

THE SPEAKEASY

A shiny pair of black shoes clicked on night's wet pavement as the man took a few more steps down the dark street. The man wore a black suit, a trench coat and a fedora, and carried a machinegun at his hip. Two others dressed in similar attire could be heard in front of him, smashing the windows of a saloon and dumping gasoline on its rotting, wooden walls.

"Alright, boys," the man said.

The men joined the man in the street.

"Please, Seamus!" someone yelled from behind the men.

"Stick a sock in it, old man!" replied one of the machine gunner's men.

The machine gunner fired. Bullets ripped through the building, but nothing happened. The man fired again. Still nothing. Again. A spark ignited some of the gasoline and a wall of the building was immediately engulfed in flames.

Seamus lowered his gun. The men beside him were laughing. Seamus stepped over to his car where one of his men held three others at bay with a Thompson sub-machinegun.

"My place!" exclaimed the older gentleman.

"I'm assumin' you'd be Murray," said Seamus, digging in his coat, his gun tucked into his armpit. "It's 'Murray's', ain't it?"

"Yes, I'm..."

The man holding them at gun point interjected, "Nah! He ain't Murray. This kid over here is." He motioned to the younger man in the middle.

Seamus lit his cigarette. "Thanks, Patrick." He stared into the young man's eyes for a moment. "What's your name, kid?"

The young man pointed to himself and shrugged.

"Who the hell else do you think I'm talking to? I asked you your name, you goof. Let's hear it."

"My name's Oscar."

Seamus looked to Patrick. Patrick looked shocked. "So all this time you haven't been dealing with the real owner?"

"That's bullshit! This kid said he was the owner!" replied Patrick. "I oughtta!" Patrick said as he stepped over to Oscar and punched him in the mouth. Oscar reeled against the car behind him.

"Easy, Patrick!" yelled Seamus. "Give me a minute here, will ya?"

Patrick looked to Seamus for a moment and then marched away in disgust.

"So you been dupin' us, eh, kid?" asked Seamus.

Oscar rubbed his sore jaw.

"You been keepin' the bootleg for yourself, eh? Sharing it with your friends? I thought this was a reputable speakeasy, but..."

"I don't run no speakeasy!" Murray said. "We never sold illegal liquor here. Never have."

Seamus gave Murray a cold stare. "Was I talkin' to you, old man? Keep your mouth shut."

Murray stepped back.

"What'd you do with the bootleg, Oscar?"

The other man nervously said, "We kept it," before Oscar could reply.

"Shut up, Gill!" Oscar whispered.

"We kept it. Oscar and I kept it. Murray didn't have anything to do with it."

Seamus waited for a moment and exhaled smoke from his mouth. He stopped. He looked down at their feet. "Hope those shoes'll keep your dogs dry."

Gill didn't expect that response. "What?" he said.

Seamus added, "You gents are gonna be in the mud tonight, diggin' your own graves."



"Name's Louie," said the man in the passenger's seat, pointing a gun at the backseat passenger. He motioned to the driver. "This here's Dick."

Oscar looked over at Seamus, sitting next to him. Seamus stared out the window. He looked behind him out the back window. Gill and Murray were in the front seat of the car behind them, a gun aimed at the backs of both their heads by Seamus's other man, Patrick.

"Don't tell him my name, you ass," replied Dick.

"What? Why not?"

"He don't need to know it!"

"He's gonna be dead in just over an hour. What difference does it make?"

"None," said Seamus. The two quieted themselves for a moment.

"Put the gun away, Louie," said Dick. "I'm gonna go over a bump and you're gonna slip and splatter my brains all over the car."

"That would never happen," laughed Louie. "I've never heard of that happenin' before."

"That's how Georgie died!"

"That's baloney! Georgie was shot in the street. He wasn't in no car."

"He was too! He was shot by that guy... What's his name? That guy that was always usin' his heater to point at people when he talked to them. I can't remember what his... Seamus, what was that fella's name?"

"Please, gents. Oscar here has about an hour to live. He doesn't need his last ride filled with banter from the likes of you too."

Lightning hit, and as soon as it was gone, the cars had disappeared in the darkness of the forest.



