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Across the Line: The Exodus of Charlie Wright

By R. Ellis Frazier

(Ocean surf)
(Charlie Wright) This is
the story of failure...
of my failure...
and how all that
is good is not me.
(Woman) They're going to
take you into custody.
Given the allegations against
you, bail is highly unlikely.
(Charlie Wright) Excuse me.
They say that in the end,
life all comes down
and when we draw
our last breath,
only a few things will
have really mattered...
(Howard) I can make these
numbers work, but it...
I'm not gonna be
thrown to the dogs.
Where the hell are you going?
I'm not taking
the fall, Charlie!
(Charlie) ...and
all that is not...
fades to nothing.
(elevator bell)
You have it?
(Agent Hobbs) Maybe.
You don't have it.
Maybe...
Maybe not.
Lunchtime, huh?
Uh, there's a nice little
panini place there.
Get yourself something.
Don't take too long.
He's on the move.
Play him tight.
(Jimmy) Good.
Benny.
How long have you been
driving for me, Benny?

Uh, it's been, uh, three
years this July, sir.
You're a good man, Benny.
I've never told you
that before, have I?
No, sir.
Mm.
Well, I'm telling you now.
Thank you, sir.
Are we a go, boss?
Almost. It's coming through.
We can take him now.
It's on its way.
That's a negative. I gotta have the
warrant in my hand, Jimmy.
You hear that? It's a negative.
Stand by, boss.
What's going on, Jimmy?
What the hell is he doing?
Jimmy, what the fuck's going on?
It's all good. The driver
just checked the tire.
(Jimmy) All right.
He's moving.
Take him inside or out?
Warrant in hand. Repeat,
warrant in hand. Everybody,
take him as he comes out of the
underground and keep it clean.
(sirens)
F.B.I.! F.B.I.!!
Show us your hands!
Show us your hands!
Show us your hands!
Freeze! Put your hands up.
Car's not clear, sir.
Sir, the car isn't-
The car is not clear, sir.
(Benny) Oh, God! Aah!
Jimmy.
(Jimmy) He's gone, sir.
There's not much here.
Looks like he didn't take
his work home with him.

It would be something like this.

Sir?

The ocean view.

Barbados, Caymans...

South Africa, maybe.

Once you had all

this, man, that's it.

It's cleansing.

He won't be able

to live without it.

Look, we, uh...

we got subpoenas ready.

Credit cards, medical records?

Credit cards we have.

Still working on medical.

And not a damn thing personal.

Huh.

What a life.

(Hobbs) Charlie Wright

is charged in a

\$10 billion ponzi fraud

scheme. Six weeks ago,

(Director Hill) I'm

sorry, Agent Hobbs, could

you speak up? I'm not...

hearing you clearly.

What part, sir?

The part about a 51 -year-old

banker who gets away from seven

trained federal agents in

a fucking parking garage.

That's what part.

All right.

How much have you recovered?

F our billion from various

accounts in the Caymans.

Mr. Thompson from the

Attorney General's office

has a question for you.

(Thompson) Has the name Joseph

Letvenko shown up on your radar?

Not from my memory.

Are you familiar with the name?

I've heard it.

He was the underboss of
the Russian mafia through
the '80s and '90s. He's been
off the map for years now.
He and his longtime body guard
run a little Russian diner
downtown. We think he's
got money with Wright,
off the books money,
upwards of 100 million.
If Letvenko has money with
Wright, he's not going to wait
until we pick him up,
if you know what I mean.
So where the hell is he, Andy?
(Hobbs) He's got several
vacation homes in the Caribbean.
He's got a place off
the coast of Spain.
We believe that we are
getting close to...
Whoa.
Close?
Yes, sir, we think
we're getting close.
Now, that's not the answer
I'm looking for here,
so let me give you a hand.
You are gonna tell me exactly
where Charlie Wright is,
and you simply need the
resources to pick him up.
It is more complex than that.
Best and worst case scenario.
Best case, he's here in the
United States in one of the
vacation homes. He
shows up, we get him.
Worst.
We estimate he's got between
\$1 to 2 billion left.
He could conceivable
take that money...
and stay above the treaties.

English, Andrew, English.

In this economy, he could buy
his way out of extradition out
of any number of countries.
He could live a life of luxury,
and if he's made that choice,
we can't touch him.

Oh, no.

