

Brandon Hunter

4/20/24

ENG 542

Rough Draft with Macro Edits

Sitting in a Hitman's Garden

Journalist Ted Carson was out to get a story. ~~It was~~ one that had never been told in full. The disappearance of a famed hitman into the Arizona desert. Carson has followed many leads and talked to many people. He wasn't sure how an albino hitman with such a preceding reputation could live in the desert, but that's the legend. He was visiting the home of another candidate on this hot day in July.

Carson sat down. He had already interviewed dozens of false leads and failed attempts to get the answer. Now he felt ~~that~~ he understood why his fellow journalists at the magazine called him "Clark Can't," as he just couldn't follow through on his story.

Carson wanted to find the right guy. But he just had been worn down by so many misleading interviews that he no longer believed that the legendary hitman even existed. He had started to think maybe it really was a prank from the office on him. He'd been across hell and half the desert of Arizona looking for the right small town to come to the right little garden oasis. Now he was sitting with Edward in his.

"I want to thank you for agreeing to speak with me mister..." Carson said. He trailed off because he just didn't know what to make of his latest interviewee. He was definitely an albino as per the description of the famed gangster he was after. But this hitman had black hair. He stood a lean six feet plus and probably weighed ~~only~~ 135 pounds on a cheat day.

Commented [MW1]: This feels odd as I feel there is no background on Carson. Why is he chasing this story? What is the interest of this story to him? Maybe add more about the stories he had done before and if they're different or similar. What are his ambitions?

Commented [MW2]: Where did he sit down?

Commented [MW3]: This feels like a weird sentence. Maybe change it to something like "He had interviewed dozens of people about the famed hitman but every lead was a dead end or was tossed into another failed attempt to find the truth."

Commented [MW4]: What magazine?

Commented [MW5]: Why would they call him this? His name is Ted Carson...it feels like a really odd nickname unless there's some extra background explanation.

Commented [MW6]: This is weird. Is it in a small town that is a garden oasis or is it a little garden oasis?

Commented [MW7]: In his what? Who is Edward? Where are we?

Commented [MW8]: Does Carson know his interviewee's name or is this just a lull in the conversation? It feels weird to do it here.

Commented [MW9]: How did he find this man?

“My name is Edward, Mr. Carson,” ~~the man~~ ~~he~~ said. “But you may call me Ed, if you like.”

Carson thanked him politely, ~~as he could,~~ but he still felt uneasy around Ed. ~~Something he just couldn't put his finger on was off about him, and he didn't know where to start talking.~~

“Well, Ed, as I said before, I am looking into a story I was given some time ago,” ~~Carson~~ ~~he~~ said.

—— “Ah yes,” Edward said, sipping tea, “the famed hitman story you were asking about.”

“Yes Ed, I just was so interested in seeing if you could be...” ~~Carson said.~~

—— “Him?” Ed ~~smiled, but there was little amusement behind it.~~ ~~said.~~

Carson felt Ed was already annoyed with him. It had been like he was expecting to be interviewed today ~~right~~ from the start ~~of the visit.~~ ~~When Carson made his initial approach,~~ Ed was out watering his garden in front of his tiny home ~~when Carson made his initial approach.~~ ~~Ed and he had~~ sighed like ~~he a thousand lousy reporters had tried~~ ~~had been through this a thousand times~~ before even though he had said Carson was the first. ~~Carson was so jaded by this point he had written Ed off as not possibly the hitman.~~

~~Carson was deeply unsettled by Ed's amazing ability to make eye contact while speaking.~~

It completely destabilized him. He felt like instead of writing an article he was being read himself.

“~~Ed,~~ maybe it would help if I told you my ~~complete~~ purpose ~~in being~~ here.” Carson said.

“Please do,” Ed said ~~with a shrug of his shoulders.~~

Carson began to recount the story of the story he was so deeply into. ~~His magazine had assigned him to research the tale of two missing hitmen, and he had not found either.~~ He didn't even know how the magazine even knew about them, ~~to be honest,~~ because most hitman go unknown. But it

Commented [MW10]: Another odd sentence. Maybe try something like “There was something he couldn't put his finger on about him. Maybe it was his laid back demeanor or the way his gaze bore through him. Whatever it was, it made it difficult for Carson to talk.”

Commented [MW11]: Why would he write him of this quickly? In my mind, this would make be even more suspicious of him. Why would he be sighing like he's annoyed to be interviewed again when he could have just told Carson that he's not the guy he's looking for?

Commented [MW12]: This doesn't connect with the previous paragraph so it feels like an odd jump.

