

AN ETHICAL HITMAN

Short Screenplay

by

Chuck Conaway

WGA reg.  
(949) 300-9753  
fadenc@gmail.com

INT. LOW CLASS BAR - NIGHT

DIMITRI (40s), craggy face, beady eyes, large frame, dark blue cap, chucks down a shot of Vodka. Bartender saddles up to him, ZOYA (30s), tight skirt, enhanced breasts.

ZOYA

Hard to believe that you got two separate requests for your service the same day.

DIMITRI

I know, Zora. Sounds fishy.  
(digs in)  
Are you up to something?

ZOYA

That's an insult, Dimitri. When did I ever let you down?  
(distracted)  
Hold on. First guy just came in.

Zoya moves on. KEPLER (50s) takes a barstool next to Dimitri.

KEPLER

Blue cap. You must be the guy I'm looking for--

DIMITRI

Fork it over.

Kepler looks around furtively, hands him an envelope. Zora answers a cell phone in the b.g.

KEPLER

Photo, address, and five-grand up front... There's a wrinkle.

Dimitri shoots him an evil look. Kepler plays casual.

KEPLER (CONT'D)

I wanna be there when it happens.

DIMITRI

Price just doubled. Sixty big ones, not thirty.

KEPLER

So be it. When?

DIMITRI

In my line of work there are no time constraints. Deal's locked in from this point on.

KEPLER  
Uh... understood.

DIMITRI  
Fine. Now scram.

Kepler leaves. Dimitri slips a photo partially out of the envelope (unseen by audience). Studies it, slides it back in. Zoya approaches with her phone.

ZOYA  
Other client's on the phone. Wants to meet you at JD's Cafe.

DIMITRI  
Okay. Tell him one hour, rear parking lot.

Zora nods, wanders off. Dimitri ponders.

EXT. JD'S CAFE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

BETZ (mid-50s) thin frame, balding, expensive suit, paces nervously near a Cadillac. Dimitri pulls up in a dark sedan. Stops, rolls down the window.

BETZ  
Are you--

DIMITRI  
No names.

BETZ  
Sorry, forgot... Here.

Betz hands him an envelope. Dimitri removes a photograph from it. His eyes balloon. It's Kepler.

DIMITRI  
Friend of yours?

BETZ  
Not anymore.

Dimitri removes the first photo from his jacket. Holds it up for Betz. It's him.

DIMITRI  
Met him earlier. He wants you dead.

Betz gasps, shakes. Slumps against the Cadillac.

Dimitri calmly lights a smoke.

BETZ

Sure, I took the money. But not two million like he said.

(losing it)

It was after he swindled our firm double that!

DIMITRI

Not interested in details, pal.

BETZ

Listen, please--

DIMITRI

You listen! I got five huge for starters and get twenty-five more after you're history.

Betz tries to respond, the words don't come out.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

It's a tough business. Surely you can relate to that.

Betz whimpers. Dimitri inhales, savors his cigarette.

BETZ

Is - is there any chance...

DIMITRI

There's only one way out of this for you. Just one.

BETZ

(barely audible)

Beat Kepler's offer?

DIMITRI

Beat, you say? Double it, sixty grand, not thirty. Otherwise your flame goes out.

INT. UPSCALE APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kepler stares out a window at nothing. Phone RINGS. He spills a drink answering it.

KEPLER

Yes?

DIMITRI

Tonight, ten o'clock. Verde Canyon behind cabin twelve.

KEPLER

Got it.

DIMITRI (ON PHONE)

Bring cash, hundreds and fifties.  
No weapons.

KEPLER

Are the cabins occupied?

DIMITRI (ON PHONE)

What? Are you suggesting I didn't  
plan this out?

KEPLER

No-no, I just...

DIMITRI

Just what? They're summer rentals,  
you nose-bleed!

CLICK! Line's dead. Kepler shivers.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN #12 - REAR AREA

Betz wears a light jacket, does a 'cold-weather-dance'  
outside his Cadillac. Dimitri pulls up in his car. Climbs  
out with a roll of duct tape.

DIMITRI

I told you it'd be cold up here.

BETZ

Yeah, I know. But I'm more nervous  
than cold.

He drops the subject. Checks his watch.

BETZ (CONT'D)

Where's Kepler?

DIMITRI

Should be here any minute.

Dimitri gestures toward a dark void about a hundred feet in  
front of the Cadillac.