No.

You're gonna touch him.

You're gonna find that money,
and you're gonna bring
Charlie Wright to me.

But most important, you're not
gonna make me look stupid.

Do you understand?

Listen, I'll stay.

No, man, you go
on your vacation.

(back slap)

I got this.

(knocking on door)

(Jorge Garza) That's him.

(Mariel Garza) Jorge.

Um, excuse me.

Wait for me outside.

What's up?

My sister's here, and
she's worried sick.

Marco didn't come
home last night.

She's been trying and trying,
but he doesn't answer.

You have to go find him.

Just-- just stay with her.

Okay.

Are you okay, my love?

Yeah. Just stay with her.

Okay.

(knock on door)

Come in.

(Gabriel Garza) We've got them.

What?

The numbers.

If it's not enough...
Did you count everything?
Yes.
Are we close?
Gabby, you remember
what Papa used to say...
especially after he
had a few drinks.
He used to say, Jorito...
you're not a natural-born
leader, Jorito.
You are going to destroy
everything I built.
Like that, with that
crooked finger, like this.
Jorito, you're gonna
destroy this family...
if you're not careful.
You remember that?
No, I...
I don't remember that.
Hmm. You were too young.
Plus, he would never
point the finger at you...
because you're a
natural-born leader.
And you look like him.
You got his looks, I
got his crooked finger.
We're next, Gabby.
You be careful.
We'll figure it out.
(Pharmacy Clerk) You're
missing five pesos.
(Mary) Impossible.
1-1 counted.
Con permiso.
Jaime.
(Jaime) Hi.
Como esta.
Good, good.
Good.
So, still no more beer?
No, no, no.

Water's good.
How about a girl?
Please.
I'm too old for that.
You know what I'm looking for.
About the lady in
question, any luck?
She's in the bathroom.
She's here?
Fantastic.
I'll go get her
for you right now.
Okay.
Mary.
This is Mary.
Encantata.
Nice to meet you.
Sit down.
Would you like a drink?
Sure.
Um, tequila, por favor.
So, Jaime tells me that
you used to work here.
Oh, uh, a-a while ago.
No.
Well, this would've been...
quite a while ago.
I'm talking 20 years ago.
So long ago.
I was just a girl.
Gracias.
Just trying to out-- find
out some information about,
um, an old friend.
What would make you think I
would know somebody for so long?
Ver-- Veronica.
Her name was Veronica.
Crystal was her working name.
Does that ring a bell?
She had dark hair,
medium height.
She was here for...
years.

Like I said, 20 years ago
I was just... a little girl.
Jaime said you
were going to pay.
I came all the way
down here for...
Relax. I'm going to pay you.
you're so young.
What do you do, Carlos?
I'm, uh...
retired.
(Mary) Did-- did you want
to go back to your hotel?
Or, um...
there's a decent place.
Close.
Oh, no, that's really...
that's not necessary.
It's very late for me.
Yes, yes. Of course.
It's not you.
You-- you're very beautiful.
It's um...
nice to meet you.
Bye.
Good night.
Carlos?
I know her.
Veronica... Crystal?
She died...
over ten years ago.
I knew that.
We were close...
friends.
It didn't seem right
not to tell you.
I'm sorry.
Do you know anything
about her children?
She only had one.
Isabelle.
Isabelle.
Is there any way that you might
be able to help me find her?

I... I don't know.
Why do you want to find her?
It's, uh... personal
reasons. Uh...
it would mean a...
the world to me.
Okay. Uh, I'll try.
How long you gonna
be around for?
Uh, not very long, actually.
Okay.
Thank you.
Oh, and by the way,
my name is Charlie.
Okay, Charlie.
Thank you so much.
(phone rings)
What you doing, man? You supposed to
be on vacation.
What?
(Damon) Good to see you.
(Borlec) You look thin.
You've heard of our problems?
You mean the banker?
Yes.
Mexico.
You've had business there?
Not really. Why?
He's there, at the border.
(Letvenko) Oh, what a day.
I'm beat.
Hey!
Good to see you,
Mr. Letvenko, sir.
Good to see you, too.
How's the painting business?
It's going, uh, very well, sir.
Ah, sit down, sit down.
Let's have a drink.
It's a hard day, a long day.
Let's relax a little bit.
To your health.
(Damon) Yeah.
Hmm.

