

The Gift of the Gun

A short screenplay
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INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

In close up we see an expensive old fashioned wardrobe door of rich mahogany opening.

Inside the cupboard are neatly hung a selection of well pressed conservative business shirts.

An elderly male hand reaches in and selects a shirt. The hand lifts the shirt out of the cupboard.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

In close up a pair of young muscular legs appear from between sheets and swing out of a low bed on to a grubby carpet floor, scattered with shoes, clothing and the odd sock.

A young male hand appears next to the feet and reaches under the bed.

The hand returns dragging a plain white paper bag. Another hand appears and reaches into the bag.

As the hands emerge we see a neatly folded pair of bright yellow pants.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

Still in close up on top of a similar style expensive old fashioned mahogany chest of drawers lie two gold cuff links, next to a vase with a single white rose.

The older male hand returns and picks up one of the cufflinks.

The hand inserts the cufflink into one of the cuffs and twists the clip, locking it in place.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

Still in close up we see a tight red cut off T-shirt being pulled down over a taut young male stomach.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

Close up of a pair of shiny black patent leather shoes.

The elderly male hand, now protruding out of the dress shirt and an immaculate dark blazer, appears holding a cloth.

The hand begins to give the shoes a quick rub.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

Close up of a pair of bright yellow sneakers on a pair of young man's feet.

The young male hands appear again and begin to tie the bright yellow laces.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

Close up still as the elderly hand now tucks in a burgundy coloured dress handkerchief into the dark blazer pocket.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

A pair of young male lips - a little dry.

A hand appears rubbing some balm into the lips, making them red and moist.

INT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: BEDROOM - DAY

The elderly hand runs an old fashioned black comb through thinning grey hair.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

A young male hands tucks a few strands of slicked backed blonde hair behind an ear.

EXT. WILLIAM'S HOUSE: VERANDAH - DAY

In crisp, early morning light an elderly man, now dressed in an overcoat, emerges from a large, well maintained Victorian Mansion on to the verandah.

From some distance across the street we watch as he checks the door is securely locked then goes over to the front windows and checks the shutters are also secure.

He appears to be going away on a trip - except he has no luggage.

INT. BEN'S ROOM - DAY

A bright yellow backpack is pulled up over a strong young shoulder, which in turn is encased in the now familiar cut off red T-shirt.

A hand reaches down and opens the deadlock of a grubby, worn apartment front door.

The hand pulls the door open and the yellow backpack, red T-shirt and flash of yellow pants exit out in to the grimy apartment block corridor.

The door is slammed shut behind the young man. Pinned to the back of the door we see a piece of paper with a handwritten scrawl : "Tues. 9am - DON'T FORGET !!!"

INT. ROOM IN DESERTED WAREHOUSE - DAY

We hear music - a Chopin Etude.

We cut to a close up of the handkerchief in the blazer pocket, the cufflink on the wrist, the shiny black shoes.

One foot taps a little nervously.

We hear a knock at a door.

Close up of the elderly hand taking a small remote control from the blazer pocket. A finger hits a button. The music disappears.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

It's open.

We hear the door open and soft footsteps shuffle into the room.

Close up of a yellow box, the size of a shoe box, sitting on a sturdy old wooden table.

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Close the door.

We hear the door close.

Close up of a bright red pyramid, sitting on the table, next to the yellow box.

WILLIAM

No problem finding the address ?

Close up of the one door in and out of the room, which locks and unlocks from the outside.

The door is set in a grubby cream wall with a healthy case of rising damp.

In comparison to its surrounding the door seems sturdy, new and modern, sitting in a strong metal frame.

BEN

Place seems deserted. You must be the only one here.

We cut quickly between close ups of the other three windowless walls.

WILLIAM

It's scheduled for demolition.

Close up of a plain, but clearly expensive sound system sitting in a filthy, mouldy corner of the room.

BEN

Whatever blows your mind.

Close up of the naked light bulb illuminating the room which hangs from a patchy, greying ceiling.

BEN

I'm Ben.

