

Armitage: Bodies of Evidence 3

Script by Dave Stone

10 pages

PAGE ONE

1) Open in the location we were in last time, Treasure and Terry's apartment. The two DataDay security guards are advancing on Kara Delbane, while barely giving a furious Armitage and Steel a second glance.

(As an entirely scene-setting aside: these security people, as we'll see, are just dumb muscle and have no idea with whom they're actually dealing. They're used to just bursting into rooms and intimidating everyone in them. I have no idea how that could possibly be conveyed graphically - I just mention it to explain the background of what's going to be happening in the next page or so.)

BOX: FROM THE FILES OF *DETECTIVE JUDGE ARMITAGE*:

BOX: LIFE GETS COMPLICATED, SOMETIMES.

BOX: YOUR INVESTIGATION INTO A BUNCH OF *MISSING BODIES* GETS COMPLICATED WHEN THE *PATHOLOGIST* DISAPPEARS...

BOX: YOUR INVESTIGATION INTO *THAT* GETS COMPLICATED WHEN INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST *KARA DELBANE* STARTS POKING HER NOSE IN...

BOX: AND JUST WHEN YOU THINK THINGS CAN'T GET ANY WORSE --

GUARD 1: DON'T EVEN *THINK* ABOUT IT, SUNSHINE!

2) Cut to the bedroom door, from which a sleepy and annoyed Terry is emerging to demand what all the noise is about. The security guard react, turning their shockrods towards her.

TERRY: ARMITAGE, WHAT THE HELL'S ALL THE --

LINK: Oh.

3) Dramatic shot as both Armitage and Steel take advantage of this distraction to take down the security people. Armitage had grabbed one by the coat-lapels and has hauled him round to head-butt him in the face. Treasure has judo-tripped the other and has grabbed hold of the back of his head to smash it face-first into the floor. The effect is of a explosion of *serious* violence as used by trained professionals, as opposed to the previous macho posturing of the guards: quick, clean and final - though not, as we'll see, fatal.

SFX: SMACK! CLUNCH!

GUARD 1: HUKK!

GUARD 2: AK!

4) A slightly stunned-looking Kara Delbane looks on as Armitage drags the unconscious body of a guard across the room. Armitage is talking to Terry, who is still in the bedroom doorway and on the point of turning to nonchalantly go back inside.

ARMITAGE: FOR EVERY PROBLEM, A SIMPLE AND ELEGANT SOLUTION.

LINK: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING I CAN *RESTRAIN* THESE JOKERS WITH, TERRY?

5) Terry nonchalantly holds up a pair of fluffy tiger-skin sex-toy handcuffs, which Armitage regards phlegmatically. Treasure is casually dumping the unconscious body of the guard she took care of next to the other one, next to some stout apartment-related fixture like an exposed radiator pipe or something.

TERRY: WILL THESE DO?

ARMITAGE: I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO ASK.

LINK: DO YOU WANT TO DO THE HONOURS, STEEL? IT'S YOUR HOME, AFTER ALL.

6) The guards are cuffed to the radiator. Treasure pinches the battered face of a guard by the upper lip and gives it a vicious twist. He's opening frightened eyes to look up at her.

TREASURE: YOU. WAKE UP.
PAGE TWO

1) We're looking up at Treasure's face as she smiles down nastily at us, obviously about to begin our interrogation.

TREASURE: YOU BUSTED INTO MY HOME AND FRIGHTENED MY WIFE. I COULD DO ANY NUMBER OF THINGS UNDER THE LAW, EVEN IF I WASN'T A JUDGE. WHAT WERE YOUR ORDERS?

LINK: ONE CHANCE TO ANSWER BEFORE I START MAKING A WIDE COLLECTION OF *POWER-TOOLS* LOOK LIKE *REASONABLE NECESSARY FORCE* ...

2) Closeup on the frightened security guard as he speaks.

GUARD: YOU'RE A *JUDGE*? NOBODY SAID ANYTHING ABOUT --

LINK: *DATADAY* EXEC-LEVEL JUST TOLD US TO TAIL AFTER KARA DELBANE AND FRIGHTEN HER OFF. WE WEREN'T GONNA, Y'KNOW, *HURT* HER OR ANYTHING ...