(Letvenko) I may have some business to do in the back.

You need a team.

Good men.

(Damon) You want this done right, I should use my own men.

(Borlec) These men work in Mexico.

There's a limit of talent there, you know?

You won't have much time.

They will have to do.

(Poker Player) All in?

F or a banker?

Not for him.

F or Garza.

Who's Garza?

The Garza family has run the border since the '60s.

They bankrolled the cartels, but somehow managed to stay out of the dirty side of the business.

Real estate, mostly.

A little politics.

We had business with them some years ago.

A decent man, but weak.

Now...

he's in trouble.

What kind of trouble?

He's into a lender in Mexico City.

They're calling up the debt.

Serious people in Mexico City.

just about anything to keep him.

Now go.

Good to see you.

Hmm.

Da.

Charlie Wright has betrayed our trust, Damon...

terribly.

Find him...

and bring him here to us.

Consider it done.

Sir.

(Hill) What was your agent doing down in Tijuana, Mexico?

The point is, we had a good sighting.

Now, what we need to do is--

No, no, no, no. What you had was an unverified sighting outside a hooker joint with a drunk agent who But I trust...

But nothing.

What would Wright, a guy with all the money in the world, be doing in a shit stew like Tijuana, Mexico?

You said yourself, he could go anywhere in the world.

Use your head, Andy.

Please tell me you got something more than this.

No more funds.

No more agents.

Damage done.

We've got company.

Let's roll.

Mucho dinero.

But why you come to us?

Why don't you go to our federal authorities, your counterpart?

We're municipal policemen.

Well, it's not exactly official at this point.

A man steals \$10 billion.

It's not official?

I gotta get my green card!

Ha ha ha!

Your man is not in Tijuana, uh, Officer Hobbs.

If a man spends a lot of money here, we know it.

May I ask you a question, between...?

What does an officer
of the F.B.I.
makes, you know, a
month, over there?
Well, it would be an agent...
and that would be a
function of how long you've
been with the agency...
but I believe starting salary
would be around 60 grand.
\$60,000?
Sesenta mil dolares
la chinga.
Muchos dinero, eh?
I might be coming back
with a couple agents,
so we'd appreciate
your cooperation.
Sure. Sure.
But don't expect any
free beers from us.
Ha ha ha!
(Michaels) You sure this
is the right place?
(Damon) It's the right place.
(Miller) Better fucking be.
That's for you.
Thanks.
Let's load it up.
(knock on door)
(knock on door)
(Gabriel) Jorge.
What is it?
Get Mexico City on the phone.
Mexico City? Why?
Just get them on the phone.
Oh, they won't take our calls. Not
anymore.
They will now.
Get them on the phone.
Tell them we have
Charlie Wright.
The...
Charlie Wright?

That's right.
This is Gabriel Garza.
Do you know who I am?
Bail bondsman?
In a way.
My name is Jorge Garza.
This is my town.
Is this your jail, too?
Your guards are...
a little excitable.
Hmm.
I'm sorry about that.
I'm gonna assume
you know who I am.
I do.
I'm gonna be perfectly
honest with you, Mr. Wright.
I haven't been to church
in over three months.
In fact, I can't even
remember a time when...
not even when I went on that
little stretch to Mexico City...
that I hadn't been
to church in so long.
And lately I've been getting
to the point where...
I was beginning to doubt that
there's actually a god...
and that's a terrible
thing, to doubt God.
I have some issues.
I have a debt,
very large debt...
and the people that
are holding that debt
are not gonna wait for
me to pay it anymore...
and it's gonna make my life...
very difficult.
Dangerous.
For me and for the
people I love, very soon.
Are you with me?

Huh.
More than you know.
But I have some good news.
I've had a...
an epiphany.
I know for sure now.
I'm positive.
Positive about what?
There's a God.
He's alive. He's real.
Because he brought me you.
Get up.
(Miller) Hey, your
name is Damon, right?
Yeah, it is today.
You been
in the shit, Damon?
Yeah, enough.
Enough.
What exactly is that
supposed to mean?
I don't know. Maybe, uh,
I guess it means enough.
It also means you're on my lead.
I'm afraid it don't
work that way, mate.
This is my crew.
It's my lead.
Well, I'm paying for your crew.
Is there a problem?
As long as
the money's green.
(Baines) Tsk.
Amen to that.
I can take of you here.
You're safe with me. Nobody
can touch you, not the Feds,
bounty hunters, enemies, no one.
Enemies?
Why would anyone be mad at me?
Don't play games
with me, Mr. Wright.
You're 51 years old.
You got nowhere to run.

