

Five Bucks  
by  
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(Based on a true Story)

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FIVE BUCKS

I/E. BULL MCGUINNESS' LIMOUSINE - FIFTH AVENUE NY - EVENING

The Limo is purring down 5th Avenue. Bull is sat in the back. Early fifties, fat and flashy he is dressed expensively and sports a beautiful camel hair coat. Outside the weather is bitterly cold and blizzarding. Bull leans back in the plush seats and rugs his hands in evident glee. In front of him THE DRIVER is sat. Sour faced but immaculate in his uniform he is slowly negotiating the early evening traffic.

DRIVER

(voice coming over  
intercom)

Where to Mister McGuinness?

BULL

(with a theatrical  
flourish)

Home James and don't spare the  
horses!

DRIVER

My name's not James, Mister  
McGuinness.

BULL

(suddenly enraged)

Oh, so we're now a goddam comedian  
are we?

He leaps forward to the glass partition and bangs angrily on it. The Driver keeps looking ahead.

BULL (CONT'D)

You son of a bitch! With what I pay  
you'll be who I damn well want you  
to be.

Bull subsides into his seat and looks moodily out of the side window.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE NY - EVENING

Bull's limo is driving slowly through the snow encumbered traffic. We see his face appear at the near side passenger window. He is staring intently at someone. Camera POV turns to reveal who he is looking at. It is THE MAN, an old man shuffling along the pavement. He is bearded with straggling hair and strange staring eyes. He is oddly dressed. The clothes seems once to have been expensive but are now stained and shabby especially the now threadbare camel hair coat tied round him with string.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER  
 (voice over)  
 Bad day at the office Mr  
 McGuinness?

CUT TO:

I/E. BULL MCGUINNESS' LIMOUSINE - FIFTH AVENUE NY - EVENING

Bull is pulled away from the window by the Driver's question.  
 He seems confused.

BULL  
 What?

DRIVER  
 I asked if you've had a bad day.  
 You seem, well, a bit on edge.

BULL  
 (angrily)  
 You mind your own business.

He then takes another peek out of the window. POV through  
 window. No sign of The Man. Bull seems relieved yet also  
 disappointed. He sits back in the seat and appears in better  
 temper.

BULL (CONT'D)  
 Hey, sorry I bawled you out just  
 then. I need a drink.

He laughs a bit uncertainly.

BULL (CONT'D)  
 I don't know why though? You see in  
 fact I have just had a very good  
 day, one of the best ever in fact.

DRIVER  
 There are not many in New York who  
 have been able to say that recently  
 Mister McGuinness, you are a very  
 lucky man.

BULL  
 My friend, luck has nothing to do  
 with it. It is just a question of  
 holding your nerve and never giving  
 a sucker an even break.

He leans back again in the seat and his head lolls to the  
 right to look out of the side window. POV through window and  
 The Man is there again. Bull straightens up in surprise and  
 then the phone rings. Bull looks from The Man to the blinking  
 phone light on the console in front of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He stabs at a button on the console which starts the hands free system on his call. He is still looking distractedly through the window.

BULL (CONT'D)  
That you honey?

UNCLE TED  
(uncertain voice over  
telephone)  
Bartholomew, it's me Uncle Ted.

BULL  
Shit!

The Man now forgotten Bull lunges forward to knock the hands free button off and wrench the handset from its cradle up to his ear. He is very self conscious about his real Christian name.

BULL (CONT'D)  
(tersely)  
Uncle Ted, Long time no hear. Where  
did you get my number from?

UNCLE TED  
(voice over telephone)  
I got it from your secretary.

BULL  
(he looks very angry)  
Is that a fact?

UNCLE TED  
Look Batholomew ...

BULL  
(interrupting him)  
Its Bull McGuinness now Uncle, I'm  
sure she told you that?

UNCLE TED  
Er yes, look I know you value your  
privacy but do not take it out on  
your secretary. I told her it was  
an emergency.

