Capitol Robbery

“Um, sir? Sir, are you awake? Sir, it’s time to leave. Your five o’clock is ready for you.”

“Huh? What? Oh. Yes, I’m awake. Long night, that’s all.” He paused for a moment and then asked, “William, what if we dreamt what would happen in the future?”

“Well, sir, I guess it might be good in some ways but bad in others. Why do you ask?” William replied slowly, carefully choosing his words so as not to upset his boss.

Still settled into his desk chair, Alfred leaned forward and breathed in as if about to speak, but instead he paused. He stared at William with a puzzled look, trying to process the last few days. He took in another breath but again did not speak. Finally he spoke, “Oh, never mind. We must be going. Can’t keep clients waiting. Time is money, William.”

Alfred walked down the hall, down the staircase, and out the lobby doors with William close behind. It was only when they had reached the street that Alfred realized something else that was strange. It was not the first strange sight of the day. A man was standing in the middle of Main Street staring at him. He stumbled over what seemed to be his own two feet causing him to look down for a moment. When his eyes returned to the street, the man was gone. He had seen that man before, but he was not sure where. “Did you see that?” Alfred asked anyone who might be listening.

“See what, sir?” William replied.

“That man standing in the middle of the street,” Alfred said, still staring at the road unbelievingly.

“Um, no sir, I did not,” William said, puzzled.

“William I must go home. Strange things have been happening to me all day. Cancel my five o’clock please. I need sleep,” Alfred said nervously.

William hesitantly suggested, “Sir, I do not think it would be smart to miss this appointment. Maybe you just need a cup of coffee. I can get it for you if you’d like. Double Mint Latte Supreme with whipped cream and a little chocolate drizzle. That should wake you right up.”
Alfred continued to stare at the street seeing only taxis, taxis, and more of those stupid yellow taxis. That was the one thing he hated about Washington D.C., taxis. “No, no William you don’t understand. Something very odd seems to be going on today, and I am the only one who is noticing it. I must go home. It will be best for me and my clients today. Call me in the morning at my apartment to make sure I am awake. Keep calling, and if I don’t pick up the phone after four calls, have someone drive over to check on me. I don’t trust these people I keep seeing.”

Rain suddenly poured from the sky without warning. William ran under an awning and yelled over the noise of the pouring rain, “Boss, come under here. It’s dry.”

“See? Don’t you see? It was sunny just minutes ago! William, I must go, I must go now!” Alfred yelled in a panicky voice. He ran through the rain, down Main Street, left on Michigan Avenue and three blocks left on Damon Way to his apartment. He ran up ten flights of stairs to apartment 1013, or was it 1031? Why couldn’t he remember? He reached in his right pocket and pulled out his key chain that had too many keys on it. He approached apartment 1013. His hands shook, and he fumbled with the keys, dropping them on the floor.

“God da...,” he stopped mid sentence. As he was reaching down to pick up his keys, the door creaked open. He picked up his keys and ran down to apartment 1031 hoping and praying 1031 was his apartment. He found the apartment key and tried to put the key in the door. His prayer was answered, and the door opened. He quickly went inside, shut the door, and locked it.

Leaning with his back against the door he looked around his apartment. Something looked different. Why couldn’t he figure out what? He picked up a chair near the dining table and set it against the door as if he was afraid someone might break in. Suddenly, the phone rang. Alfred jumped. He walked slowly towards the phone and looked at the caller ID. It read “unknown,” so he decided not to answer it. If it was important, they’d leave a message. The phone stopped ringing and the answering machine came on.

“Hi, you’ve reached Alfred Simmons. I can’t come to the phone right now. Leave a message, and I will get back to you,” the answering machine proclaimed in the silence. The beep came, and it was silent for a moment. All Alfred could hear was what seemed to be the heavy breathing of another man.

A voice spoke, “We’re watching you, Alfred. You’re not crazy. We’re watching. Give us what we want Alfred, and it will all stop. You know what we want, Alfred. You know.” There was silence for a while longer. Then, the phone disconnected, and the dial tone rang in the silence.

Alfred stared at the blinking light indicating the new voicemail he had received. “What do they want? What do they want? Think Alfred, think!” Alfred muttered under his
breath. He ran into his office and frantically searched through the papers scattered on his desk.

“It must be here. It must, it just must!” Alfred yelled through the quiet apartment. He stopped and looked up. He heard a sound that seemed to come from the kitchen. He walked slowly around his desk and into the living room. He debated whether to find the source of the noise or to leave the apartment. He decided to go to the door. He walked as quickly and quietly as possible. He touched the handle, about to turn it, when he heard the voice from the voicemail. It sounded like nails on a chalkboard in his ears.

“Oh, Alfred,” the voice said with a hint of laughter in it. “We both know you don’t want to open that door. You don’t even know who I am, do you, Alfred? Oh, of course you do. You just don’t recognize my voice. Turn around and look at me, Alfred,” the voice commanded.

Alfred hesitated with every ounce of his being. His hand was still on the door. He could turn it, but what if the man had a gun ready to shoot? He could turn around, but what if he hated what he saw?

“I said turn around, Alfred! Now!” said the voice sternly.

“I, uh, all right,” he said slowly and uneasily. He turned around as slowly as possible. His eyes were fixed on the floor.

“Look up, Alfred,” said the voice more calmly than before. “I said look up!” the voice said again. Alfred’s eyes slowly moved from the floor, to the man’s shoes, to his pants, to his shirt, and finally to his face.

“Oh my God!” Alfred yelled.

“Surprised?” asked the man. “So am I. Never would have figured me to be the bad guy huh? Well, you were wrong. After working under a boss like you for five years, let’s just say I can’t stand it any longer. I want the card, Alfred. The one I deserve. The one my guys and I deserve. Give it to me.”