You got nowhere to hide.
Why don't you tell me what it is
exactly that you want from me?
Your incredibly
impressive scam netted
you about \$11 billion, U.S.
You blew four.
They recovered five.
There's \$1 .6 billion
unaccounted for.
I need it, and you're
gonna tell me where it is.
You're very good at math.
Well, unfortunately,
not good enough.
But you're gonna help
me get better at it.
Let's go.
Gabby, take him home.
Watch him.
Where you going?
Gotta buy some time.
I should go with you.
No, just take him home and
watch him. He's our last chance.
(engine starts)
(guns cocking)
Here we go.
(engine starts)
Yeah.
We've got a problem.
Plaza. The plaza.
Get down.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Clear.
Group head, I got eyes on
five at elevated position.
(gunfire)
Fucking amateurs!

Aaargh!
Go! Go!
Come on, Damon, let's
get out of here.
(Miller) Abort! Abort!
(Baines) Go, go, go, go!
Move!
Come on!
Let's go!
Come on, let's go!
The man is fucking dead already. Move
now! Come on!
Char--
He's a Russian.
A Russian?
Big in the '80s. Worth
about \$1 billion now.
Word is Charlie Wright took
him for about \$100 million.
Jesus.
So, he's not gonna stop.
It's okay.
Gabriel, some people say
that, uh, a man in your
position could actually
benefit from my bad fortune.
Who would say that? I mean, that's
ridiculous.
Maybe, but with me gone, it'd
give you a chance to start
clean. No more debts,
no more baggage.
Just like when Father died.
My father got shit.
Yeah, but his dying gave
me a chance to start clean.
You take this family and
move on from his mistakes.
You understand?
I fucked up.
But you didn't fuck up.
Listen to me.
I fucked up.
It's over for me.

No. We have people everywhere. I'll find them.

I know you will.

I'm gonna get him back.

I'm gonna go for a walk.

(Michaels) What, you think I do, mate? One of my guys.

(Damon) Bullshit.

(Charlie) Mary.

Charlie.

Oh...

a drink?

Uh, no, I don't drink...

anymore. Remember?

Ah, si.

Con permiso.

It's not usually this messy.

Is this a...

you been here a while?

Si.

Yeah.

A long time.

Oh, it's nice.

There's something about you.

What, you running away from something?

Um...

well, it's a...

it's a little bit,

uh, complicated.

What happened?

A lot of things, but, uh, it's-- it's all over now.

You don't need to...

Would you like to take a shower?

Oh, my God.

That would be a...

You need help.

Yeah, that would be fantastic.

This way. Um, uh, please.

Are you sure this is where you marked him from?

Yeah.

He was right there.

It's dark out here.
Yeah, but...
Yeah, but you got
the streetlight.
Come on.
Here's some clothes.
Thank you.
They-- they are clean.
Oh, thank-- thank you.
Look, I swear to you,
boss. It was him.
I want you to listen
to me carefully.
Now, I know you respect
me as a human being.
So, if I ever hear any...
No.
I wouldn't do that.
I wouldn't throw you under
the bus. I don't sell out.
Jimmy, when this comes up, and
it will come up no matter who
spins it, you put
the blame on me.
Don't you carry this.
You got it?
You're gonna land on your feet.
Just, Andy...
want to grab another drink?
I'm gonna cross the border
in San Diego tonight,
heading back up to
L.A. in the morning.
Hey.
You be careful down here.
Yeah.
So, would you think
this one looks better?
Bueno?
Uh.
I really should go.
What?
I want you to stay.
I'm afraid if I tell

you, you won't stay.
Tell me what?
It's been such a long time.
It's my face.
It's the wrinkles.
Men hate the wrinkles.
Wait.
I try everything.
They won't go away.
Shh. Shh shh. No. Don't--
you don't have any wrinkles.
I don't care about wrinkles.
Oh, and then I cry.
It is so bad to cry.
You found her?
Si.
Where she works.
Is she okay?
I don't know.
Aren't you going to leave?
It's been such a long time.
I'm.. I don't.. I don't want...
(Mary) Fuck.
No, I don't have to leave.
Then...
you stay?
Yeah, I'll stay.
The banker got away.
We lost a man.
American?
Yes.
You have something in mind?
Yes.
Chances are the banker will be
hard to hide, even if we got
him, and the Feds...
If they find out we have him,
it could open up some
of our old problems.
And if they get him...
then it's sure he'll talk.
Either way, we're
back on the map.
We may be too old to be going