BULL  
(sarcastic)  
An emergency? What has cousin Louis  
broken out of detox again?

There is a pronounced silence. Bull seems to realise that was a very hurtful remark to make.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

UNCLE TED

(struggling to keep his  
emotions in check)

Er, no, er Bull, Louis is still  
undergoing treatment. He might be  
out one day but hope is fading fast  
for any sort of meaningful  
recovery.

BULL

Too bad, now what is all this  
about?

UNCLE TED

It's about your father.

There is another pronounced silence. Bull sits staring  
impassively ahead telephone to his ear.

BULL

My father is dead.

UNCLE TED

I know.

(beat)

he died this morning

(beat)

In my arms.

Bull looks both angered and distraught at the news.

BULL

Whadya mean in your arms? You told  
me you didn't know where he was?

UNCLE TED

I lied, I knew where your father  
was all along, I looked after him.  
I was his only friend.

BULL

You bastard! You lied to me. All  
those years ago I begged you to  
find him. You said it was  
impossible. You said he had gone to  
a place that no-one could ever  
track him down. You said that he  
wanted nothing more to do with me  
and mom.

(beat)

You told me to forget him.

UNCLE TED

Bull, look this is very hard for me  
but I have to try and make you  
understand. I did not really lie.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

UNCLE TED (CONT'D)

You see your father had gone somewhere where you could never find him. That is the father you so desperately wanted. Have you heard of Agent Orange?

BULL

Sure

UNCLE TED

Well as I told you your Dad did a lot of real sneaky covert work back in Vietnam. This meant he was often right in the thick of the jungle when those bastards dumped that shit all over. He took it pretty bad. Even before demob he was having fainting fits, hallucinations and crazy dreams. They kept putting him in asylums but it was no good

(beat)

The Government disowned him. If they accepted responsibility it meant they had to own up to having troops where they had always said they had no troops. Your Dad became an embarrassment and was left to rot on the vine.

BULL

Why didn't you tell us this? Why did you leave mom and me in the dark? We could have looked after him.

UNCLE TED

Your Dad could see that would not work. Your mom was a good woman but not strong. If he had come back to you there would have been trouble and you would have been the loser and he did not want that.

BULL

So where did he go?

UNCLE TED

He didn't go anywhere.

BULL

Whadya mean?

UNCLE TED

He lived with me. He was awarded a small pension and I looked after him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

UNCLE TED (CONT'D)

The money I would send on your birthday and at Christmas that was his. Sometimes he would go and see you when you played Little League and I even managed to get him to see your graduation.

Bull is finding the conversation increasingly difficult. Tears well in his eyes. POV the Driver's mirror.

DRIVER

Something wrong Mister McGuinness?

BULL

Shut the fuck up!

UNCLE TED

Bull?

BULL

What?

UNCLE TED

Bull I know this is hard for you but your Dad thought it was for the best. But he's gone now and I know it would be his dearest wish if at least in death he can come back into your life.

BULL

What sort of shit is that?

UNCLE TED

Will you come to the funeral Bull, he wanted you to come to his funeral.

BULL

Give my secretary the details.

UNCLE TED

I already have.

BULL

Great, then I'll think about it.

UNCLE TED

I really hope you'll make it.

BULL

Yeah.

UNCLE TED

Bull, I'm really sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BULL  
Yeah, goodbye Ted

There is a click. The phone goes dead. The car comes to a stop. Bull puts his hands up to his face and then burrows for a handkerchief and wipes his eyes. Then he turns to his right and freezes in shock. There , his face pressed up against the car window, is the face of The Man. He is staring manically at Bull and making strange noises whilst pawing at the window with his hands.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Jesus!

The Man stops and just stares a Bull. His eyes desperate, pleading. Then he starts his grunting and pawing again.

BULL (CONT'D)  
(a bit hysterical)  
OK, OK, I'll give you money.

He struggles with his wallet and opens it. Pulls out \$100 bills. He swears under his breath then leans forward to tap the driver's partition.

DRIVER  
Yes Mr McGuinness?

