

TRUCK STOP

by

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(Based on his original short story)

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FADE IN

EXT. OPEN-AIR BISTRO - DAY

A bustling cafe, fronting on a busy urban street.

Lots of pedestrian and vehicular traffic on the road.

A cluster of tables, on the terrace of the restaurant.

Sat at one of them - his back to an end wall of the adjacent building - is HARRIGAN, thirties. Kind of dangerous-looking.

Pen tapping loosely on a largely blank crossword puzzle. It's on the top section of a multi-layer newspaper, bundled on the table in front of Harrigan.

Cooling (okay; cold) cup of coffee, beside the paper.

With a cops - or killer's - eye, Harrigan is scoping out everything:

The cafe CUSTOMERS. Place is busy, so there's a lot of them.

PEDESTRIANS on the sidewalk. Same deal.

The building across the street.

An approaching WAITRESS / NINA, twenties.

Look of amused resignation on Nina's face. Steaming pot of coffee, in her hand, as she dispenses refills.

WAITRESS / NINA

Harrigan, are you gonna--

She stops, as Harrigan waves a crisp new fifty in her face.

HARRIGAN

Keep the change.

Nina pockets the bill, with an appreciative smile.

She picks Harrigan's cup up, off the table.

There's a potted plant in the corner beside the wall.

Nina empties half the cup into the soil, there.

NINA

Hmph. We're killing this thing.

HARRIGAN

All gotta die of somethin', Nina. Even cactuses. Cacti. Cact-- Whatever. And that is the God's honest truth.

Eyes flicking every which way, he's barely looking at her, as he speaks.

With a "seen this, done that" expression, Nina sets the cup back on the table, and fills it up with fresh Joe, from the pot.

NINA

You actually gonna drink any of this?

HARRIGAN

Sure, yeah.

He looks at her directly, for a second.

HARRIGAN (CONT'D)

You know; for the anti-oxidants. Healthy. They help you live longer.

NINA

Ooo-kay....

HARRIGAN

I'm as good as my word. Nine letters. Ends in 't'.

NINA

Excellent. Hmph. Next time, give me something hard.

On that cryptic note - and with a smile, to match - Nina spins on her heel and continues her circuit of the restaurant.

That got to him. Harrigan quits eyeballing the street, and follows Nina's progress, as she sashays away.

Slight shake of the head, as he fills the word 'EXCELLENT' into the crossword.

Then, he continues scanning his surroundings.

Harrigan's back is to that adjacent wall, but it's also to a stream of oncoming traffic.

So, he can't see...

EXT. ROAD - DAY (SAME TIME)

The front grill of a huge truck, as it barrels along the surface of the road, accelerating dangerously.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BISTRO - DAY (CONTINUING)

Harrigan's eyes narrow, as a customer approaches.

A big guy, Mob enforcer-type, reaching into his jacket pocket.

Harrigan lets his pen fall. Fingers poised, over the newspaper bundle...

As the Mob guy's hand clears his jacket...

Harrigan relaxes.

The guy continues on his way to the cashier's desk, wallet in hand.

Harrigan picks up his pen, once more.

His eyes resume their circuit.

Unaware that...

EXT. ROAD - DAY (SAME TIME)

That truck surges forward.

Inarticulate cry of protest, from someone alarmed at its erratic progress.

EXT. OPEN-AIR BISTRO - DAY (CONTINUING)

Harrigan's eyes stop dead, and go wide.

He's reacting to that cry, as...

EXT. ROAD - DAY (SAME TIME)

With a loud grinding of gears, the truck rumbles ominously forward, and...

EXT. OPEN-AIR BISTRO - DAY (SAME TIME)

HARRIGAN

Oh, shi--

Harrigan's coffee goes into orbit, spilling over the newspaper.

There's a WHOOSH of air, as Harrigan pitches forward, himself.

HARRIGAN

Aaarrgh!!

Screaming out, as he reaches down to his ankle.

Where A CHILD'S REMOTE-CONTROL DUMPSTER just crashed into his leg.

It's the same truck that's been hurtling toward Harrigan, the whole time.

Hard to tell who's most upset:

The LITTLE BOY / BILLY, age 7 or 8, a few tables over - who's holding the remote. Looking like he's not sure whether to cry, say "Sorry", or what.

The kid's YOUNG MOM, thirties. Eyes wide as saucers, and cup poised halfway to her lips, since the point of impact.

Or Harrigan, who's staring - but not at the kid, or his mom.

He's looking at the shattered back cushion of his chair - and the TWO BULLET HOLES in the wall behind.

From a crouch, Harrigan rolls deftly out of his seat; all business, now.

Hunched low behind the table, he scans the buildings across the street.

He reaches a hand up, into the sodden bundle of newspaper.

Extracts a HUMUNGOUS GODDAMN HANDGUN.

Sharp intake of breath, from the Young Mom.

YOUNG MOM  
Billy!! Get down!

Not taking his eyes off the street:

HARRIGAN  
It's okay, I'm a--

With his free hand, he pulls a badge holder from an inside pocket.

While still on the move.

Harrigan edges clear of the table, heading toward the sidewalk.

He turns for a second, toward the little boy. Grins.

HARRIGAN  
Thanks, kid.

Little Billy's still shellshocked.

Harrigan rises from a crouch.

Then - gun in hand - he sprints off, down the street.

Nina gets up, from where she's been hunkered down behind Billy and the Young Mom's table.

She gestures with her coffee pot, at the receding Harrigan.

Shrugs. Apologetically - almost.

NINA  
He does that.

With a wistful look, she watches Harrigan's progress, as he clears a path through alarmed pedestrians.

NINA (CONT'D)  
A lot.

And on that note, we

FADE TO BLACK