Seamus exhaled a breath of smoke and said, "Come on, gents. I don't need to be here all night." The shovels of Oscar, Gill, and Murray sank into the rock-filled dirt. "It's a relatively simple task. You hoods don't even have to finish the job. We'll put the dirt back once you're lying in it."

"I'm done," said Murray as he threw down his shovel. "I'm done with this. You're gonna kill me anyway. I'm old. I don't need this. Just do it."

"You have two options. One, you dig your fuckin' grave," Seamus flicks his smoldering cigarette butt in the Murray's face, "or two, we rip off your fingers one by one until we're satisfied with the fact that you're makin' us dig your grave for you."

Murray stood in his watery, half-dug grave, staring at Seamus.

"Don't be stupid, Murray. Pick up the shovel."

Murray slowly bent down and grabbed the shovel. He sank it into the dirt.

"That's it," said Seamus. As the three dug, he reached into his coat to pull out his pistol. He pulled the slide back to see if there was indeed a bullet in the chamber, which there was. He brought the pistol down to his side.

"How much money did we lose you?" asked Gill, still digging.

"Hey, shut up, will ya?" yelled Dick. "Just keep diggin'. It's fuckin' freezin' out here and you're slowing things down."

"Enough," replied Seamus.

"Enough to kill us?" asked Gill.

"You got it, kiddo."

"What was it compared to the rest of the money you and your men make?" continued Gill.

"Kid, shut up!" yelled Dick.

"It ain't nothing compared to the money we're making across the state." Seamus brought his gun up and pointed at Gill.

"Jesus, Gill, shut up already!" yelled Oscar.

"Stop it. Stop digging!" shouted Seamus. "That's deep enough. Dick, Louie, grab their shovels."

Louie and Dick stepped down into Oscar and Gill's grave. "Stay right there," Louie whispered in Gill's ear. "You won't remember nothin' in the morning."

"You know what they say, Seamus," said Patrick. Patrick turned, no longer aiming his gun at Murray. Patrick's gun was now pointed right at Seamus. "You lose a lot when you try to get just a little more."

Seamus looked over at Patrick. "You got about three seconds to aim that gun someplace else or I'm gonna have to kill you."

"Oscar, Gill," said Patrick with his gun steady on Seamus. Oscar and Gill took from Dick and Louie their weapons and stepped out of the graves.

"I'm gonna kill your family too."

"Put the gun down and step into the grave."

Murray stood in his grave, confused.

"Sorry to drag you into this, Murray," said Oscar.

"What's going on here?" asked Murray.

"Stay where you are," Patrick said to Murray. "We'll bury the two of them together."

A flash of lightning struck the ground in the distance. There was a few seconds of silence. The old man slowly reached for his shovel. A thunderous boom shook the air and the old man Murray thrust his shovel up into Patrick's face. Patrick bent over backwards,

gripping his gun trigger, and shooting Louie several times before collapsing. Louie fell with a splat into the hole of a grave behind him.

Seamus spun around at the same time Oscar and Gill tried to take aim. Seamus's sights passed across Gill's chest, and he fired. Gill hit the ground. Dick leapt from the grave with the shovel and drove the shovel down into Gill's face. Oscar was taking aim at Seamus. Seamus ducked and the bullet hit Dick clean in the neck. Seamus took Oscar down with two shots to the chest.

By this time Patrick had gained his bearings back. He tried to sit himself up in the mud enough to fire, but he couldn't sit good enough and fired anyway. Seamus dodged the spray and darted towards the car. He jumped in and took off, firing a few rounds at his wake.

Patrick threw away his clip and loaded from his trench coat a new one. He jumped in the other car. The chase was short. Up ahead, Seamus had spun out in the mud. Seamus was still in the car. They both jumped out at the same time. Patrick hid behind his door while Seamus fired. Seamus was hit several times. His body slumped up against the car.

Patrick slowly approached him. Seamus was out of shells, and his gun was buried below him in the mud. "You..."

"Yeah, Seamus, me."

"You didn't get enough money workin' for me, eh? Had to take it all." Blood ran from Seamus's mouth. He didn't have long. "Looks like you should have listened to yourself when you said you lose it all when you want just a bit more."

Patrick turned around. Standing behind him in the headlights of his car, the silhouette of a determined old man carrying a shovel.

Patently the old man raised the shovel and said to Patrick, "You let 'em burn my place!" and finished him a swift blow to the head.

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