Now for the first time we see BEN. He is in his late teens and has a slim, taut physique.

He is handsome but his face betrays an weariness and experience beyond his tender years.

His fair hair is slicked back and he wears the brightly coloured red singlet and yellow pants and carries the small yellow back pack.

He stands in front of the door, looking around the room.

WILLIAM

My name is William.

Suddenly for the first time we see WILLIAM - a conservative looking man in his late 50s. His face is slightly pale and his eyes betray his tired state.

He looks at Ben, his response is muted but he seems pleased.

He sits on a sturdy, simple arm chair in the middle the bare room, partitioned off from the rest of the warehouse.

The only other piece of furniture in the room is a plain old fashioned wooden table.

WILLIAM

Come over here so I can look at you.

Ben puts down the bag. He walks slowly towards William.

William indicates for him to walk up and down in front of him. Ben walks in front of William. William watches.

WILLIAM

Excellent.

BEN

Blonde enough for you ?

WILLIAM

Perfect.

BEN

Clothes alright ?

WILLIAM

You've done very well.

BEN

Not leaving anything to chance are you ?

WILLIAM

Best not to.

BEN

Any more special requests ?

WILLIAM

Not just yet.

An uneasy silence. The two men are very close. Ben looks at William. William looks away.

BEN

So, having a good day ?

WILLIAM

So far.

BEN

(wandering around the room)

Do you live here ?

WILLIAM

Of course not.

BEN

It doesn't look too cosy. Is there a bathroom ? I might need to clean up afterwards.

WILLIAM

Unfortunately not.

BEN

How about some towels ?

WILLIAM

I do apologise.

BEN

It's alright. I've got some of my own. Keep them for little emergencies.

Ben opens up his bag. He takes out a small towelette dispenser and places it on the desk. He holds up a small pink cassette player.

BEN

How about some music ?

WILLIAM

Not at the moment.

Ben puts the cassette player away. He stands and moves towards William.

BEN

So what will it be ? Giving. Receiving. Or are you just interested in some oral ? You look like you really like to suck dick.

WILLIAM

(horrified)

Absolutely not.

BEN

Oops. Didn't mean to offend you. I don't often have new clients. Too popular with my regulars. They get great service so they ask for me again and again. Hopefully you will too.

WILLIAM

A once off will be sufficient.

BEN

Don't be so hasty. Wait to see if you like me.

(beat. Ben moves away.)

I don't usually go to someone's place. You never know what could happen. But Terio said you come highly recommended and you'd make it worth my while.

WILLIAM

You'll be well compensated.

Ben takes that as his cue to begin. He steps in front of William and spins around, turning his back towards him.

He then bends down, pushing his bum up near William's face. He begins to bump and grind his hips sensually.

Next Ben shoots his hands up to his hips and starts to inch his pants down.

WILLIAM

(bemused)

What are you doing ?

BEN

Don't you want to watch me.

WILLIAM

God no. No offence.

BEN

Most people say I've got a great body.

WILLIAM

You look very firm.

BEN

(lifting up his shirt to show his stomach)

Would you like to touch me ?

WILLIAM

No, but thanks for offering.

BEN

(reclining back on table)

I could lie on the table.

WILLIAM

That won't be necessary.

Another silence. Ben is getting a little irritated but trying not to show it.

BEN

Look, I don't mean to sound ungrateful. But could we get started. I've got to be back for one of my regulars at eleven.

WILLIAM

Certainly.

BEN

(kneeling in front of William)

Well ? What would you like me to do ?

WILLIAM

Go to the table and lift up the red pyramid.

BEN

Oh, so that's it. Toys.

WILLIAM

Objects from my childhood.

BEN

Kinky.

Ben moves over to the table, once again going into performance mode. He walks away from the table, trying to put on a show, then spins and walks back.

He steps behind the pyramid and begins stroking it as if it was a phallus. He puts on his best "cheeky" face.

Close up of the red pyramid as Ben lifts it up to reveal - a shiny silver revolver.

