

Elliott brought his right hand leftward to adjust his cuff and straighten his sleeve. His eyes were fixed on a man with curly brown hair and thick black rimmed glasses resting on his face. His white grin was too wide as he leaned in to tell an incredible story, probably about a paintball tournament in Berlin a few weeks earlier.¹ Elliott's ears caught the laughs of the people standing around the man; the laughs of people who should have been a great deal more uncomfortable than their laughs indicated. As it happened, the colorful narratives told in a bizarre accent to which they listened were originating from the mouth of one of the country's most depraved and deleterious criminals. An evil and insidious mouth indeed, it was that of Tom Wood.

Illegal animal trafficking, prostitution, armed robbery, protection racketeering, investment banking, t-shirt sales, sea piracy:² Tom Wood's criminal organization had done it all. And here was Elliott, an advertisement copywriter, about to introduce himself to Mr. Wood and begin his life as a criminal.

Elliott shuffled across the room, keeping his gaze focussed on Mr. Wood. After a few mishaps, such as knocking a platter of champagne glasses out of a waitress's hands and receiving an urgent call from his mother, he found himself face to face with Tom Wood.

Mr. Wood let his digression about the effect of pant shrinkage on dancing³ trail off as a middle aged man's large and entirely too grave face inserted itself between Tom's own face and that of one Mr. Brubaker, who proceeded to frown.

"Can I help you?" asked Mr. Wood, a half-smile still half-attached to his face.

Elliott's brow furrowed.

"That's what I've come here to find out," replied Elliott after some thought. He had forgotten to ask himself that question before coming here.

Tom saw Mr. Brubaker's sparse grey hair slowly creep out from behind the man's shoulder, followed by Brubaker's wrinkled old face.

His head cocked slightly and face firmly expressive of discontent, Mr. Brubaker addressed the intruder.

"Just who are you to be interrupting the esteemed Mr. Wood's diatribe?"

"Why, I'm Elliott Richard Franck."

"And what are you doing here Mr. Frank?"

¹Just kidding, it's not in Berlin, it's within driving distance. And it's not a few weeks ago, it's the fourteenth of November. And Lakshmi has emailed some info about it to hitchcock_happenings, so if you're interested, read that and/or talk to her. I believe it's an all-inclusive \$30 fee.

²*Hanging around Goldshire, Sam Spiegel gets uncomfortable after looking at the guild bank account...*

smeagol91: srsly guys, we need gold

ryang8: truth. lets raid utgarde lol

b2: no, we should raid harc xD btw tony, where is that?

TheHoff: idk lol

While Spiegel is okay with just blowing \$100 on candy for everyone at the end of the year, he feels compelled to do something more productive with the funds entrusted to him. Perhaps even increase said funds. *Hopefully* you've taken the *mandatory* survey on t-shirt slogans (sent to hitchcock_happenings like everything else). If you have any other money-related ideas, email or talk to Sam Spiegel.

³The relevant committee wishes to make it known that House Homecoming is indeed happening. Expect further communiqués to that effect.

Comet: A Tale of House Meetings

“That’s Franck to you, sir,” scowled Elliott. “Though you might be excused for never having read my name in print. And who are you?”⁴

With an *ahem*, Mr. Benjamin Brubaker straightened his jacket and introduced himself as such.

“Well, it’s very nice to meet you, Mr. Brubaker. However, my business is with Mr. Wood here.” Mind you, Elliott had been staring at Tom throughout the exchange. “Mr. Wood, I wish to become a part of your—”

“Say no more!” exclaimed Tom, mouth tugged into a hasty grin and eyes oscillating in nervous sideways glances. He threw an arm over Elliott’s shoulder and led him out of the group to the further chagrin of its well-dressed and glowering members.

Walking with Tom through the party,⁵ up the stairs, down the hall, and into a dark room behind a door hidden by a heavy velvet curtain, Elliott wondered whether he would subsequently be executed or initiated into the criminal organization. Tom removed his arm from Elliott’s shoulder and walked to roughly the center of the room.

“Well then, Elliott,” said Tom as he lifted his hand above his head and groped around in the darkness, “What are your professional interests? Do you have any relevant work experience, education, or skills?”⁶

Tom’s hand found a hanging cord and pulled down, causing light to flood the room.

“I’m sorry, what? Your accent is gratuitous.”

“What are your professional interests and qualifications?”

“What, like musicals?”⁷

“No! Why should I employ you?”

“Ohhh, okay. Well, I have great concentration and no family⁸ or friends to whom I can disclose criminal secrets. I’m also a pretty good copywriter and an excellent knife fighter.”

“You don’t look like street muscle. How flexible are you? Do you think you could pick up some acrobatics? Aside from street muscle, we use knives pretty heavily for infiltration.”

“Well, I stretch in the mornings.”

“And how does espionage fit into your professional interests and career goals?”

“Uhm. Nicely?”

“You’re hired. Can you start in fifteen minutes?”

“I’ve got nothing else going on tonight.”

“Excellent. The training team will pick you up on the roof.”

TO BE CONTINUED

⁴**PSA:** If you *have* read a name in print, find their contact info on directory.uchicago.edu, you creeper!

⁵Speaking of parties, our dear Condom Czar had a few words about... condoms. They are to be used one at a time, as there is a two week interval between deliveries of condoms to the cuddle cup, and because two condoms are in fact not better than one. Furthermore, Mr. Bartley is organizing a ‘Peer Health Exchange’-esque event in conjunction with Sarah Goldberg. Someone who probably wouldn’t want to remain anonymous but probably should asked, “Would that mean having sex with people from Snell? Because I’m not down with that.” Lucky for us all, it actually means a joint learning experience: that’s right, Protection 10100.

⁶I know a fair number of people who don’t have skills related to printer usage. DJ LoBraico is not one of them, and as your RCA, he notes that the Rec Room printer is not broken and you can talk to him if you can’t figure it out.

⁷**House Meeting: The Musical** arrives at a theatre near you (such as the Green Room) on Thursday, the 21st of October at 10:00 PM. It’s exciting. Get excited. Show up.

⁸Family! How about the up and coming Wood family? Looks like Baby Wood is going to be a girl!