

OUT OF NOWHERE

15 Page Excerpt by

Mike Bencivenga

MikeBencivenga.com
Phone: 917-797-7654

E-mail: imshmenge@aol.com

EXT. STREET IN SOUTH PASADENA - NIGHT

An old, neglected house. Candlelight flickers inside. The scratchy SOUND of a Bing Crosby 78 record drifts out.

CROSBY (O.S.)
(singing)
In dreams I kiss your hand, madame,
Your dainty finger tips,
And when in slumberland, madame,
I'm begging for your lips...

TITLE: TUESDAY, AUGUST 8th - PASADENA, CA

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

A crank driven gramophone plays the record. Strumming a guitar along with the song, surrounded by lighted candles, is RANDALL HENDERSON (28). He's soulful, tatted-up and moody.

TITLE: RANDALL

Randall struggles with the chords, but he's getting there.

EXT. STREET IN SOUTH PASADENA - NIGHT

A CAR pulls up, stopping by the house. A DARK FIGURE exits the car and walks up to the front of the place.

The FIGURE opens the rusty mailbox out front and puts in an envelope. They raise the ancient 'mail's in' flag.

Lights from an approaching car cause the figure to nervously scurry back and drive off.

INT/EXT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

The headlights are from a police car approaching. Behind the wheel, OFFICER CHARLIE BENNET (35) notices the candles burning in the window. He stops the car and grabs his radio.

Charlie's a man of much muscle but little subtlety.

CHARLIE
(into the mic)
Hey Bertha-babe. What say you do
some work and earn your pension?

BERTHA (O.S.)
(on the radio)
Screw you, Charlie.

CHARLIE

I love you too. Look up 421 South Robles Street. Tell me who owns it.

BERTHA (O.S.)

Will do.

CHARLIE

Hey B. What did the leper say to the hooker? 'Keep the tip.'

BERTHA (O.S.)

I'm calling HR.

Charlie laughs. He takes his flashlight and shines it on the front of the house.

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Randall notices the light flashing across the windows and stops playing. He looks out and sees the cop car out front.

RANDALL

Shit.

He lifts the needle off the record and heads to the door.

EXT. STREET IN SOUTH PASADENA - NIGHT

Charlie moves the light back and forth across the old house. He stops when the radio kicks on.

BERTHA (O.S.)

Charlie, you there?

CHARLIE

Yeah. What d'ya got?

BERTHA (O.S.)

The place was owned by James G. Henderson. Deceased.

CHARLIE

All right. Print it out. I'll come get it later.

Charlie sees Randall walking out of the house toward his car. He shines the flashlight in his face to stop him.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What's up? You a squatter?

RANDALL

Nope.

CHARLIE

How'd you get in there?

Randall pulls out a set of keys and jingles them at him.

RANDALL

You mind turning off that light?

He does.

CHARLIE

You mind telling me what you're doing here?

RANDALL

Yeah. I do.

They stare down each other for a moment.

CHARLIE

I'll be watching you.

RANDALL

Don't strain your eyes.

Charlie throws the car in gear and drives off. Randall's about to head in when he notices the flag up on the mailbox.

Opening the rusted box he finds a bulging envelope inside with 'Hitman' scrawled on it. He scowls at it.

INT. OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Randall moves to a lit candle in the living room with the letter. He opens it and finds \$1000 in hundred dollar bills. Reading the note that's with it makes him very angry.

RANDALL

Jesus Christ!

EXT. DOWNTOWN SOUTH PASADENA - NIGHT

Charlie's squad car drives down the dark, empty streets. He passes a homeless woman sleeping in front of the drug store.

The woman, EVELYN GILBERT (27), looks up and sees Charlie. To protect herself, she curls up like a frightened armadillo.

Inside the car, Charlie sees this and smirks. He pulls the car up near 'Sinkers Donut Shoppe' on the corner.

He looks up at the clock above the bank. 3:55.

Charlie parks and douses the lights. He pulls out his cell phone and, from his 'favorites' list, calls up a video.

INSERT: A slick EVANGELIST (40) is in front of a LARGE CROWD.

