

Official business. Strictly confidential. Must keep hush-hush, on a need-to-know basis.

I'm what you'd call a Government Man, you see. 5 passports in a safety deposit box. Today I'm Lorne DeLancey, society schmoozer, and I play the part well enough.

They've got me in the Sewage Sector with the rats and the bums. Suits back home that is, damn them all to hell. Never met a crowd so keen on forgetting favours done on their behalf and more likely than not to do you a wrong turn for thanks. And they had enough to thank me for.

Strippers have invaded the booth and begun twerking everywhere. Bunch of baboons. As way of encouragement they slap each other loudly. "Yaaaasssss bitchhhh". The whole place smells of their assholes. Like an open septic tank. I catch whiffs of the pungent human odour every time they clap. "Yaaaasssss bitchhhh".

I dodge a stray cheek and duck into the corner of the booth, keeping my eye locked on the target. Hollywood Sweetheart, sitting meekly in the corner, 3 grams of criminal substance 'moon dust' stashed neatly between the folds of a lick-it-yourself manila envelope stuffed inside her clutch (*Chanel, \$6,450*). Observe the transaction, snap some shots on my hide-a-cam, and report back to the Ministry ASAP. Routine operation.

The booth is in disarray. A busboy comes 'round collecting empty cups. He looks at me, down to my glass, and then at my crotch. I slap his hand away quickly, the little faggot.

Specimen from every dirty rathole of the gutter have infested the booth and are setting up shop. Promoters, mostly. Creature beside me's sporting a black puffer jacket with the tag still dangling from the sleeve (*Moncler, \$1,925*). Starts rolling up a blunt and casting me sideways glances like he's just waiting for me to ask if I can get in on it. I pull a supra out my brushed cashmere jacket pocket (*Tom Ford, \$5,470*) and spark it up right in his ugly fuckin' face and blow the smoke in his eyes and he leaves off coughing to sulk. These pussy ass gangsters don't scare me; plus, I've got my trusty blunderbuss tucked between my thighs as insurance against wanton bravado. Let one of them so much as flash a blade an' I'll plaster their rat brains all over the walls.

Nothing to make of it though. I've been in the *biznay* too long to get caught up with the frontmen.

I, more than any of these play-hard chicos in their height-of-the-moment fashion, know the true mastermind behind this entire operation: Charles LeBooth – the infamous 'Man with the Leather Pants'. LeBooth'd never let himself get caught dead here, out in the open, what with compromising females and the prying eyes of envy emanating from the dancefloor. No, he'd be in an adjoining room, separated by a two-sided mirror and bulletproof walls no less, cameras playing back to screens giving him the rundown, puffing heavily on his hashish, a little minx of a foreign bottle-goddess going for laps on the pole.

I'm accosted by one of the strippers as she begins her mating dance on my lap, getting ass grease all over my bespoke *Brioni* twills (*\$920*). "Sorry darling, but I'm a good Christian boy" says I, and stick a rubber-gloved thumb up her butt for good measure. Don't want to crack my cover...

Did a spot up in the slammer couple years back. 'nother inside job. 8 months in solitary, 'cept it wasn't so solitary seein' as how they had 5 of us bunkin' down together in the space of a broom closet. Tried and true rapists and murderers every last one of them. Friendly fellows. No windows in the place. We'd sleep all day and stay up all night, make time go by faster. I was there trying to win the confidence of the suspected head of some plot to see a nation-wide prisoner uprising. Ministry thought it was this radicalized junkie-philosophical type that had got

himself life 3 times over for inciting race revolts in preparation for some helter-skelter affair. Turns out the whole thing was cooked up by this turned C.O, got too much action in the showers and started going looney, got it into his head that he was the next John Brown here to liberate the unjustly detained abovementioned rapists and murderers and set up a '*Free Incarcerated Republic*', wrap you head 'round that one. Confided in me, one night, he did, after the showers. Told me all about his plan to overthrow the warden and the state-loyal guards and get the prison up and floating, go across the land pillaging and raiding towns and cities '*till we raise up 'nuff lead and paper to take on the Union!*'. Reported back to the Ministry with my findings and hightailed it out of there, and not soon enough either. Barmy son of a bitch tried to lead the first revolt the following day an' got himself and his half-brained followers shot up in the yard from the walls like fish in a barrel.