through all of this again.
So, you suggest we let him go?
No.
Then?
We make the problem go away...
permanently.
Do it clean.
No fancy stuff.
Let Damon know.
Come on, it's late.
Come to bed.
I need to
know what's going on.
This isn't just about you.
This is about me, too.
Come here. Come to bed.
Let me read to you.
We don't have to stay here.
We could just go. It
doesn't matter where.
We just go. It doesn't matter. None of
this matters anymore!
Mari, it matters.
I wish it didn't matter,
but it matters. Come on.
Great Expectations.
My father's family name being
Pirrip and my Christian name
Philip, my infant
tongue could make...
She's yours, isn't she?
The girl?
Veronica's girl.
Yes.
You know all this time?
Yes.
Veronica would talk about you.
And then one day she stopped.
You're a good man.
Your heart is good.
She always believed that.
I am not a good man.
There is no good in me.
Oh...

The pain I've caused...
the lives I've destroyed...
If you only knew.
All that I had has
come to nothing.
It's not so bad.
Senor.
Desculpe.
Is-- is that, uh, Isabelle?
Is her name Isabelle?
(Waitress) Gracias.
You're looking for Isabelle?
Yes.
She's gone.
She's gone?
About two weeks ago.
Well, do you know
where she went?
She went to the U.S.
selling coke.
She went illegally. Mm.
Yes.
Senor.
Are you okay?
You want to order something?
Uh... no.
What is she like?
She's pretty.
Very nice.
Was she a...
happy person?
Very happy.
Thank you.
Thank you. That's...
Sure. Okay.
Gracias.
(phone rings)
Yeah.
It's Charlie.
Charlie Wright.
I want to come home.
Okay.
But you're gonna
have to come get me.

I'm not gonna make
it out of here alone.
Where do I find you?
Okay, meet me at the
Tijuana Market,
the southwest corner at 3:00.
Listen, I need two favors.
Meet me in the parking lot
right across the border.
You know the one,
the left there, yeah.
I need you to bring me a piece. And
second favor...
don't ask me why.
Gabriel.
You find him.
I know you said not to
ask why, but I'm asking.
You were right.
(panic)
F.B.I.!!
Put it down.
Drop it.
Vamos.
Vamos.
Andale.
It's over.
Mexico City's headed this way. They're
close.
I know.
We've gotta get you on a plane.
Gabriel...
We have to move the women.
Listen to me. Gabby.
Jorge, they're on
their way here.
I know. I called them.
You what?
I called them.
They're coming for me.
I made a deal.
They accepted.
What kind of deal?
I signed away all our assets.

It's not enough.
You know that.
The balance is me.
But...
what does that mean?
What'd you do?
You're gonna be able to keep
the house and some things, but
you're gonna have to start over.
No. No, there's no deal.
No, we'll fight 'em.
Listen.
Listen to me.
It's done.
You-you've always
taken care of me...
but now it's time to
take care of this family.
Pop is so proud
of you right now.
I am so proud of you right now.
Is there a bathroom break?
Talked to Dr. Brooks yesterday.
Dr. Brooks?
You know who that is.
What'd he tell you?
Six months with treatment.
Maybe three without.
Maybe less.
So now you know.
With any luck, I'll make
my first court appearance.
Why are you doing this?
I don't know.
(Charlie) My dear Isabelle...
When a man finds himself
at the end of his days...
He has to take an
account of his life.
He has to be able to
live with what he's done.
If he can find the
goodness somewhere...
if there is a chance to find

some kind of redemption before
we leave this Earth...
then life's moments
will have mattered.
This is the story of failure...
of my failure...
for all of the failures
of this life...
of my life.
Fade to nothing.
Just fleeting moments.
Gracias.
And as I find my way...
my exodus from this place...
I can know that this
life was not so bad.
And like the cleansing sun and
the beautiful sounds that lie
just beneath the lies...
all that is good in
me lives on in you.