Commented [MW13]: Be careful of the overuse of their names and the “Carson said, Ed said,” overuse too.

Commented [MW14]: This doesn't match with what you said in the beginning of the story where you said he was investigating one hitman, not two.

turned out the story was so legendary among gangsters of all kinds that it had been passed along to ~~some in the known~~ within the press. There are only two known hitmen who were able to kill an entire ~~series~~ of rivals as well as their own gang and employers. ~~The They weretwo were~~ only known as Tony and Mags.

Commented [MW15]: ?

Commented [MW16]: Did you mean gang? I'm not sure what series means here

~~Tony was regarded as an Italian hitman like you would see in old noir films after WWII.~~ Mostly the ones right around the earlier seventies. He wasn't quite a Joe Pesci character, but he wasn't far off either. He loved his mother and collected cars as a hobby. He was not known to be all that forgiving to his assignments, but it was a job. That's how a man can justify just about anything. A job to do. And he had a partner who he kept company with for decades.

Commented [MW17]: I think this whole explanation should be in the beginning, not in the middle because then it gives context to what Carson is doing, who exactly he's looking for, etc.

~~That partner was Mags,~~ who had more nicknames than Michael Jackson, Prince, or ~~Madonna combined.~~ But he ~~definitely waswas~~ no material girl. He was also ~~called~~ a gardener, hence how Carson knew what to spot when he arrived at ~~a location. a spot.~~ He had an insurmountable ~~amount count~~ of confirmed kills in his career. ~~He~~ was described as a tall albino gentleman, who moved like a ghost ~~just~~ through any challenge. He could disappear into thin air when he wanted to, but he had pulled his greatest magic trick of all ten years ago.

Commented [MW18]: Add this sentence to the previous paragraph.

Commented [MW19]: This sounds weird to list. I would either choose one or use all them and say "combined".

Commented [MW20]: I laughed so hard when I first read this. I love it.

Commented [MW21]: You used "he" three times to start a sentence in this paragraph. Maybe use his name?

Now Carson felt he had not found Mags, ~~whose listed name never made sense to him,~~ but he was sitting with one person who definitely fit the "thin white duke" description. Ed ~~satsaid~~ before him: tall, lean, ~~light,~~ and whiter than any alabaster. ~~HeEd~~ had black hair, but Carson didn't want to ask if it was a wig or not.

Commented [MW22]: Why not?

Commented [MW23]: ?

Commented [MW24]: Why does it matter if Ed has black hair? I don't remember you describing what he looked like.

~~Ed laughed.~~ He ~~just~~ liked playing with Carson ~~a little bit.~~ They were on his property, in ~~his garden after all.~~ Carson had shown up ~~not~~ fifteen minutes early, asking Ed if he could chat with him. Ed knew instinctively it was not your basic stranger social call. He also knew Carson was not a travelling salesman ~~caught outside of time,~~ as those were out of fashion.

Commented [MW25]: This is out of nowhere. Why is he laughing?

Commented [MW26]: What does this mean? Is it because they are on Ed's turf and he can do whatever he wants?

Commented [MW27]: What?

When Carson had approached the small, white picket fence around his garden, he noted the quizzical expression on his face. Ed figured it's not common for a pale gentleman to be tending his cactus garden in the middle of the desert community where he resided. Ed never suggested that they move inside for their chat. He was perfectly comfortable in his garden setting.

The conversation continued as such.

"Ed, you know I am looking for a famed hitman called Mags," he said.

"Yes, Mr. Carson," Ed said with a smirk.

"Are you the man I am looking for?" Carson asked.

"No, Mr. Carson, and I will tell you why," Ed said, leaning forward in his chair.

"I may fit the description you were initially given, but why would that matter? A fully capable retired hitman could completely change his lifestyle and appearance," Ed paused for a moment, gauging Carson's expression before starting again. he began.

"I live out in a small, desert oasis of my own design, yes, but I do so openly," he said.

"I speak with my neighbors every day, I subscribe to the paper, I even wave at people I don't know such as yourself," he said.

Ed allowed for Carson to interject.

"Yes, you've been very welcoming, but I must tell you that I don't think you're the guy I am looking for," Carson said. Ed laughed "Why is that so funny?"

Ed laughed.

"Why is that so funny, Ed?" Carson asked.

"Because Mr. Carson, you should think I am Mags, otherwise you won't get anywhere in your quest," he said.

Commented [MW28]: This whole part is very confusing. Why did Ed note Caron's expression? Why would it be odd to see a pale gentleman tending his cactus garden? Why did we suddenly jump to Ed not suggesting they move inside? I'm confused.