A fight breaks out. Rival gangs *The Construction Boys* and *The Automatic Men* are going at it. Bottles fly overhead and crash and send splinters of jagged glass into the faces of screaming bleeding dancers. The bartender has taken out a light machine gun and is gunning down patrons running for cover. Security rushes in to agitated calls on their walkie-talkies and team up on an unsuspecting nerd in the corner, grab him by the hair and drag him to the stairwell and begin beating him to a pulp. One of them has sense enough to close the door while they conduct their ghastly business. 5 minutes later they walk out, smug and satisfied looking. LeBooth, his leather pants resplendent, saunters in to survey the gruesome aftermath, looks down at the beaten and bloodied body of the nerd, nods his approval, and saunters on back. The fight subsides, the light machine gun goes back behind the bar, the twerking resumes.

Contact comes in. Goes by the name Carmelo Trepid. From the way he talks I pin him for a coke-head.

"Hey, want to get plastered together, Baby? C'mon, we got all night! I thought you were my right-hand gal, Baby-doll, don't let me down, don't disappoint me now, don't let me find out I was wrong! Let me get another bottle – ey' sweet stuff, Carmelo is in need of your attentions. What? Who!? Forget about him! Get that soap boy outta here! C'mon, c'mon, you're comfy, right? Yea, so let's have a drink, let's get plastered. Let me get another bottle." He leans over to me, confidential-like "Hey pal, you got any *sniff* on you??"

The problem with coke is that coke becomes the motive. Once one does it, one must continue. It is the only thing of importance for the remainder of the night. More coke. Always more. Scurried away in the corner, a real rat figure, doing a quick bump off the space between thumb and index – junkie behaviour! Dirty drug absorbs all the dirt around it. Liable to give you a breakout. That's why moon dust is the new thing. No spiralling degradation of the character, no caved septum, no clogged pores, no, none of that unsightly stuff. You take one hit of moon dust and its straight to the city morgue for you. Shit kills you instantly, but supposedly the high is something unbeatable. So they say. Hard to tell for sure seein' as everyone whose tried it is far too dead to confirm. But the junk is in motion.

Nevermind Carmelo. He's arrived with Baby Aspirin, one of those high-class fancies, shape of her cheeks gives a man delusions, thinks he's flying in the sky, or sitting on gold and marble thrones, a thousand good thoughts popping off in his head like constant ejaculation 'till he wakes up and finds she's swiped his internal organs and is playing the odds on the pre-market with his liver and kidneys, thank you very much.

DJ hops on the mic: "Ladies and gentleman, welcome to Amateur Night at Club Sewage Sector! Ever been to the fair before? Try your hand at ring toss? Hard game, no? Well, it's about to get even harder. Let's welcome our first dancer of the evening. Sweet little Giana, now, lets

see how many rings she can get tossed on her pole! Wait, I'm getting word that...what's that? Sweet little Giana couldn't make it tonight? Still recovering from last week? Moving on then...let's keep Sweet little Giana in our thoughts as we give a warm welcome to our replacement dancer; the beautifully-buttoxed ebony goddess, Black Excellence! Now, Excellence, stick the broomstick in here, and I'll grab these rings and we'll just about get started..."

"Black Excellence? Funny seeing you here girl. I was just thinking about you. You see, I'd like to eat your pudding..."

I look down to see my drink is gone. Faggot busboy is scurrying away, his fly open and dick flying around in spirals. He looks back over his shoulder and shoots me a scornful look. This is his revenge.

"I'll spit in your eye and shit in your milk, damn you m'boy!"

A sleek hand places another cup in front me.

"Here's another, darling"

Malilópez, slut galore.