BULL  
Pull over and park up.

DRIVER  
But Mister

BULL  
Do as I goddam say!

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE - EVENING

The big limo slides into the curb forcing The Man to step away. As it parks up The Man falls to his knees beside the car door and continues to paw at the window. Bull's face can be seen looking through it terrified.

CUT TO:

I/E. BULL MCGUINNESS' LIMOUSINE - FIFTH AVENUE NY - EVENING

Bull taps on the partition and gestures to the Driver to open it. It slides back.

BULL  
Have you got any money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER  
 (nodding at the dash)  
 I keep five dollars here for the  
 tolls, that's all.

BULL  
 Give it to me.

The Driver hands him the note and Bull looks back desperately at The Man who is now just staring at him through the window. Bull hesitates then turns back to the Driver.

BULL (CONT'D)  
 Drive on a couple of yards. I don't  
 want to open the door with this  
 guys here.

The Driver checks his near side wing mirror. It seems he has not noticed The Man. He sets the gear and the car lurches forward throwing Bull back in his seat.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE - EVENING

The limo moves forward and The Man is left out of shot. Then it stops. The rear door opens and Bull looks out through snow being driven by screaming winds. He closes the door.

CUT TO:

I/E. BULL MCGUINNESS' LIMOUSINE - FIFTH AVENUE NY - EVENING

Bull reaches forward and hands the Driver the money.

BULL  
 It's fucking freezing out there,  
 you go.

The Driver turns in protest.

DRIVER  
 Mister McGuinness I'm not supposed  
 to leave the vehicle

BULL  
 (enraged)  
 Do as I tell you or you won't even  
 be driving a grocery cart.

Reluctantly the driver gets himself into his coat.

DRIVER  
 Who am I giving it to?

Bull jerks his thumb behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BULL  
Old guy, beard, looks like Jesus,  
you can't miss him.

The driver get's out of the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE - EVENING

The Driver gets out and huddles against the weather. Then rather uncertainly starts to walk back down the sidewalk. He leaves the door open.

CUT TO:

I/E. BULL MCGUINNESS' LIMOUSINE - FIFTH AVENUE NY

Bull looks back through the rear windshield. He sees the driver approach The Man but the man backs away, shaking his head. Bull swears and reaches for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE

Bull stands by the open rear door. He is shouting back to the Driver.

BULL  
Give it to him for chrissake and  
get back here. I'm freezing my  
balls off!

Change to Bull's POV and the Driver now chasing The Man who shambles away from him in evident fear. Bull swears again and hurries after them. He quickly overtakes the driver and snatches the money from him and then bears down on the Man.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Look you piece of shit take the  
money.

The Man continues to back away.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Why don't you take the money?

Bull is beginning to get tired.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Please, please take the money.

The Man is now backed into an alleyway entrance and cowers before Bull. He does not want the proffered note so Bull tries to find a pocket. Eventually he stuffs it inside the Man's coat. He steps back and helps the man upright.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He goes to pat the Man on the shoulder but seeing how dirty and smelly he is thinks better of it. He turns to see the limo still stood with both doors open then turns back.

BULL (CONT'D)  
OK, no problem, you're OK?

The Man merely nods, hesitantly, but as he does so the Five dollar bill flutters from the neck of his coat and is blown down the alley. The Driver and Bull both set off after it. There is a silly chase as both try and catch the note and then when they do they bump into each other and send each other sprawling in a pile of old garbage bags that split to reveal their stinking, rotting contents. The Man has followed them and is stood looking down at them as they sprawl in the filth. With a fierce grunt Bull takes the bill from the driver and stretches an arm up to The Man who starts to reach down for it.

CUT TO:

I/E. NYPD SQUAD CAR PARKED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FIFTH AVE

The car has just pulled up. There are three officers inside and the one in the passenger seat looks over to the sidewalk. He depresses the window.

NYPD OFFICER  
Kapinsky, you there?

