

## Act One

### SCENE ONE

*Police interrogation room. Katurian sitting at table, centre, blindfolded. Tupolski and Ariel enter and sit opposite him, Tupolski with a box file containing a large sheaf of papers.*

**Tupolski** Mister Katurian, this is Detective Ariel, I'm Detective Tupolski . . . Who left that on you?

**Katurian** What?

*Tupolski takes the blindfold off.*

**Tupolski** Who left this on you?

**Katurian** Um, the man.

**Tupolski** Why didn't you take it off? It just looks stupid.

**Katurian** I didn't think I was supposed to.

**Tupolski** It just looks stupid.

**Katurian** *(pause)* Yes.

**Tupolski** *(pause)* Like I was saying, this is Detective Ariel and I'm Detective Tupolski.

**Katurian** Well, the main thing I want to say is, I have complete respect for you and for what you do and I'm glad to help you in any way I can. I have complete respect.

**Tupolski** Well, that's good to hear.

**Katurian** I'm not like some of these . . . you know?

**Tupolski** Some of these what? I *don't* know?

**Katurian** Some of these types of people who have no respect for the police. I have never been in trouble with the police in my life. In my life. And I . . .

Ariel Never been in trouble until now, you mean.

Katurian Hah?

Ariel Repeating myself . . . You have never been in trouble with the police until now. You mean.

Katurian I'm in trouble with the police now?

Ariel What else are you doing here?

Katurian I'm helping you with your enquiries, I thought.

Ariel So we're friends of yours, like we've took you here like this is a social visit like we're friends of yours?

Katurian You're not friends of mine, no . . .

Ariel You have had your rights read. You've been took out of your home. You've had a fucking blindfold on. Do you think we do this to our good fucking friends?

Katurian We're not friends, no. But by the same token, I hope we're not enemies.

Ariel (*pause*) I am going to hit you so hard in the fucking head.

Katurian (*pause*) Hah?

Ariel Am I mumbling? Tupolski, am I mumbling?

Tupolski No, you're not mumbling. You're quite clear.

Ariel I didn't think I was mumbling.

Katurian You don't . . . I will answer everything you want me to. You don't have to . . .

Ariel 'You will answer everything we want you to.' There was never a question, 'You will answer everything we want you to.' There *was* a question, 'How much are you going to make us fuck you up in the meantime?' was what the question was.

**Katurian** I am going to try not to make you fuck me up at all because the reason is I will answer everything.

**Tupolski** Well, that's a start, isn't it?

*Eyeing Katurian, Ariel idles to a side wall, smokes a cigarette.*

Why do you suspect we have brought you here? You must suspect some reason.

**Ariel** Look, why don't we just start torturing him and cut out all this shit?

**Katurian** What . . . ?

**Tupolski** Who's the Number One on this case, Ariel, me or you? *(Pause.)* Thank you. Don't listen to him. Anyway, so why do you suspect we have brought you here?

**Katurian** I've been racking my brains, but I can't think.

**Tupolski** You've been racking your brains but you can't think?

**Katurian** No.

**Tupolski** Well, yes or no?

**Katurian** Yes.

**Tupolski** Huh?

**Katurian** Because I've never done anything. I've never done any anti-police thing, I've never done any anti-state thing . . .

**Tupolski** You've been racking your brains but you can't think of a single reason we might have brought you here?

**Katurian** I can think of a reason, or, not a reason but a thing I assume there must be a linkage, although I can't see how there can be a linkage.

**Tupolski** The linkage of what? Of what to what? Or, of what to what?

Katurian What? Just, only the thing of how you took my stories away too when you took me, and that you have them there, is the only thing.

Tupolski And that I have them where? Have you been reading the papers I've got in front of me?

Katurian I haven't been reading . . .

Tupolski Papers which, for all you know, may have been some immensely classified, very very secret thing.

Katurian My eyes caught the titles, just glancing.

Tupolski Oh, like your peripheral vision?

Katurian Yes.

Tupolski But, hang on, for it to be your peripheral vision, you'd have to be turned around this way . . . (*Tupolski turns sideways on, glancing down at papers.*) See, like this way. Like sideways, like this way . . .

Katurian I meant . . .

Tupolski See? Like this way. Like sideways.

Katurian I meant my peripheral vision at the bottom of my eyes.

Tupolski Ohh, the peripheral vision at the *bottom* of your eyes.

Katurian I don't know if there's a word for that.

Tupolski There isn't. (*Pause.*) Why would there be a linkage, your stories, you being taken here? It isn't a crime, you write a story.

Katurian That's what I thought.

Tupolski Given certain restrictions . . .

Katurian Of course.

Tupolski The security of the state, the security of the general whatever-you-call-it. I wouldn't even call them restrictions.

Katurian I wouldn't call them restrictions.

Tupolski I would call them guidelines.

Katurian Guidelines, yes.

Tupolski Given certain guidelines, the security of the whatever, it isn't a crime, you write a story.

Katurian That's what I thought. That's the whole thing.

Tupolski What's the whole thing?

Katurian I mean, I agree. You read these things, these 'stories', supposedly, 'The police are all this,' 'The government is all this.' All these political . . . what would you call 'em? 'The government should be doing this.' Please. Fuck off. You know what I say? I say if you've got a political axe to grind, if you've got a political what-do-ya-call-it, go write a fucking essay, I will know where I stand. I say keep your left-wing this, keep your right-wing that and tell me a fucking story! You know? A great man once said, 'The first duty of a storyteller is to tell a story,' and I believe in that wholeheartedly, 'The first duty of a storyteller is to tell a story.' Or was it 'The *only* duty of a storyteller is to tell a story'? Yeah, it might have been 'The *only* duty of a storyteller is to tell a story.' I can't remember, but anyway, that's what I do, I tell stories. No axe to grind, no anything to grind. No social anything whatsoever. And that's why, I can't see, if that's why you've brought me in here, I can't see what the reason would be, unless something political came in by accident, or something that *seemed* political came in, in which case show me where it is. Show me where the bastard is. I'll take it straight out. Fucking burn it. You know?

*Pause. Tupolski stares straight at him.*

You know what I mean?