

REESE

I appreciate the help, counselor.
Who's picking up the tab?

The lawyer ignores him, leaving Reese at the corner, where a town car is double parked. Two PRIVATE SECURITY MEN are waiting, making it clear that they want Reese to get in.

PRIVATE SECURITY

Our employer wants a word with you.

Reese weighs his options. A block back, Carter pushes through the front doors of the station, hunting for him. Reese shrugs. Climbs into the back of the car.

EXT. STREETS, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The car speeds through Manhattan. The city is slowly coming alive, like a toy being wound up, about to let spin.

REESE

I'm a little tired, fellas. Maybe
another time. You can just drop me-

The security guys respond by locking the doors with a THUNK.

EXT. TOP LEVEL, PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The car stops and Reese climbs out. A man is waiting for him, staring out over the city. This is FINCH, 50s, rumpled suit, haunted eyes, body stiff from some old, deep wounds.

REESE

Do I owe you money? Because I'm
running a little short at the moment.

FINCH

You don't owe me anything, Mr. Reese.
That's the name you prefer, isn't
it? I know you've had... several.

Reese reacts at the mention of his name.

FINCH (CONT'D)

Don't worry. I'm not going to tell
anyone about you.

REESE

You don't know anything about me.

FINCH

I know exactly *everything* about you,
Mr. Reese. I know about the work
you used to do for the government.

(MORE)

FINCH (CONT'D)

I know about the... doubts you came to have about that work. I know the government, along with everyone else, thinks you're dead -- a star on the wall at CIA headquarters in Langley.

At this last comment, Reese steps closer to Finch, anger rising. Finch's security respond, until he waves them off.

FINCH (CONT'D)

I know you've spent the last two months trying to drink yourself to death. And I know you're considering more efficient ways to do it. Which would be a shame. You see -- knowledge is not my problem. Doing something with that knowledge is where I'm... lacking. That's where you would come in.

REESE

I'm not sure I follow.

FINCH

I think we could help each other. You see, Mr. Reese, I don't think you need a psychiatrist. Or a support group. Or pills.

REESE

Yeah? What do I need?

FINCH

You need a purpose. More specifically, you need a *job*.

Reese LAUGHS. Is he serious?

REESE

What kind of job?

FINCH

It's a little unconventional, and it'll take a little while to explain. Of course I'll pay you for your time. I know you don't care about the money. But if you're going to drink yourself to death, you could at least do it with a higher grade of alcohol.

One of Finch's security holds out a wad of hundreds. Gestures back towards the car. Reese thinks it over, then takes the money and climbs into the car. The knife edge of the sun is rising over the East River.

EXT. STREETS, MANHATTAN - DAY

The car glides through the morning rush hour of Manhattan. At each stop light, people stream around the car. Millions of them, all heading in different directions.

FINCH

8 million people. You know what they all have in common? None of them know what happens next.

(beat)

Good things, maybe. But for some of these people, very bad things are on the way. Someone is murdered in New York every 18 hours. Did you know that? It's like musical chairs. At the end of the day, one of these people will be gone.

REESE

Bad things happen to people every day. You can't stop that.

FINCH

But what if you could? Not all of them; not the ones that happen in the heat of the moment. But some of these crimes are planned for days or weeks in advance. What if you could stop those ones?

REESE

Is this like a psychic thing?

FINCH

(laughs)

No psychics. No magic. You see, when I was a kid, I wanted a jet pack. A summer house on Mars. And then I realized I was growing up in the *information age*. And that was a shocking disappointment to me. Until I realized how important that was. How revolutionary.

(beat)

The right person, in the right place, with the right information, can change everything.

Finch steps out of the car and into the swirl of people around them, morning commuters on their way to work. Reese follows.

EXT. STREETS, LOWER MANHATTAN - DAY

Finch stands on the street corner, people racing past him.