3) Wide shot of the room, possibly with indications of Kara and Terry regarding the cuffed security men. In the foreground, Treasure is conferring with Armitage, who is back in his jacket and coat, hands thrust bad-temperedly into his pockets.

TREASURE: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ARMITAGE: I THINK THEIR ORDERS WERE SO STALK DELBANE AND *KILL* HER. FAT CHANCE OF DIRECTLY PROVING IT, THOUGH.

LINK: YOU KNOW, I'M AGAINST *LIE DETECTORS* ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES, BUT SOMETIMES I WONDER...

4) A change of scene. Armitage and Steel are storming into the impressively baroque entrance hall of the New Old Bailey: arches and nineteenth-century-looking charging desks, statuary of Robert Peel, Dixon of Dock Green etc. Treasure has changed her look again: black leggings, boots and and a long black leather

trenchcoat. They have frogmarched in the battered DataDay security guards and are in the process of flinging them down before a desk. Indications of the startled Duty-Judges - Armitage is snapping an order at one of them. Importantly, Kara Delbane is following him, now with two floating microcams again.

BOX: NEW OLD BAILEY, BRIT-CIT.

ARMITAGE: BOOK THESE JOKERS FOR *BREAKING AND ENTERING*, *CONSPIRACY TO ASSAULT* AND THAT OLD FAVOURITE, *RESISTING ARREST*.

LINK: HOLD 'EM FOR FURTHER CHARGES WITHOUT THE OPTION. THEY'RE *MATERIAL WITNESSES* IN AN ONGOING CASE.

5) Administrator Warner as he bustles up, angry, hastily pulling a coat over what is obviously a pair of pyjamas. Armitage stands over the dazed bodies of the security guards, with the flat impenetrability of one who knows he's in the right. Possible indications of Treasure and Kara, somewhere, just to fix their general presence - we'll mention them when they make an active contribution, but their general demeanour is of a sort of who-me casual confidence.

WARNER: JUST WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE UP TO, ARMITAGE? YOU'RE ON *SUSPENSION* - !

ARMITAGE: I HAPPENED ON A *CRIME IN PROCESS*, AND AS A CONCERNED BYSTANDER I WAS WELL WITHIN MY RIGHTS TO MAKE A *CITIZEN'S ARREST*.

6) Closeup on Armitage as he sardonically holds up a plaque-like data wafer for our inspection. In the background, Kara Delbane brightly tips us an ironic little hiya-wave.

ARMITAGE: AND SPEAKING OF MY RIGHTS... I'VE HAD A LEGAL *SOFTWARE PACKAGE* PREPARE THE CASE FOR MY *SUSPENSION HEARING*.

LINK: KEY WITNESS REPORTS AND UNADULTERATED VIDICAM FOOTAGE FROM *UNIMPEACHABLE* SOURCES...

DELBANE: THAT'S ME.

PAGE THREE

1) Armitage shoves a startled Duty Judge out of the way, plonks himself down at a flat touch-screen computer and shoves the data wafer into the drive. Warner is ineffectually making to prevent this - but one of Delbane's microcams is already zipping towards him.

ARMITAGE: LET'S RUN IT NOW, SHALL WE?

WARNER: YOU CAN'T JUST -

ARMITAGE: YES WE CAN, *ADMINISTRATOR* WARNER. THE STAR CHAMBER'S MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL ABOUT THESE NEW MICKEY-MOUSE *TRANSPUTER* SYSTEMS...

LINK: OR DO YOU *REALLY* WANT TO OBSTRUCT THE COURSE OF *DUE AND SPEEDY* PROCESS WITH THE CAMERAS WATCHING?

2) Closeup on the computer monitor. Prominently, overlaid over strings of equations and machine-code to convey that algorithmic number-crunching is taking place we see the JUDICIAL REVIEW logo and the alert: RECOMMENDATION, ARMITAGE – REINSTATE, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY.

SFX: bdeep bdeep ping!