EVANGELIST

Every year, millions of dollars go unclaimed by lottery winners. Well, God has a prize for you. And its worth more than all the money in the world. It's called 'salvation.'

The audience in the video applauds.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SOUTH PASADENA - NIGHT

In his car, Charlie nods affirmatively at the video.

Across the street, FERNANDO GUERREZ (28) rides up to the donut shop on his bike. He notices the darkened cop car.

Seeing that it's Charlie Bennet inside he grows nervous. He fakes a friendly smile and waves to him.

Charlie waves back, then goes back to listening to the video.

EVANGELIST (O.S.)

And to claim that prize all you have to do is say 'I'm sorry' and 'I have sinned' and--'

He abruptly clicks the phone off. Instead of comforting him, the message upsets Charlie. He starts his car and drives off.

Fernando unlocks the door to the donut shop and watches him drive away. As the car vanishes so does his pretend smile.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Charlie pulls into an alley and kills his lights.

He looks at himself in the rearview mirror. He's sweating and agitated. He mutters as he touches the crucifix on his neck.

CHARLIE

Just not ready, Lord. Not yet.

Getting out, he moves to the back door of a house. He slides his hand through a hole in the screen and lets himself in.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Charlie moves inside. For a large man he's very light on his feet. Passing through the kitchen he sees a box of 'Sinkers' donuts on the table. He snatches a piece of one as he goes.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charlie slides into the bedroom where a woman, MAGGIE (28), is asleep in bed. Charlie gets close to the side of the bed.

He takes out his nightstick and uses it to lift the covers.

Looking at her, clad in a T-shirt and panties, Charlie grows excited. He runs his nightstick up her leg. Maggie squirms. Moving the stick to her privates, he gives her a gentle poke.

Maggie wakes up. Charlie clamps his other hand on her mouth.

CHARLIE

Quiet now. Stay quiet.

He takes his hand off her mouth and starts roughly fondling her. Maggie doesn't struggle. She knows what's coming.

MAGGIE

I have to pee. Can I pee first?

Charlie moves the night stick up to her neck and holds it against her. He gets very close, breathing very hard.

CHARLIE

No. You do as I say. Understand?

Frightened, Maggie nods. Charlie plants a kiss on her mouth as he moves on top of her.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Wedged between the bank and a year-round Christmas boutique, the filthy bundle that is Evelyn sits, sadly calling out.

EVELYN

Help me. Please. Help.

People walk by, ignoring her. Randall moves quickly up the street, still agitated from the note. He passes Evelyn.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I have no one. I have nothing.

RANDALL
Join the club, sister.

Feeling bad for the crack, Randall digs a fiver out of his pocket and puts it in her hand. She watches him bustle off.

EXT. SINKERS DONUT SHOPPE - DAY

Randall moves quickly into the very pretentious joint.

INT. SINKERS - DAY

He rushes to the counter, up to Fernando. Randall shoves the envelope at his very busy, aproned friend.

RANDALL
What the hell is this?

FERNANDO
An envelope?

RANDALL
I got it last night. Read it.

Fernando opens it and looks at the note.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
You're the only one who knew where to find me. So what's the deal?

FERNANDO
Calm down. Sit. Have a coffee.

Randall sits. Fernando pours him a cup of coffee as Evelyn enters with her morning take from begging.

EVELYN
Hey! Can I get a coffee and--
(counting her cash)
And one of those creme-filled things. Strawberry.

She meets Randall's eye and smiles. Fernando gets her coffee and a donut. She pays and moves to a table.

Fernando hands Randall back the note.

FERNANDO

That's messed up, man. I don't know what to tell you.

RANDALL

You must've talked to someone.

FERNANDO

Nobody. I swear.

RANDALL

So did you send this?

FERNANDO

No.

RANDALL

Come on. Tell me.

Fernando angrily points at his menu board.

FERNANDO

I didn't do it! Look. I write up the menu. That's not my writing. Now drink your coffee and go.

RANDALL

Maybe Maggie wrote it. How is she? Hey Darlin'!

He waves to the kitchen where Maggie is by the donut fryer. She looks away from him. Not a fan.