Ben pulls away from the table.

BEN

Oh shit. Shit !

Ben runs for the door. He tries the handle. It is locked.

BEN

Jesus. Help me. Help me.

Ben bangs on the door.

BEN

Help me - please !

WILLIAM

As you said the warehouse is deserted.

Ben scrambles for his bag. William stands.

BEN

Stay away from me. I've got a panic button.
In two minutes they'll be security all over the
place.

WILLIAM

Please Ben - I'm not going to hurt you.

BEN

(searching through his bag)
You stay away from me.
(pulling out panic buzzer)
Got it.

WILLIAM

There is no need to panic.

BEN

That's not how I see it.

WILLIAM

I'm standing still and I'm putting my hands
above my head.
(raising his arms)
There is only one revolver in the room and I
am not intending to touch it. I am completely
powerless.

BEN

Why should I believe you ?

WILLIAM

You are welcome to search me.

Ben does not move.

WILLIAM

I am not going to hurt you. And as your
manager said you will be extremely well paid
for your services.

Ben, holding the buzzer in one hand, moves slowly towards William.
He pats his pockets and feels his pants.

WILLIAM

Nothing except the clothes on my back.

Ben steps back.

BEN

What is going on ?

WILLIAM

May I put my hands down ?

BEN

Okay, but keep them where I can see them.

WILLIAM

Thank you.

William lowers his hands.

BEN

Is this like some weird S and M thing ?

WILLIAM

(he smiles)

After a fashion. Try to look at me as just another client.

BEN

Pretty weird client.

WILLIAM

Who is paying you very well for your services.
Lift up the yellow box.

BEN

I'm not touching anything else.

WILLIAM

May I remove it then ?

BEN

How do I know it's not a bomb or something ?

WILLIAM

It's not.

(beat)

Would you like to leave ?

BEN

Too right.

WILLIAM

The key for the door is hidden somewhere in this room.

BEN

Where ?

Ben begins to search around the room.

WILLIAM

Let me remove the box and then I'll tell you.

BEN

Tell me now.

WILLIAM

Not until I remove the box.

(indicating box)

May I ?

Ben nods. William moves towards the box. Ben's eyes fix on the gun.

BEN

Stop !

WILLIAM

Why don't you pick the gun up ? It might make you feel safer.

BEN

I've never held a gun in my life.

WILLIAM

Then now would seem a good time to start.

Ben hesitates. Then he gingerly picks up the gun.

WILLIAM

How does it feel ?

BEN

Cold.

WILLIAM

It'll warm up.

BEN

Is the thing-a-me on ?

WILLIAM

Yes, the safety catch is on. Would you like me to show you how to take it off ?

BEN

Stay where you are. It's fine the way it is.

WILLIAM

As you wish. May I remove the box now ?

Ben nods.

Close up on the box as William lifts it up to reveal three large, neat piles of cash.

Ben is drawn towards it. William steps away.

BEN

Shit.

WILLIAM

Touch it. It's yours.

Ben puts down the buzzer. He picks up some of the money.

BEN

This is for me ?

WILLIAM

All of it. Not bad for a morning's work.

BEN

You must be into some pretty weird shit. What do I have to do ? Let you stick a rat up my arse.

WILLIAM

Nothing as vulgar as that.

BEN

Then what do you want me to do ?

WILLIAM

I want you to give me a gift.

BEN

Listen mister, I don't think I'm selling what your buying.

WILLIAM

You're more than capable.

BEN

So what is this gift ?

WILLIAM

It's in your hand.

BEN

(looking down at money)

You want me to give you a hand job with the cash ?

WILLIAM

The other hand.

Ben looks down at his other hand - which is holding the gun.

BEN

(realising)

You're completely mad.

WILLIAM

I can assure you I am perfectly sane.

BEN

Not from where I'm standing.

William moves away from the table. He sits.