ARMITAGE (OFF): BLOODY MARVELLOUS, MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

3) Armitage is walks nonchalantly towards us, straightening the lapels of his coat. Treasure is following him. Both of them are casual and calm in the manner of those walking off with contempt at some easy victory. Behind them Warner fumes impotently. Delbane is by him, regarding the Administrator with flat disdain.

ARMITAGE: RIGHT, WHERE WERE WE?

LINK: INVESTIGATING SOME MESSING AROUND WITH *BODIES* AND THE ABDUCTION OF *MARY TURNER*, I THINK.

4) Cut to a New Old Bailey corridor - in fact, the same corridor we've seen before, leading to the Pathology labs. Armitage and Steel are walking purposefully down it, conferring.

TREASURE: IS *DELBANE* GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT ON HER OWN? THERE'S SOME POWERFUL PEOPLE WITH HER NAME ON THEIR LIST.

ARMITAGE: THEY TRIED AND FAILED. SHE KNOWS ENOUGH TO WATCH HER BACK.

LINK: BESIDES, I THINK THEY'LL BE MORE CONCERNED WITH US THAN POINTLESS REVENGE.

5) The pathology labs, pretty much the same as we last saw them save for little details like new bodies on the slabs, equipment rearranged and so forth. Armitage and Steel are heading purposefully for a work desk (rather than a slab) on which is computer-analysis and note-taking equipment - the same we saw Mary Turner using before she was abducted.

ARMITAGE: MARY WAS ALWAYS *METICULOUS* ABOUT BACKING UP HER NOTES.

LINK: THEY'LL HAVE DELETED THE *BACKUPS*, BUT YOU NEVER KNOW... THINK YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO *SALVAGE* ANYTHING?

TREASURE: I CAN TRY.

6) Treasure is working intently and obviously adeptly at the computer terminal while Armitage watches thoughtfully. The image on the screen isn't important - possibly fractured strings of computer code to denote that it's garbled.

TREASURE: THERE'S SOMETHING HERE IN THE *CACHE BUFFER*, BUT IT'S FRAGMENTARY AS HELL.

ARMITAGE: LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO NEED MORE PROCESSING POKE THAN *MICKY MOUSE*...

PAGE FOUR

1.

Cut to Armitage's apartment - which we've seen before in the stories 'Influential Circles' and 'City of the Dead.' Genuine bound-books in cases and a slightly Art Nouveau feel.

Importantly there is a big globe-like plasma screen in the ceiling, on which is displayed the cheerfully evil and foxy-looking face of a Manga girl. This is MIRA, Armitage's home AI unit.

Armitage and Steel are walking in, MIRA's face grinning spitefully at them (if that can be made to work in two dimensions - otherwise, she's just grinning spitefully.)

MIRA's voice-balloons are jagged to convey computer-speak.

BOX: SECTOR 2, BRIT-CIT.

MIRA: THE WANDERER RETURNS.

LINK: I THOUGHT THEY'D HAVE HAULED YOU OFF IN *CHAINS*
BY NOW, SWEETIE - THAT OR WALLOWING IN A
FLOPHOUSE AND YOUR OWN DIPSOMANIACAL FILTH.

ARMITAGE: I LOVE YOU, TOO, MIRA.

2.

Closeup on Armitage as he shoves a data wafer into a wall plate control-pad.

ARMITAGE: CAN YOU RUN THE DATA ON *THIS* FOR ME?
ANYTHING THAT EXTRAPOLATES AND COLLATES
INTO SOMETHING COHERENT.

3.

Closeup on MIRA's face, scowling.

MIRA: THAT'LL BE A FIRST.

LINK: LET'S HAVE A LITTLE *LOOKSEE* ...

4.

A plasma-screen image. Mary Turner in mask and gown is working away at a body - possibly recognisable as one of the bomb-blast victims from before. She's examining what appears to be a multiple puncture-wound in its arm.

Mira's face is overlaid on the lower left corner of the image, lecturing brightly.

MIRA: AHA!

LINK: *MARY TURNER*, EH? I LIKE HER. SHE'S NICE.

LINK: SHE'S FINDING SOMETHING WRONG WITH THEM
THERE *BODIES*. THERE'S A KEY SECTION MISSING HERE
BUT - CROSSREFERENCING THE FRAGMENTS WITH MY
OWN *MEDICAL DATABASE* - IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE
THEIR *LYMPHATIC FLUID* HAS BEEN REMOVED ...