Commented [MW29]: Too much " he said" "Carson said" "Ed said". We need more movement. More action behind the dialogue and more expression. Also, who said this?

Commented [MW30]: If Carson is an investigative journalist, why would he straight up ask this question?

Commented [MW31]: Combine all of this into one whole dialogue piece instead of multiple separate ones.

Carson paused. He didn't know how to follow up on that. He was starting to believe that he was in school again and this was a lecture.

Ed began to recount that Carson should follow his instincts as a journalist, but he should never have assumed that his current subject cannot be who he is looking for. Ed fit the description. So, Carson should hope, for his own career, that Ed was the guy. He needed the pay to survive after all.

"So, Mr. Carson, you might want to ask more questions of me before writing it all off,"

Ed said.

"That's true Ed," Carson said, "I didn't think up too much to ask because I didn't think anyone was the guy. I didn't even think he was real."

Ed didn't laugh.

"Well Mr. Carson," he said, "you do realize that if you ever found the man you're looking for, it would mean your death," he said.

Carson said nothing.

"I do mean. A famous killer of killers, who worked for the mob and had such a notorious reputation, would surely not want to be found. Maybe your office doesn't want you around either," Ed said.

Carson said nothing.

"And remember, just because you have some thoughts on my appearance, you haven't gotten to know me at all," Ed said.

Carson said, "You're absolutely right Ed, I haven't done my job, and you've been so welcoming to me."

"It's alright Mr. Carson, you know you aren't the first news man to come talk to me," he said.

Commented [MW32]: Why is Ed schooling Carson? Why doesn't Carson already know all of this if he is an experienced Investigative Journalist? It would make more sense if he was an intern, but not a professional.

Commented [MW33]: Watch out for how many times you are using their names. In real life, we do not call each other's name that often, so why would character's do it in a story?

Commented [MW34]: Add more actions and setting into the story. It feels very dialogue heavy with spots of vague descriptions.

Commented [MW35]: If Carson believes this, why not play into this idea more? Have him be more sloppy and carefree about his investigation into this.

Commented [MW36]: Again, don't split up dialogue like this because it makes for a very choppy reading. Combine it together. For example:
"Well Mr. Carson, you do realize that if you ever found the man you're looking for, it would mean your death." Ed said. Carson stayed silent. "I mean. A famous killer of killers, who worked for the mob and had such a notorious reputation would surely not want to be found."

Commented [MW37]: This dialogue and the part before makes no sense to me. Is Ed trying to warn Carson? If Ed didn't want to be found, how did Carson find him so easily? Why did he sigh like he did in the beginning when Carson found him like he had already been interviewed a thousand times if he claims it should be hard to find him?

“Really?” Carson asked, “that must mean...”

“Yes, Mr. Carson,” Ed said.

It hit Carson then. The story he was looking for had been previously assigned to other junior reporters, just to teach them all a lesson or two. That’s why his editor had assigned this to him.

He was freshly out of school and had no experience. Now he was getting it as he told Ed all about this.

“Yeah, that’s all true,” Carson said, “my boss both did and didn’t send me on a chase.”

“How do you mean, Mr. Carson?” Ed asked.

“It’s like you were saying. You could be the guy, and it wouldn’t matter. I’d be dead meat if you were, probably. So, my boss sends me out on this doomed search to find the guy...”

“Just to teach you a lesson,” Ed said.

Carson thanked Ed for his time and said it had all been illuminating for him and his career. Ed had known another young guy would come by again and do all the same stumbling and bumbling trying to get information, but they really had no clue.

“If it’s alright with you, I would like to get back to my cacti,” Ed said.

Carson put on his **elassie**-fedora, feeling he had been completely outclassed. As he left, he thought he should not turn back, but he did, and saw the Edward had not yet gone inside. Instead, he was putting his work apron back on to go back to the garden he had been tending not twenty-five minutes before. Edward took notice of his glance and began to wave politely with a small sneer.

Carson paused, now he was certain he had been properly schooled in journalism. This may be a wild goose chase as his officemates often said, but it might be worth it too. He was glad

Commented [MW38]: Why would he editor do this to him if he was just fresh meat and they would give this assignment to juniors who need to be taught a lesson? Did Carson do something else? This makes no sense other than simply being awful.

Commented [MW39]: This feels very quick for Carson and I feel for a slight reveal of Ed’s character he could show Carson mercy or maybe give him time to think about why he was sent to interview Ed.

he talked to Ed then. Any well-hidden hitman hides in the open and makes it clear he isn't afraid to be found. Carson decided he would continue to look and he moved onward.

Commented [MW40]: This contradicts what Ed said before.