WILLIAM

All my life there has been an absence of control. I have been perpetually at the mercy of others. The whim of chance, fate, circumstance. But through it all one piece of information has been a considerable source of comfort for me. The knowledge that there was one pivotal moment in my life that if I acted quickly enough, I could control. Completely. The time, the place and the mechanism of my death.

BEN

And you chose this room - and me ?

William nods.

BEN

But why do you want to die ?

WILLIAM

The reasons are not important. Suffice to say I have them. You don't need to know why. Indeed it's perhaps better if you don't.

BEN

I'm kind of involved here. What you're asking me to do is likely to cause a few bad dreams down the track.

WILLIAM

As I said this is one event that I can control. And I choose to keep my reasons private. That's what I want and on this day I am getting what I want. I'm not asking you to do something that far from your usual gamut.

BEN

Killing people is a little out of my ordinary work day.

WILLIAM

You carry out a service. Give people a bit of a thrill. I'm not asking for anything quite so ... grubby.

BEN

I think it will be just a bit messy.

WILLIAM

I'm asking you to carry out a service.

BEN

You got the wrong boy. I give blow jobs.

WILLIAM

But that's not what I want.

BEN

Yes it is. You're asking me to give you the ultimate blowjob.

WILLIAM

Don't be vulgar ! That's not how I want it !

BEN

Some clients like it if I talk dirty.

WILLIAM

I would be grateful if you could restrain from it.

BEN

Always want to give client satisfaction.

WILLIAM

And you can do that. Completely.

Beat. Ben looks at William.

BEN

You do understand you only get to do this once. I can't come back tomorrow.

WILLIAM

I'm well aware of the consequences.

BEN

This isn't like some test is it ? I'm not being filmed for some stupid reality TV show.

WILLIAM

I do understand that this must come as quite a surprise to you. Look at it rationally.

BEN

You're a complete psycho.

WILLIAM

At this moment I would imagine you desire two things. The first would be to leave this room as soon as possible.

BEN

You're right there.

WILLIAM

The second would be to take that money with you.

BEN

The thought had crossed my mind.

WILLIAM

Now I'm going to tell you where the key is hidden and you will be able to leave. But first I need you to do one more thing for me ?

BEN

You want me to sing you a song Willy ?

WILLIAM

Please Ben.

BEN

You have someone else you'd like me to bump off ?

WILLIAM

This is for your protection.

Ben is silent.

WILLIAM

In the draw of the table you will find a pair of gloves and a cloth. I want you to put the gloves on.

BEN

Why ?

WILLIAM

Just do it !

(softening)

It's for your benefit.

Ben opens the draw and pulls out the gloves and the cloth.

WILLIAM

Thank you. After it's done you will wipe the handle of the gun with the cloth. You will then put the gun in my hand and wipe the door handle on the way out. No one will ever know you were here.

BEN

Suicide ?

WILLIAM

Precisely.

BEN

Then why don't you just do it yourself ? Why do you need me ?

WILLIAM

Because that's not how I want it.

Ben puts on the gloves.

BEN

Okay. I've put on the gloves. Now, where's the key ?

WILLIAM

Reach under the table.

Ben feels underneath the top of the table. He pulls out a key.

BEN

Thank Christ for that. See you later psycho.

Ben heads for the door.

WILLIAM

Do you love your life Ben ?

Ben stops. Beat.

BEN

What do you think ?

WILLIAM

Look at what's sitting on that table. I'm offering you a new life.

Ben turns. He looks down at the money.

BEN

Maybe I'll just take the money anyway.

WILLIAM

I'll have you tracked down and killed within the hour.

BEN

You've really thought of everything.

WILLIAM

What is so abhorrent -

BEN

Ab - what ?

WILLIAM

Abhorrent. Awful. What is so awful about what I'm asking you to do ? How am I different from a thousand other Johnnies you've serviced ?

BEN

I've never called anybody a Johnny. Unless they wanted me to.

WILLIAM

And what about what I want ?

BEN

Look, I just never thought about killing anybody.

WILLIAM

You're a service man. I'm asking you to provide a service.

BEN

It's more than that !

Beat.