DIMITRI (CONT'D)

You see that incline?

BETZ

Yeah.

DIMITRI

Runs down to the lake. Did you set your parking brake?

BETZ

Sure did.

INT./EXT. TWO-LANE ROAD - DARK

Kepler maneuvers a sports car along a winding traffic-free road. Has a bottle of Scotch.

KEPLER

Yes, Mr. Betz, my former business partner.

(giggles)

Your days are gonna end very soon. Hell awaits you.

Pumps fist. Chugs down Scotch from the bottle.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN #12 - NIGHT

Dimitri smokes in his car as a vehicle APPROACHES (O.S.). Alighting quickly, he stomps out his cigarette on the ground. Kepler cruises up in his sports car.

Gets out, hands Dimitri a bag. Sees the Cadillac.

KEPLER

Your money... Where's Betz?

Dimitri pops the Cadillac trunk. Betz struggles on his back inside, mouth taped and hands (presumably) also taped behind his back. Kepler enjoys the moment.

BETZ

Hello, Kepler. I'm here to watch your demise. I'm sure the cost will be worth it.

Kepler pushes himself up (hands unsecured), rips the tape off his mouth, climbs out. His words drip with vile.

KEPLER

Wrong, Betz. You're the one who's going to check out!

Betz is aghast. Turns to Dimitri who shoots him in the leg with a 9-mil. Betz grabs his leg, teeters.

DIMITRI  
Gimme a hand, Kepler.

Kepler helps Dimitri muscle Betz into the trunk.

KEPLER  
Comfy, Betz?

Dimitri motions to Kepler with the gun.

DIMITRI  
Now join your ex-partner.

KEPLER  
Whaddya mean? You take my money,  
then double-cross me?

Betz pleads to Dimitri in a horse voice.

BETZ  
Let us go, man!  
(catches breath)  
You can have the money! Please,  
take all of it!--

KEPLER  
Right! Let's forget the whole  
thing! You gotta--

Dimitri snaps his fingers in Kepler's face.

DIMITRI  
You two mutt-heads don't get it!  
Being a true professional, I honor  
my contractual obligations.  
(wryly)  
That's why I've been so successful  
over the years.

Kepler lunges at Dimitri - gets cut him down with a shot to his gut - He staggers back--

tumbles into the trunk. He and Betz twist violently inside. Dimitri slams the lid. THUMPING is heard.

Dimitri leans inside the Cadillac. Releases the brake and pushes the vehicle forward - as it gradually gains speed he backs away--

The Cadillac disappears in the darkness. Couple beats later it SPLASHES in the lake (O.S.).

Dimitri lights another smoke. A form of victory. Takes a long drag. Pulls up his coat collar.

EXT. MOUNTAIN DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Zora waits in a small car. Headlights flash from Dimitri's arriving sedan. Zora exits her car.

Dimitri stops. Zora leans through the passenger window, sees the suitcase on the floorboard.

ZORA

How'd the exterminations go?

DIMITRI

Very successful. Money's in here.

(pats suitcase)

Here's your cut--

Hands Zora some cash. She whips out a small semi-automatic gun from her purse--

Shoots Dimitri - he groans, clutches his chest and gasps. Zora drags the suitcase out of the car.

ZORA

Sorry, slug. Betz was my husband,  
refused to divorce me.

Dimitri coughs blood.

DIMITRI

You bitch...

ZORA

He found out Kepler and I had been  
having an affair.

DIMITRI

So you set me up.

ZORA

Well that's a given.

(beat)

Kepler was a stooge, thought he was  
gonna marry me.

(chortles)

It's why I used him to clean my  
slate. So to speak.

DIMITRI.

I knew something was...

ZORA

Wrong, yeah. You should've followed  
your instincts, Comrade.

Dimitri desperately tries to grab Zora's arm. She steps back calmly, pumps two more rounds into him.

Dimitri struggles to open the car door, falls out, dead.

INT. SMALL CAR

Zora plops the suitcase down on the floorboard and piles in behind the wheel. Opens the suitcase sees batteries and wires hooked to a device with a note.

Reads it silently (heard in Dimitri's voice):

DIMITRI (V.O.)  
Zora. My contingency plan should  
you betray me. Money's in my trunk.  
Opening this--

LONG SHOT

DIMITRI (CON'T)  
--triggered a bomb that--

BOOM! HUGE ORANGE FLASH!

Smoke obliterates the entire screen.

FADE OUT.