"Much obliged" says I with a nod and my most rakish grin.

Carmelo reappears in the booth. Coke heads come and go like that. You never see 'em coming or leaving, they're just there one moment and not the next. Better watch out. This one may be Stasi...

"Get these lousy bums out of here! Begging like a dog, shooting up right there on the street corner in front of mothers with their children. Have you no mind for little Timmy? Have you not a care that your offensive presence and foul odour are unbecoming? That this is not the appropriate sight for young Timmy's innocent eyes, that it is not conducive to a stout upbringing and advancement in what we call a society? Have a care for Timmy, do some moon dust, get it over with already!"

All of a sudden I'm gripped with a serious urge to drop something heavy.

"Goddamit! Out of the way, Baby, I'm defecating here!" And I push our pretty prostitute to the floor and vault over her body like a thing possessed, my lower intestines rumbling something savage. But I'm too late. I've soiled myself. Luckily my Ministry *Brioni*'s came equipped with the portable lavatory feature. God bless the Empire.

I walk back to the booth and I think to myself: *all these people are full of shit...*

"Deuced itchy teeth, slipped something into my Negroni, did you?"

"Huh?" Malilópez turns around.

"That's right, you bitch. I'm onto your game. Slipped me a nasty one, did you? No use denying it, sweet one, I've been in this *biznay* too long not to know when someone slips me a —"

She grabs my cock and squeezes hard. I try to finish my sentence but can only muster a choked whimper.

"Hush, you fool! Aren't you a professional?"

At this moment a bottle goddess comes to the table.

"Hiiii~♥! Name's Krissy, and I'll be your bottle goddess tonight. We're having a special promotion here at Club Sewage Sector. Buy one bottle of vodka, emptied and filled to the brim with cheap rubbing alcohol, and get the second half off!"

Malilópez loosens her grip on my crotch just long enough for me to respond.

"I'm good on that score, love, but if you could get me a spoon and some running water..."

You never heard of Malilópez? Queen of Indico 73, big slut out in those parts.

"Would you let a girl with a strap-on give it to you?"

“That depends. Is it very big?”

We’re cut short by a heated conversation between the Mayor of Atlantic City and Ryan Seacrest in the next booth over:

“Now listen Frank, this ain’t no normal moon dust. That stuff they’re peddling out in the streets now? Sure, yea, it’ll hit you right and good, blow up your *fuckin’* pineal gland, make your asshole dilate wider than a football field, sure, sure, but it don’t hit like this stuff. *This*, my friend, is dust from the *dark side*. That’s right. The dark side of the fuckin’ moon, baby! You thought that light side dust was good, wait till you try some of this shit. Wait, on second thought, no trials before the purchase. But trust me Frank, this shit right here’ll fuck you up like you’ve never been fucked before. You’ll be creaming your goddamn pants! So, what’s it going to be Frank?”

Seeing that I’ve resigned myself to play along cordially with her little charade, Malilópez puts an index to her mouth and releases her hold on my blunderbuss.

“But, goddamit, what’s the meaning of this girl?”

“Keep your mouth shut. You just took a dose of moon dust and I just saved your life. The nasty one I slipped you was to flush the shit out your system.”

I laugh in her face.

“Do I look like I got a death wish, sweetie? I never touched the junk.”

“Not purposefully you didn’t, but someone spiked Black Excellence’s pudding with the stuff.”

“What! Who? When...?”

“Can’t get into it now. No time. The flush is only a temporary fix. You’ve still got enough moon dust in your system to put a demented old elephant out of its misery. Now, keep your mouth shut and follow me. I’m from the Ministry myself. The busboy’s my aide, name’s Keto. He’s been watching to make sure your drink stayed clean. We never thought they’d sneak it into the pudding. Now, follow me. It’s not safe here anymore...”

Will Lorne DeLancey survive the dose of Moon Dust? Can he trust in the supposed Ministry Ma’am, Malilópez? And what about Carmelo...could he be Stasi?

Find out next time in *GOVERNMENT MAN*