5.

Plasma-screen shot of Mary, sans mask and working at her blood analysis machine. On the machine's display are mugshots of Armitage and of Joey Kane, and strings of biodata-readout. Mira's lower-corner face is turned and watching Mary's activities noncommittally.

MIRA: AND THERE SHE IS, MATCHING UP BLOOD-PATHOGENS
BETWEEN A CERTAIN *JOEY KANE* AND YOU ... WHAT
YOU BEEN DOING ON YOUR NIGHTS OFF, THEN,
ARMITAGE?

6.

The plasma-screen shows a closeup on the blood-machine display: a complicated, spidery but distinctive chemical-bond diagram of a biorganic molecule.

Armitage is staring at the image while Treasure looks at him questioningly. We get the impression that what he's seen there has made his blood run cold.

MIRA: THE PATHOGEN SEEMS TO BE *ALIEN* IN NATURE. THE
DETAILED ANALYSIS IS *GARBLED* BUT I THINK I CAN ...

LINK: AND THERE IT IS. LOOK FAMILIAR, ARMITAGE?

ARMITAGE: OH MY GOD.

PAGE FIVE

1.

Cut to the dark and slightly menacing space of an underground car park. Indications of Armitage's and other retro-futuristic cars, possibly with little details to show that they're being charged in some arcanelly futuristic manner involving the spinning-up of flywheels.

Armitage and Steel are walking through it, purposeful and conferring.

TREASURE: WHAT'S THE *HURRY*, ARMITAGE?

ARMITAGE: I'LL JUST FEEL HAPPIER IF WE'RE ON THE MOVE. THE VESTED INTERESTS IN THIS ARE ... *BIGGER* THAN I THOUGHT.

LINK: THAT BIOGENIC COMPOUND. I'VE SEEN SOMETHING LIKE THAT BEFORE ...

2.

An illustrative flashback sequence. A younger Armitage, black-haired and in a leather jacket and T-shirt is in a classy-looking apartment, arresting a smoking-jacketed and crazed-looking rich guy type. Indications of the call-girl the rich guy has murdered, signs of a struggle and scattered pills. Armitage is slapping the cuffs on him with a snarl.

BOX: 'TIT WAS YEARS AGO - BACK WHEN I THOUGHT ANYTHING I COULD DO TO THE, AHM, *GREAT* AND THE *GOOD* WOULD MAKE THE SLIGHTEST BIT OF DIFFERENCE.'

3.

Intercut current-time shot as Armitage and Steel climb into their car, still talking.

ARMITAGE: A NUMBER OF *RICH* AND *FAMOUS* TYPES WERE GOING COMPLETELY PSYCHO - I MEAN, PEOPLE LIKE THAT, THEY TREAT THE WORLD LIKE DIRT IN ANY CASE - BUT THINGS WERE GETTING *EXTREME*.

LINK: IT GOT TO THE POINT THAT EVEN THE HIGH-UPS IN THE *NEW OLD BAILEY* HAD TO SHOW A BIT OF WILLING.

4.

Illustrative flashback. The New Old Bailey holding cells. In the foreground Armitage and a med-tech are conferring worriedly. In the med-tech's hand is a data pad, clearly showing a graphic like the molecular diagram we saw earlier.

In the background, in a holding cell, the rich guy Armitage arrested is madly thrashing around and basically going apeshit.

BOX: 'TURNS OUT, THESE JOKERS WERE DOING AN ALIEN COMPOUND SIMILAR TO *STOOKIE-GLAND* - SIMILAR BUT DIFFERENT.'

BOX: 'THE SUPPLIERS HAD *ENGINEERED* IT SEVEN WAYS FROM SUNDAY. GOD KNOWS WHY. MAYBE TO BOOST THE *LONGEVITY* ASPECTS AS OPPOSED TO SIMPLE *REJUVE*, I DON'T KNOW.'

5.