FERNANDO

Leave her alone. In case you forgot, she--

RANDALL

I know, she hates me. Everybody does. Thanks to you I got no job and no home.

Evelyn looks up from her coffee, taking this in.

FERNANDO

I had nothing to do with it, bro. You brought this all on yourself. You're bad news. You scare people away. And I don't need that. I need to stay 'open.'

RANDALL

Look, Fatty--

FERNANDO
 (striking a nerve)
 Nobody calls me that. Not anymore.
 So stop it.

RANDALL
 You do look good. That apron fits
 you real nice.

FERNANDO
 Get the fuck out of my store.

Randall moves toward the door.

RANDALL
 Stop telling people where I am. I'm
 done with all that. Understand?

FERNANDO
 Get out!

Randall leaves. Watching with interest, Evelyn downs her coffee and, still eating her donut, she heads out.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Randall angrily moves down the street. He's unaware that Evelyn has run out of the shop and is behind him.

EVELYN
 Hey.
 (yelling at his back)
 HEY!

RANDALL
 (stopping)
 WHAT? What do you want? Who the
 hell are you?

EVELYN
 I was just with you. In the donut
 shop. You know that guy?

RANDALL
 Yeah. And it's not a 'Donut shop?'
 He calls it an 'artisanal bake
 shoppe.' With two 'ps' and an 'e.'
 He's a pretentious prick.

EVELYN
 He makes a good donut.

RANDALL
Anyway, what do you want?

EVELYN
I'm homeless, like you.

RANDALL
I'm not homeless.

EVELYN
You're not?

RANDALL
No. I have a house. A big, old place.

EVELYN
Good. I need a place to stay.

RANDALL
What? No.

EVELYN
I just need a few weeks to get myself straightened out.

RANDALL
I got enough 'straightening out' to do for myself. Sorry.

Randall walks into an office building. Evelyn watches him go in and then sits, arms folded, not giving up.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

In a tiny office above the drug store, Randall is angrily confronting DORIS KAPPELHOFF (60) seated at her desk.

RANDALL
Why can't they do it?

DORIS
I told you. They can't turn it on until you legally take possession. Then you'll get all the gas and electric you want. Sit down.

RANDALL
I don't want to sit.

DORIS
Sit, sit. We have to deal with the whole back-tax thing.

RANDALL
(sitting)
How much is that?

DORIS
It comes to \$25,000. I was able to pay off \$18,000 after I settled up the estate. And after I collected my fee. You still owe \$7000.

RANDALL
I ain't got anything close to that.

Closing the file, she looks at him.

DORIS
I figured. So I have some thoughts. You could take out a mortgage on the place and pay the tax that way. But there isn't a bank around here that'll give you a loan if you don't have a job. So--

RANDALL
I can't get a job.

DORIS
Right. I guess nobody here wants to take a chance on 'The Killer.'

RANDALL
If you're going to insult me at least get the name right.

DORIS
Pardon me. 'The Hitman.' It's not so much about you. It's the guns. We're all sick to death of the guns. It's gotta stop.

She gestures back toward a poster taped to her wall. It reads, 'STOP THE VIOLENCE. MARCH ON JULY 27TH.'

RANDALL
You still beatin' that drum?
Nothing's gonna change, you know.

DORIS
Oh, it'll change. We're not giving up 'til they take the guns away from all you creeps. No offense.

RANDALL
Screw you.

Ignoring him, she sips her tea.

DORIS

Your only hope of finding work is to get out of the south side where everybody knows you. There's lots of work up north. Or in 'Old Town'--

RANDALL

I don't want a fucking job. I just want to sell the house and go.

DORIS

Okay, well. That brings us to option number two.

RANDALL

And that is?

DORIS

You get yourself some insurance.

RANDALL

What good would that do?

DORIS

You buy the insurance. Then you get a can of gas and a match and your worries are over. But you didn't hear me say that.

Randall gets up to go.

RANDALL

Thanks for nothing.

DORIS

These days lots of folks are doing 'option number two.' For a small fee I can hook you up with a guy--

RANDALL

I am not burning down my grandfather's house.

DORIS

I just figured with your history you might be open to that.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Randall bolts out the door of the building and stalks off. Surprised, Evelyn jumps up and takes chase.

