely acknowledges Jane who, embarrassed, slowly retreats from the room.

DOT

I'm not sure about his face. I don't think I like it. I thought it would be better.

Kong grunts, just about recognisable as a possible agreement.

JULIA

I'm sorry about my family, Mr. Blue. We haven't had many guests recently...

Mia doesn't look up from the computer.

MIA

We haven't had any guests recently.

JULIA

Heh. Hard times! Still, at least we've got one paying customer now!

Otis, likewise, remains as still as a statue.

OTIS

I'm not staying... And don't count on me paying, either.

Julia smiles awkwardly as the room falls silent for a short while before Stan turns to Julia.

STAN

I don't know what you're worried about. It's not like we're going to be here much longer.

DOT

Now there's a face I'd like to launch a bazooka in to. You've got a better face than George Fox, I'll give you that, Mr. Blue.

STAN

(annoyed)

Shhh.

Silence takes over once more as the entire family shuffle and look around the room, uncomfortable at the mention of George Fox. Even Mia's eyebrows rise as she briefly glances up. Otis remains still, continuing his antisocial protest, but looks around with his eyes at the family, noticing something is wrong. Intrigue takes over...

(CONTINUED)

OTIS
George... Fox?

At that moment Jane bursts in the room, food somehow managing to stay on a plate she is swinging around as she speedily walks over to Otis, failing to feign nothing is wrong.

JANE
Here it is! Here it is! Here's
your dinner, Mr. Blue! Here it
is!

Jane plonks the plate down on Otis' lap. Otis looks down to see two overcooked fried eggs, six and a half undercooked chips, a mountain of baked beans and a limp pickled gherkin. A worried Jane beams as Otis looks back up and in to space.

MIA
My. God. Just tell him.

Mia! JULIA Mia! JANE

MIA
George Fox is a local
businessman. He bought the
guesthouse for peanuts and now
we've got to move out. Like,
yesterday.

JULIA
Mr. Blue does not want to hear
about our problems, Mia!

MIA
No shit.

Mia! JULIA Mia! JANE

Dot chuckles as Stan looks at Jane and Julia disapprovingly.

DOT
You should let me shoot him.

JANE
No one is going to shoot anybody.

JULIA
Don't talk to mother like that!

DOT
Fine, you shoot him.

JULIA
We're not going to shoot him!

STAN
You know, maybe we could let her shoot someone just this once. Fox has got it coming to him.

DOT
THANK you. I'll go and get my gun.

Dot starts to walk towards the door.

JULIA
You haven't got a gun!

DOT
I have got a gun! I've got a big gun. A really big gun. I got it on eBay.

JANE
eBay?

DOT
From a man.

JANE
You haven't got a gun! And you're not going to shoot anyone!

Dot, upset, stops, turns and returns to her chair.

DOT
You're no fun.

Kong stands up, falls forward, smacks his head against the wall and falls to the floor, unconscious.

Kong!

JANE

Kong!

JULIA

Idiot.

MIA

Hah!

DOT

Shhh.

STAN

Otis rises from his chair, plate in hand, and slowly leaves the room, leaving the manic family bicker and fall over each other.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE. MORNING

With birds singing the dawn chorus, Otis steps out of the front door of the guesthouse, lets the door slam behind him, looks both ways down the road, which is as quiet as ever, looks down, withdraws a handkerchief from his pocket, carefully lies it down on the doorstep, and sits down on it, next to his briefcase.

Time ticks by and the sun rises higher as the birds begin to calm down. Otis looks bored.

The door opens, Mia steps out in her pyjamas and sits down next to Otis who initially pays no attention to her. She looks up to him.

MIA

Morning.

Otis looks down to her and begrudgingly responds...

OTIS

Morning.

...before looking away again.

MIA

What time's your car coming?

Otis looks at his watch.

OTIS

Any time now.

The two awkwardly look around without any communication for a short while.

MIA

You know, you could just stay here. It's not as bad as you think it is. You might like it.

OTIS

I don't think so, kid.

After another bout of silence, Mia gets up and goes indoors.

Time continues to pass and no car arrives. Otis continues to sit in the same spot, visibly annoyed at the apparent lateness of his car.

(CONTINUED)

Mia appears from the guesthouse once more, this time dressed in jeans and a Charles Darwin t-shirt and carrying a small plate holding a simple sandwich cut in to triangles. She sits down once more and starts to eat one of the triangles. With her mouth full, she holds out the other triangle towards Otis. He looks at the sandwich and shakes his head in refusal. After finishing both halves of the sandwich Mia looks up to the sky and heads back inside.

More time passes and Otis' annoyance turns to frustration as light drops of rain begin to fall. As the rain starts to pick up in intensity Mia opens the door and offers Otis an umbrella. He stands up, ignores the gesture, hands Mia the briefcase, which she accepts, and storms off down the road in the direction of the phone box.

As he plods the same journey as he did the day before the rain begins to intensify further until, by the time he reaches the phone box hours later, the sky has turned black and the rain is torrential.

INT. PHONE BOX. DAY

He opens the door and steps inside, showing some relief to have reached his destination and to be out of the rain. After shaking off water from his hair and brushing it off his coat, Otis lifts the receiver and holds it to his ear. His eyebrows rise to make way for his wide-eyed look of concern. He returns the receiver and lifts it once more, returning it to his ear. This time his eyebrows try like strongmen pulling trucks to get away from his face. He frantically presses the phone's hook switch a number of times before smashing the receiver down over and over again with increasing force.

OTIS

Work. Work! WORK! Work, damn you!
You antique. Piece. Of. Crap!

Otis' strikes soon crack open the receiver and he drops the broken device, leaving it swinging from the phone. He angrily flings open the phone box door and steps outside in to the rain.

EXT. PHONE BOX. DAY

Growling and pacing back-and-forth in the muddy ground in front of the phone box Otis finally walks up to the phone box and kicks it with some force, causing him to slip and fall with a splash in to the mud. As he does so a clap of thunder rolls through the air.

(CONTINUED)

Considering defeat, after 30 seconds lying on his back with rain pummelling his face, he admits it and stands. As he does so, putting pressure on the foot he kicked the phone box with, pain shoots through his leg and he falls in to the mud once more.

With his twisted ankle an utterly drenched Otis, covered in mud, eventually manages to move away from the phone box and hobble back towards the guesthouse as the rain continues to fall and thunder continues to rumble.

A painful pseudo-walk soon comes to an abrupt halt when, accompanied by a clap of thunder, a bolt of lightning strikes Otis, knocking him to the ground by the side of the road, unconscious.