Another flashback-frame. Closeup on the rich guy as he thrashes around in crazed and terrified pain. Tumourous alien growths are starting to proliferate over him - transforming him into a lumpen diseased mess as opposed to *into* an alien, if you get me. Possibly these growths are visually similar to elements of the little alien creature we'll meet later, on this episode's last page.

BOX: 'WHATEVER THEY WERE TRYING FOR, THEY *BOTCHED* IT.'

BOX: 'AND THE SIDE-EFFECTS WERE SOMETHING *ELSE*.'

PAGE SIX

1.

The current time again. It's now the morning. Armitage's car drives up a ramp and out into the street. Possibly (just to fix its existence) we see indications of the car that becomes important next page parked in the extreme foreground to one side.

ARMITAGE: WE ENDED UP FIGHTING A *HOLDING ACTION* - HAULING THE USERS IN AND ISOLATING THEM, LANDING ON THE *POINTS OF SALE* WHEN WE FOUND THEM, TRYING TO WEAR THE SITUATION DOWN BY PURE *ATTRITION* ...

2.

We're looking through the windscreen of Armitage's car. Armitage talks seriously as he drives. Treasure listens.

Importantly, through the back window, we see indications of a particular car some way behind.

ARMITAGE: ... AND THEN THINGS STARTED TO GET WEIRD.

LINK: ALL OF A SUDDEN - AND I MEAN INSTANTLY - THE STUFF DISAPPEARED FROM THE STREETS AS IF IT HAD NEVER BEEN THERE.

LINK: 'THE *USERS* DISAPPEARED FROM THE HOLDING CELLS, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM, TOGETHER WITH THEIR RECORDS.'

3.

Illustrative flashback. The younger Armitage and a couple of uniformed Judges are bursting into an apartment and staring at what lays within. A flame-thrower has been used here - not indiscriminately to burn the whole place down, but with decisive force to incinerate the apartment's occupants. The charred skeletons that remain contrive to suggest a rather pathetic tableau of a mother and a couple of kids huddled terrified together - the effect should be horror at how far our villains are prepared to go rather than nausea at lovingly detailed anatomical remains.

BOX: 'THEIR ASSOCIATES JUST DIED. AND THEIR FRIENDS.'

BOX: 'EVEN THEIR FAMILIES.'

4.

The current time again. Same shot as the last but one, through the windscreen of Armitage's car. Armitage is grimly thoughtful. Treasure, however, has turned her head to see the car behind them, which is now far more prominent and detailed.

ARMITAGE: THAT'S WHAT FRIGHTENS THE HELL OUT OF *ME*, STEEL. IF THIS THING'S SURFACED *AGAIN*, THE PEOPLE WHO WANT TO *BURY* IT ARE GOING TO STOP AT -

TREASURE: UH, ARMITAGE ..?

5.

Dramatic shot as the second car comes up and sideswipes Armitage's. From inside it (possibly detailed and recognisable but not at this point necessary) the Special Branch man from the pair we met in previous episodes has levelled a huge handgun and is firing it. The shot is passing through the canopy of Armitage's car to reasonably spectacular effect, narrowly missing Armitage, whom Treasure has grabbed and roughly shoved out of the way.

SFX: SKAAASH!

PAGE SEVEN

1.

From a new angle, Armitage desperately skews his car around in a powerslide, scattering pedestrians and knocking over the futuristic equivalent of a roadside stall in the celebrated, cinematic, ultimately nonfatal manner.

Possible indications that the car is now directly facing the enemy vehicle.

SFX: SKREEEE

ARMITAGE: MARVELOUS.

LINK: I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, STEEL, BUT I DON'T THINK
DEFENSIVE DRIVING'S GOING TO CUT IT ...

2.

Smallish telegraphing shot to convey that Armitage's car is now powering directly towards the attacking car, which is itself speeding towards his in an impromptu game of chicken. Indications of the Special Branch man leaning out and firing wildly, and possible indications of the Special Branch woman driving.

BOX: 'LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T TAKE THE *OFFENCE* TO THEM.'

3.

We're in the car, looking out past Armitage and Steel as it and the attacking vehicle rapidly approach collision.

Treasure is on the point of panicking. Armitage is reaching out to calmly and firmly grab her by the arm. Possibly indications of Armitage's other hand calmly reaching for the door-release ...