EVELYN
How did it go?

RANDALL
Shitty.

EVELYN
Sorry. Can I see your place?

RANDALL
No.

EVELYN
Why not?

RANDALL
Because it's not really mine. And I don't need more problems right now.

EVELYN
I won't be a problem.

RANDALL
You said you needed 'straightening out.' Sounds like a problem to me.

EVELYN
Look. I just need a place to sleep. I don't need a fucking therapist or some God damned career counselor.

RANDALL
Why don't you go bother somebody else?

EVELYN
Because you gave me five bucks. And you seem nice.

RANDALL
I'm not nice. Ask anybody.

EVELYN
Look. I can't sleep in the alley anymore. And I need a bath. Or a shower. I need water. Clean water! That's all I'm asking for.

RANDALL
(surrendering)
I have water.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

Randall walks up to the house with Evelyn trailing behind.

EVELYN
This is it?

RANDALL
Yup.

EVELYN
Really? 'Yours' or 'stolen?'

RANDALL
Mine. Soon.

INT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

They enter the museum that is Randall's current residence. Full of old furniture with candles everywhere.

RANDALL
The water's ice cold. Did I mention that? There's no heat. No electric. You can sleep upstairs.

EVELYN
Is there a bed up there?

RANDALL
Yeah. No sheets, though.

EVELYN
'No sheets' is fine. Thanks.

She moves upstairs. Randall takes the 'envelope' out of his pocket and reads the note again.

It says, 'One thousand up front, another four when it's done.' His eyes land on the last line, 'I want him dead.'

Chilled by the words, Randall stashes the note in a cupboard drawer along with the cash.

INT. UPSTAIRS OLD HOUSE - DAY

Evelyn strips down and gets in the old claw tub. Eager to rinse several months of grime off, she turns on the shower.

Ice cold water hits her and she SCREAMS!

EVELYN
AAHH! Shit! God dammit!

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OLD HOUSE - DAY

Hearing it, Randall runs to the steps.

RANDALL
What? What happened?

INT. UPSTAIRS OLD HOUSE - DAY

He bounds up the stairs and, hearing her shrieking, Randall yanks open the bathroom door.

He sees Evelyn naked, shivering in the shower. Without all the dirt, she's pretty stunning.

EVELYN
Hey! Close the damned door!

Embarrassed, Randall closes it.

RANDALL
Sorry. I thought you fell. Or there was a raccoon in there.

EVELYN
It's fucking freezing.

RANDALL
I told you! Anyway, there's clothes in the bedroom. Take what you need.

Randall slinks off.

In the shower, Evelyn scrubs off the grime and shivers.

INT. UPSTAIRS OLD HOUSE - DAY

Wearing a towel, Evelyn opens the bedroom closet and grabs a flannel shirt and jeans off their hangers. As she closes the door she notices a high powered rifle in the corner.

All during this, another Bing Crosby 78 plays downstairs.

CROSBY (O.S.)
(singing)
You came to me from out of nowhere,
You took my heart and found it
free.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS OLD HOUSE - DAY

Randall is sitting in an enormous, very worn leather chair. He strums his guitar along with the Crosby recording.

Evelyn comes downstairs. She's wearing a gigantic flannel shirt and man-size jeans. They're rolled up and tucked in.

EVELYN

So great. Cold as shit, but great.
Hope it's okay. I took your stuff.

Randall glances at her.

RANDALL

That's not mine. That's Big Jim's.

EVELYN

'Big' is right.
(tugging at the shirt)
Look at this thing. It's a tent.

RANDALL

Big Jim was my Grand Dad. This was his place.

EVELYN

Was he a hunter? I saw a gun.

RANDALL

Uhh...no. He grew up in Oregon.
Kind of a lumberjack.

Randall goes back to playing along with the gramophone.

EVELYN

Who's that singing?

RANDALL

That's Mr. Harry Lillis Crosby.
Otherwise known as 'Bing.'

EVELYN

Isn't he the guy who sang 'White Christmas' and beat the crap out of his kids?

RANDALL

Yeah but-- He was the first guy to sell a million records. Women used to faint when he sang.