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDE WALK - FIFTH AVENUE

Officer Kapinsky comes out of the shadows thrown by the lights of a coffee shop carrying a tray with four coffee cups on it. He approaches the squad car and bends down to the window.

OFFICER KAPINSKY  
Here you are boys, I know how cold  
it gets in those squad cars.

CUT TO:

I/E. NYPD SQUAD CAR PARKED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FIFTH AVE

The tray is taken through the window and the coffees rapidly distributed. Kapinsky is looking through the window

NYPD OFFICER  
You bet Kapinsky, we don't get to  
sit around drug stores and diners  
all day  
(beat)  
What is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He has noticed that Kapinsky is looking past him across the car to the other side of the street. He turns and from his POV we see the Man reaching down to the sprawled bodies of Bull and the Driver at the end of the alley.

NYPD OFFICER (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch, it's a mugging.

The car explodes as the officers try and get rid of their coffees and get out quickly. One spills it on his groin and lets out an excruciating yell.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY OFF FIFTH AVENUE

Bull is looking up at The Man who is now looking down at him with a strange, loving expression. Bull seems to recognise the Man.

BULL

Dad?

The Man smiles and is about to speak when there is the sound of running feet and Kapinsky appears from behind the Man and cracks him over the head with his night stick sending him sprawling into the garbage. Another officer picks up Bull and the Driver. Bull then sees Kapinsky about to hit the Man again.

BULL (CONT'D)

No, leave him

Then he launches himself on Kapinsky and the other cop jumps on him and wrestles him away.

NYPD OFFICER

What the fuck are you playing at, we just saved your ass?

Kapinsky has now handcuffed the Man and left him in a slumped sitting position. He walks over to stand over Bull shielding the Man from view.

BULL

Whadaya mean?

OFFICER KAPINSKY

Weird beard here, he was mugging you right?

BULL

Wrong!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NYPD OFFICER

Oh I get it, same old story. You're one of those goddam liberals. Want the protection of law and order but can't stomach it when it gets dirty.

Bull has got up now and is dusting himself down with the Driver's help.

OFFICER KAPINSKY

Yeah, even when it is stuck in your face you do gooder's can't see it. We are the last line of defence between you and scum like him.

The Driver is about to speak but Bull stills him with a gesture. He squares up to the three officers.

BULL

Listen you trio of clowns and listen good. This was no mugging, in fact if there is fault here it is with my friend and me because we were trying to give this guy five bucks

The officers seem perplexed.

BULL (CONT'D)

Yeah, crazy isn't it. You see that is the problem of today, we have lost touch with ourselves. I assumed that man wanted money, he assumed we wanted to harm him, you assumed he was a mugger I assumed you are a bunch of bigots. who's right and who's wrong? We all are. If we'd only take the time to stop, to think, to goddam communicate then so much of the silly stupid misunderstanding in this world will disappear and we might actually start to get along.

The three officers shuffle a bit sheepishly.

OFFICER KAPINSKY

Well we're sorry Sir, but, well, it is not often we meet this sort of thing.

BULL

I know, I'm in the same situation. It has taken an old tramp to make me see it. We need more people like him. Such people are the future.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He suddenly remembers that the Man is still handcuffed.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Hey, let him go, get those cuffs on  
him.

POV of scene now changes to that of the Man, or where the Man should be. Camera looks up as the Police Officers, Bull and the Driver look down.

BULL (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch!

OFFICER KAPINSKY  
Oh shit!

NYPD OFFICER  
Captain's not going to like this.

Shift to their POV. There on the floor is the old camel hair coat and the handcuffs. Then POV is of the little knot of men in the alleyway. They look up and see that they are right beside St. Patrick's Cathedral and the full moon has just emerged from behind the spire. They look at each other meaningfully then the POV changes to look down at their faces looking up as if from the spire. Then we do a jump as in Google Earth to see the whole area, then another jump to take in the Eastern sea board of the States and then the Earth itself.

SUPER: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" Hebrews Ch13, V2.

FINIS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)