TREASURE: ARMITAGE! I DON'T THINK THEY'RE GOING TO TURN!

ARMITAGE: SUITS ME.

4.

Big, spectacular shot as both cars collide. Appropriate indications of the other traffic and pedestrian confusion, and indications of the two Special Branch people being thrown around inside their own vehicle by the force of impact.

Armitage has grabbed Steel, meanwhile, and flung them both desperately from the car before the collision. They are on the point of hitting the ground with enormous force and rolling, possibly cushioned by a collection of old packing crates and garbage. (This has all been, naturally, one of those all-action set pieces that would have been utterly impossible in real life - but it's been and is being played straight, the desperation and dynamics making it somewhat believable. Think of the deadpan superheroics in something like *Die Hard*.)

SFX: SHAKRAASH!

5.

Smallish aftermath shot as Treasure and Armitage climb battered and groggy to their feet, rubbing at their latest collection of injuries. In the background, indications of the pileup and possibly a billow of smoke.

TREASURE: MY GOD, ARMITAGE. DO YOU THINK YOU *KILLED*
THEM?

ARMITAGE: WHO CARES?

6.

Treasure regards the wreckage and the twisted bodies of the Special Branch people - dead or unconscious, it's impossible to tell with alacrity. Armitage, meanwhile is crouching by the Special Branch man and thoughtfully picking up the gun he was firing.

ARMITAGE: THIS IS GETTING BEYOND A JOKE.

LINK: I THINK IT'S TIME TO TOOK THINGS TO A *MAN WHO*
KNOWS.

PAGE EIGHT

1.

Cut to the Brit-Cit Spaceport Hinterlands (explanation in the dialogue as to why this name is not entirely correct). The building-structures aren't exactly run-down but built on the functional-cheap of 'International US' architecture rather than the innate quality of British or European stuff, if you get me. The place is plastered with advertising and tourist information, in any number of languages, a lot of them nonsensical alien. We see lots of little misnomic details like 'Drink Happy-Luck Ethanol Toxin' etc.

In this establishing shot we see indications of the spaceport itself: ships and fuel-and-loading pylons like a bastard cross between Jerry Anderson, 2000AD-chunky and Dan Dare. Our main concern, however, are streets and duty-free stalls and stores crammed with consumer items unavailable even in the relatively free-and-easy Brit-Cit, and a packed with a chaotic mix of human and alien life.

Within that chaos, our attention is drawn to the distinctive figures of Armitage and Steel (see next frame for her latest change in outfit) who are coming through a hatch in the obviously security-packed wall that bounds the Hinterland. Possibly there are some seriously heavy-duty checkpoint guards to which they're absently flashing their ID.

BOX: THE *BRIT-CIT SPACEPORT HINTERLANDS* ARE A BIT OF A MISNOMER. SINCE THEY'RE NOT NEAR A *SEAPORT*, THEY DON'T HAVE TO BE *BEHIND* ANYTHING; THEY'RE JUST THE AREA AROUND.

BOX: IN ANY EVENT, THE *HINTERLANDS* ARE TECHNICALLY AN INTERNATIONAL *FREE-ZONE*, A CHAOTIC MIX OF HUMAN AND ALIEN WHERE EVEN THE RELATIVELY EASYGOING LAWS OF *BRIT-CIT* DON'T APPLY.

ARMITAGE: JUSTICE DEPARTMENT. CLEARANCE FOR ALL ZONES.

2.

Armitage and Steel walk through the chaos of the Hinterland - Armitage with his hands in his pockets and looking surlily around, trying to spot something.

TREASURE: IS THIS A GOOD IDEA, ARMITAGE?

ARMITAGE: PROBABLY NOT - BUT THE GUY IS THE PREMIER IMPORTER OF *GENUINE* STOOKIE-GLANDS INTO BRIT CIT ... AND I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT HE HAS A KIND OF TWISTED SENSE OF *HONOUR* IN HIS DEALINGS.

3.

Closeup on Armitage as he looks around himself thoughtfully.

