

At Rise: A portion of a bar with a mirror for a back - silhouetted in front of the mirror are various taps of beers, small strings of unlit Christmas tree lights are hung over the mirror - one brightly lit barstool at the bar, two dimly lit barstools to the right and left of it - the bartender is never seen, only her arms sliding drinks in front of the lit barstool - at times, the SOUND of a cash register ringing - a pause, and MACK ENTERS from the front, slaps a newspaper down on the bar - his face mirrored in the back bar)

MACK

Hello, Stacy..

(A glass of wine is slid next to his paper)

My, can you tell me where you got those earrings? - very stylish! - my daughter's birthday is coming - I'll get her a pair..

(Listens to response from the bartender)

I know where I can get them - Nordstroms - I'll go down after this - have to drop off a return at the main post office - deadline's today - have to get it out..

(He sits down, opens his paper, reads as he slurps his wine, a pause, a dark figure sits down on the barstool to the left - Mack continues reading, pauses, then turns)

Oh hi, Fred..

(Turns back to paper, reads, a pause, he turns)

You read what on the Internet?

(Pauses, listens)

I kind of know that, Fred.. I read it this morning - I read five papers a day..

(Holds up newspaper)

.. this is the Times - New York Times? - Brazil is a country of sixty-eight million - besides a big agricultural sector, it has a large manufacturing base - exports goods and food to the Far East, specifically China - of course, they're going through a big political upheaval, right now, Brazil - state corruption, as far up as Lulu, their former president - the current president is in big kim-chee - nobody likes him, trying to give him the boot - so, I kind of know all that..

(Goes back to his paper, slurps wine, looks right for some one else to talk to - perks up his ears at a conversation)

You don't want to declare that.. you want to give the IRS as little information as possible - let them figure it out - your return is just going to be screened by a software program, anyway, before it ends on the desk of some G-1 clerk, not the smartest tool in the shed.. sorry, I'm a buttinsky..

(Slurps wine)

.. Mack, a CPA - I have an office down the street..

(Slurps wine, empties glass)

Well, back to my paper!

(Puts up paper up to stop further conversation, reads, puts down paper, looks left)

MACK (Con't.)

How's your brother doing, Fred?

(Listens, another glass of wine is slid in front of him)

His what are draining - legs? - sounds like diabetes - he needs to see a specialist - you need to set up the appointment, make sure he gets there - but he's dying - you know that..

(Holds his paper up, continues reading, slurps wine, pauses, turns back to left)

I know he's your brother..

(Slurps wine)

.. but, moving to a higher level.. have you read those allegations about Trump? - ha-haa! - he's finished, kaput..

(Puts paper up, reads, puts paper down, looks in mirror for company, slurps wine, turns left)

I'm seeing my ex- this weekend - family get together - my daughter's back with her boyfriend - left her husband, wanted her space - my granddaughter is fine.. see a picture?

(Takes out phone, scrolls, holds screen toward shadowy figure to the left)

Know her first word? - depreciation! - true story - takes after her grandfather..

(Puts phone on bar, slurps wine, reads paper, pauses, talks to bartender)

Is that my second?

(Reads paper, puts it down)

I have the audit from hell - I'll do it, old client - homeowners association - I said give me some numbers, something to work with! - I can massage the numbers - they're trying to declare an office a rental, a write-off - but no one's there - that's all right, I'll do it - I just won't sign the audit..

(Reads paper, slurps wine, turns to left)

What, Fred? - oh, I'm fine.. getting work out.. got six accounts receivable out - no one pays! - at least, not on time - I'll be fine..

(Reads paper, turns back to a question)

Your 1099 for the tutoring? - you sent it to me? - oh, yeah, I got it - I get a hundred fifty e-mails a day - it's there somewhere..

(Slurps wine, reads paper, turns back left to a question)

Yeah, I got everything, just have to put it together..

(Empties wine, goes back to paper, puts paper down)

I know you gave it to me two months ago.. I know..

(A new wine is slid in front of him)

..I haven't been doing well, slowing down.. I'll get to it.. I know you need the money..

(Puts up paper to block conversation, listens to comment from the left, puts paper down)

Fred..

MACK (Con't.)
(Slams hand down on bar)

I will not be held hostage to your time line!

(Slurps wine, puts paper up, puts it down)

Fred.. you don't have to go.. it's the medication - I haven't been doing well.. moving to another level, the you-know-what deadline passed - I'm in big kim-chee - no, I don't want to talk about it here - over and above that, cats - you got too many cats - you know that - it's amazing what a small 22 can do..

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- from the play, Mack