WILLIAM

Tell me, is there anything you like about your job ?

Ben shrugs.

WILLIAM

Anything. Anything at all

BEN

(beat)

Once I was with this guy, from Telly. He was like - famous. And afterwards he had this big smile on his face. I liked that. I made him happy.

WILLIAM

And if you did this it would make me very, very happy. Would it make any difference if I was lying here stuck full of needles, tubes coming out of every orifice ?

BEN

Yeah. That would be different.

WILLIAM

How would it be different ? I want to die Ben. Why can't I die when and how I chose ? Surely I deserve that dignity.

BEN

I just wish you hadn't involved me.

WILLIAM

And then you would miss out on the chance for a new life. We are the same - you and I.

BEN

No we're not.

WILLIAM

We both have a life we don't want. You're giving me a way out and I'm giving you a way out. No one loses.

BEN

Except maybe the wallpaper.

WILLIAM

Don't think about it anymore. Just do what I ask then pick up the money and leave. Begin your new life.

Beat. Ben puts down the gun.

BEN

I think you should get somebody else.

Ben starts to leave. William steps in front of him, blocking his path.

WILLIAM

But I chose you.

(beat)

You're not here by accident Ben. I could've got hundreds of people to do this. Some would've gladly done it for kicks. You were handpicked for this occasion.

BEN

I was ?

WILLIAM

Terio didn't know exactly what I wanted you for but he knew I needed someone very special. I came to his office and I went through the catalogue. I chose you from all the other boys. Remember the parade.

BEN

When we all had to walk up that stupid
catwalk ?

WILLIAM

I was there. Behind the glass. So I could see
you in the flesh. So I knew I was making the
right choice. And your clothes. They were
handmade specifically to your measurements.

BEN

They do fit well.

WILLIAM

Everything had to be perfect for this one
moment. I want it to be exactly how I
imagined. That's why it has to be you. You're
the one I chose. The one I want. The angel of
my demise.

BEN

Angel ?

WILLIAM

(moving around the room)

I want to sit here nice and straight with my
hands on my knees and close my eyes. I want
you to stand here and put the gun to my head.
I want to feel the steel point pressed against
my temple and smell the sweet blend of your
sweat mixing with your perfume. I want to
taste the saliva building in my mouth. I want
to hear the soft click of the gun cocking and
then feel the explosion against my skin as
the bullet enters my skull - a millisecond
before my blood and brains are splattered
against this wall. Then my nerve endings will
be numb and the screaming inside my skull
will finally stop. My angel will have given me
my blessed release.

(beat. Turning to Ben)

Please Ben. Give me my parting wish. This
final gift. I want there to be an end to it.

Beat. Ben looks at William.

BEN

You really want to die that much ?

WILLIAM

Yes.

Pause. Ben makes a decision. He moves towards the table.

BEN

Let's get it over with.

WILLIAM

Thank you.

BEN

Don't say anything else. I want to start forgetting this ever happened.

William takes out the remote control. He points it at the sound system and presses a button. Music fills the room - the Chopin etude.

William sits in the chair. Ben moves over to him.

William holds out his hand.

BEN

What ?

William indicates the gun. Ben hands him the gun. William takes off the safety catch. He hands the gun back to Ben. Beat.

BEN

Ready ?

William sits up straight and puts his hands on his knees. He takes two deep breaths then closes his eyes.

WILLIAM

Now.

Ben puts the gun to William's head. He closes his eyes and pulls the trigger. The gun clicks.

Ben opens his eyes. He pulls the trigger again and again. The gun continues to click.

Ben begins to laugh.

BEN

You are without doubt the sickest jack I have ever met in my entire life. And believe me - I've met some sick jacks.

WILLIAM
I'm sorry I had to be sure

BEN
Sure of what ?

Beat. William turns off the music.

BEN
Okay, so what do we do now ?

William pulls a single bullet from his pocket. He holds it up to Ben.

WILLIAM
Now, we load the gun.

Freeze frame. Screen dissolves to black.

End film.