ARMITAGE: AND PLUS I KNOW FOR A *FACT* THAT HE HAS NO LOVE FOR THE CURRENT OVERLORDS, AFTER THEY STRIPPED HIM OF HIS CITIZENSHIP AND EXILED HIM HERE IN THE LAST INTERMURAL TUSSLE.

LINK: MY WORRY IS, HE'LL BE KEEPING HIS HEAD DOWN AND THEN WE'RE *NEVER* GOING TO FIND HIM ...

4.

We're looking up past Armitage as he turns to the spectacularly imposing edifice of a gaming house. Even in terms of Casino Architecture, the proliferation of showgirl animatronics, graphics of cards and wheels-of-fortune, daggers, nooses, dollar-signs, pots of cash, martini glasses, hypodermics, whips, spike-heeled boots, smiling Sun-and-Moon-God faces, pistols etc, are such to give even the most overenthusiastic Casino Architect pause for thought. The overall impression is of a slightly twisted establishment where you could win anything of your dreams - and lose slightly more than money.

Prominent in the flashing chaos of it is the name of the establishment: DRAGO'S HOUSE OF ARBITRARY CHANCE. Armitage is regarding it with deadpan equanimity.

ARMITAGE: THEN AGAIN, I COULD BE WRONG.

PAGE NINE

1.

Cut to the opulent and rather Godfatherish inner sanctum of Efil Drago San - the criminal overlord whom we've met in previous stories. Just to remind us: he's excessively corpulent and crippled, with a monocle-like cybernetic eye-implant and slicked back hair - the cumulative impression is that of Bertie Wooster out of Jabba the Hutt.

His sanctum is all red plush and gilt, with some highly dubious statuary and a wallful of viewing screens in gilded frames, each showing indications of some weird and futuristic and possibly potentially lethal gaming activity. Before this, in his floating paraplegic-chair, Drago San floats behind an impressive Queen Anne-

reminiscent desk. He's listening to an old-style intercom unit with a nasty little smile.

DRAGO: DESCRIBE THEM TO ME, IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND.

INTERCOM: SCHWARZER GIRL, MOVES LIKE A RONIN. OLD GUY IN A COAT AND A FACE LIKE A SMACKED ARSE ...

DRAGO: AH YES. I'VE BEEN EXPECTING THEM.

2.

Armitage and Steel are escorted in by a pair of perkily-uniformed, quasi-military Female Minions who wouldn't look out of place in a camp old spy movie. There's something about their dollybird demeanour, however, that tells us they're trained professionals and would kill us as soon as look at us. Possibly it has something to do with their severely heavy-duty guns.

Armitage is glowering and coldly angry. Treasure is glancing appraisingly at a stony-faced Female Minion.

Drago San greets them with every evidence of warmth and delight.

DRAGO: ARMITAGE! MY *DEAR* CHAP! AND THE DELECTABLE, MS STEEL! MY CUP OF FELLOWSHIP RUNNETH OVER AND NO MISTAKE.

LINK: I GATHER YOU'RE IN NEED OF SOME *ASSISTANCE* WITH YOUR CURRENT VENTURES? A LITTLE SOMETHING CONNECTED TO THE AGING PROCESS ..?

3.

Closeup on Armitage, speaking angrily. Possible background indications of Treasure still looking coolly at a Female Minion and making her uncomfortable - if that can be made as a subtle little addition to the power-play dynamic going on rather than as blatant as even mentioning it here might suggest.

ARMITAGE: HOW DO YOU KNOW *THAT*, DRAGO SAN? WHAT'S *YOUR* INVOLVEMENT WITH ALL OF THIS?

4.

Closeup on Drago San, completely unconcerned and insouciant, as he searches for something in his desk.

DRAGO: OH, I STILL HAVE MY *CONTACTS*. I PICK UP THE ODD THING HERE AND THERE.

LINK: FOR EXAMPLE, I HAVE IT VERY GOOD AUTHORITY THAT A CERTAIN CONCERN IS, AH, *COMPETING WITH ME IN MY LINE OF BUSINESS*. THINGS ARE GETTING OUT OF HAND.

5.