“William? How could you! You were such a great help!” Alfred said surprisingly. He was standing with his hands in the air because William was holding a gun pointed at him. “I don’t know what you want, William. What is it you want? I will give it to you. Just leave me alone.”

“I want your access card to the Capitol Building,” said William.

Alfred thought for a moment. Then an idea came to him, “Fine, fine. Here it is!” Alfred said acting scared.

“You were more cooperative than I thought, Alfred,” William said laughing. “Too bad I can’t risk your telling anyone. You see, after working under you for a while, I know how much of a big mouth you are. I just can’t risk you telling anyone in this type of situation, so goodbye, Alfred. Very, very nice knowing you,” he said laughing.
He started to point his gun at Alfred when Alfred interrupted, “Wait, wait! You can’t shoot me! They’ll find out who it was and send the cops after you immediately.”

“Haven’t you figured it out yet? I’m not really William. They’ll be searching for the wrong man. What is my real name you may ask? Well, I can’t tell you. Wait. Maybe I can since you will be dead in a few minutes,” William replied chuckling to himself. “I’m Andrew.”

“Well, Andrew, I have one request of you. Shoot me in the heart so I may die quickly,” replied Alfred hesitantly.

“Anything for my dear Alfred,” said Andrew sarcastically.

The shots rang out. They were shot right into Alfred’s chest as he had asked. Alfred lay motionless on the ground. Andrew stared at him for a moment, smiled and ran from the room with the card. After about three minutes Alfred stood up. He held his hand against his chest. “Gosh, even with a bulletproof vest those things hurt like hell,” he whispered to himself.

Having to think fast, Alfred put on different clothes, a long, black coat and a black hat to cover his face. He ran outside into the rain toward the Capitol Building. When he reached the stairs of the building, he called 9-1-1 to report what was going on.

“9-1-1. What’s your emergency?” asked the dispatcher.

“Hi, this is Alfred Simmons, and I have reason to believe there is going to be a robbery of some sort at the Capitol Building. The robber goes by the name Andrew but also by William Reynolds. He tried to shoot me at my apartment after he took my access card to the Capitol,” explained Alfred to the dispatcher.

“Where is your location now, sir? We will send backup to the Capitol and alert the guards inside. Just stay where you are, sir, and let the professionals handle this.”

“I am just walking into the Capitol Building now,” replied Alfred before hanging up the phone. He walked into the building and looked around, not sure where to go. He started to wonder why he had even come, or what he would do if he found Andrew.

Alfred walked into the Rotunda and watched the tourists gaze at the paintings on the wall. He decided to walk to the House Chambers. He walked into the room where the State of the Union Address was held, hoping to find some hint as to where Andrew and his accomplices were. He looked around, and then he saw a movement. It came from the flag by the stage where the President usually stood when giving his speech. He slid around the back wall quickly and quietly. He had heard sirens just before he had walked into the room.

“How did you know this was here?” whispered a mysterious voice.

“Yeah, and how do you propose we get this home without anyone noticing?” whispered a different voice.
“Guys, guys don’t worry. We just say we have a delivery for someone. That’s why I brought us these mail carrier uniforms,” a voice, possibly Andrew’s, replied.

Alfred slowly tiptoed to the side of the stage. He could just make out the three men. Then, he lay on the ground and crawled closer to get a better view. The men were putting documents with “CONFIDENTIAL” written on them into three mail carrier bags. He thought to himself, “Okay you got this far, Alfred. You must do something!” He looked around to see what he could do. There were too many exits to count. So much for blocking the exits. He thought harder.

“Okay change quickly before the guard makes his rounds in this place,” said one of the men quietly.

“The guards! That’s it!” Alfred thought to himself. He snuck out the nearest door. Luckily none of the men heard the grunt he made when the door almost slammed shut. He looked around for the nearest guard. He went up to one and explained what was going on inside as quickly as he could. The guard immediately called over another guard who gave Alfred his uniform. Alfred then went back into the room acting as a guard.

“Hey! What’re you three doing in here? You can’t be in here!” Alfred screamed in the best guard voice he could.

“Oh, we’re sorry, sir. We were just on our way. We got lost and wandered in here. My friend dropped some of our things, so we stopped to pick them up,” Andrew said to Alfred. Andrew and the two men picked up their bags and began to walk out.

“Let me just see what is in those bags. I might have mail. You never know these days,” Alfred said standing far enough away so Andrew couldn’t see his face.

“I’m sorry, sir, but we can’t let you see in here. It’s confidential information we’re handling,” replied one of the men.

“Well, in that case let me escort you to the door. Where do you need to go? The Rotunda is this way,” Alfred said pointing to a door in the back.

“No, sir, we know where to go from here, thank you,” Andrew said impatiently.

Andrew and his two accomplices had been walking toward the door while they were talking with Alfred. Andrew turned the knob, looked back at Alfred, and as he was getting ready to turn around he heard from behind him, “And just where do you think you are going with those papers, my good men?” It was a policeman. Perfect timing. Andrew winced at the sound of the voice.

“Freeze! Put your hands where I can see them!” yelled a police officer. At least one police officer burst through every door. Andrew and his two accomplices held their hands in the air and dropped their bags and their mouths.

“Thought you could outsmart me, did you Andrew? Well, you were wrong. Looks like I’m still teaching you, even now,” Alfred said laughing.
“I thought I shot you? How did you...?” Andrew said very confused.

“It’s called a bulletproof vest, Andrew,” said Alfred. The guards and policemen arrested Andrew and his two accomplices and took them to jail.

Alfred went home to a peaceful house and slept the best he had in weeks. He awoke to find himself in his office chair staring at a wall. He then heard, “Um, sir? Sir, are you awake? Sir, it's time to leave. Your five o’clock is ready for you.”