Drago San tosses a data pad to Armitage, who catches it as casually as if it was a set of keys or whatever tossed to him by a friend. Indications of a startled Treasure, who is not as experienced as Armitage and so is countering her automatic impulse to dive out of the way.

DRAGO: I COULD DO SOMETHING *EXCESSIVE* IN RESPONSE, OF COURSE ... BUT QUITE FRANKLY, I CAN'T BE BOTHERED. NOT IF SOME EASIER WAY PRESENTS ITSELF.

LINK: TAKE A LOOK AT THIS.

6.

Closeup as Armitage thoughtfully peruses the image on the data pad. It's an idealised and nobly-posing graphic of the madman we'll meet on the next page, gazing nobly upon the phrenology-head he's holding in one hand.

The image is the cover of an electronic brochure, the title reading: DR BOB'S LONGEVITY CLINIC - A SUBSIDIARY OF MEDIGEN.

DRAGO OFF: I THINK IT'S POSSIBLE, ARMITAGE, THAT WE MIGHT COME TO A *MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ARRANGEMENT*.

PAGE TEN

1.

Cut to a completely new and different scene. Closeup on the unconscious and slightly wasted-looking face of Mary Turner, her hair ragged and ratty. The bruise-marks around her eyes suggest suggest that she has obviously been kept in a narcoleptic coma for some time.

BOX: ELSEWHERE.

VOICE OFF: WAKE HER UP.

2.

Closeup as a hand injects Mary's arm with a complicated-looking hypodermic unit - obviously a match for those used on Armitage and Steel back in part one.

TECH: TWENTY CC, DOC?

VOICE OFF: FOR THE MOMENT.

3.

Pull back as Mary stirs, fitful and dazed, on a hospital bed. Indications of the bleep-machines and IV-drip units she was until recently connected to. We see a hi-tech-suited med tech leaning over her, drawing back the needle unit he used. From what we can see at this point, his suit is the same as the med techs we encountered (again) in Episode 1.

MARY: MNF.

MARY: WHAT ..?

4.

Mary suddenly galvanises into desperate life, shoving the med tech away and trying to struggle out of bed.

MARY: GET AWAY FROM ME!

MARY: WHAT THE *HELL* D'YOU THINK YOU'RE -

5.

The med tech slaps her, rather harder than necessary and knocking her out of the bed.

SFX: SMACK!

6.

Closeup on Mary, pinned down by indications of the med tech, and looking up in startled shock to the person who has just spoken out of shot.

VOICE OFF: NO, NO, MR WHORL!

VOICE OFF: PLEASE GET OFF HER. THE SIGHT IS QUITE DISTRESSING. LET HER UP.

7.

Menacing Villain-introducing shot of Doctor Bob. He's standing there, in the hospital-room doorway, in white slacks and American-cut doctor's smock, on which are a few dubious stains - more menacing in their understatement than if he were simply slathered with gore.

His face is bland, though with those little wrongly-formed wrinkles and sutures that speak of cosmetic surgery. His smile shows perfect teeth and has that consciously put-on aspect that someone once likened to a letter box with dentures. His eyes ... his eyes have that slight crazedness about them that tell us that, for all his apparent bland and friendly aspect, we are dealing with a total psychopath.

Against one breast and over the shoulder, held by one hand and being absently stroked with the other, is a horrible little alien creature that seems both sluglike and insectoid simultaneously. I'll leave the specifics of its look to the artist - but it gives off the same sort of basic Horror of Wrongness you get when looking at a squid or an enlarged photo of a spider's head, the Wrongness of a living creature completely and fundamentally different than any you'd encounter in real life. (Incidentally, we'll learn that this thing is *not* a stookie in any way shape or form, so it shouldn't look even remotely like one.)

Doctor Bob smiles at us, leaving us in no doubt that we are now in serious trouble indeed.

DOCTOR BOB: GOOD AFTERNOON, *MS TURNER*. I TRUST *WHORL*
HERE HASN'T ALARMED YOU UNDULY.

DOCTOR BOB: YOU'VE BEEN BROUGHT HERE FOR A *REASON*. THE
FACT IS THAT I HAVE NEED OF CERTAIN RATHER
SPECIALIST SKILLS ...

Dave Stone

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