

LIFE'S BEST IMAGERY IS BUT A SLEEPING SHADOW of a sudden ripple of street applause for the professional responsible for Ivan Dzerzhinsky's party sounds. The LA-based American audiovisual expert and putative film producer Jack Kimmelon, arm-in-arm with his stunning wife, Merryl, the still gorgeous fashion model, a now wildly famous pair walking out into a spring sun from the Casino de Monte-Carlo CCTV flashback security cameras capturing their wide-eyed surprise at finding officers, police cars and flashing lights—another jewel-thieving pair caught after a decade on the run. Jack's eyes spring open.

'Hell,' he moans softly, 'where am I.'

Glancing to his left he sees Merryl still fast-asleep. Parking another of his dreams filled with disturbing images deep inside his head, Jack slides from the bed, managing to get upright without waking Merryl, staggering on numb feet down the corridor to the boat's galley. Few know that Alex Zanayev gave Jack his Sunshine Coast free of charge for the entire festival. Even fewer know the Russian also let a fellow-Russian Ivan Dzerzhinsky have Zanayev's beloved Soraya for the same period. Who knows where the money comes from to prop up Zanayev and his luxury Monaco lifestyle or what his connection is to Ivan Dzerzhinsky. And why should Jack care. Alex Zanayev is just another Monaco-based well-boated Russian oligarch living the good life, another of the taxless territory's financial mysteries. When an English clothing billionaire whispered in Jack's startled ear that Zanayev actually began his working-life as a contract house painter in Siberia, Jack at first began to protest, mumbling something about everything he's heard about Alex Zanayev being unverified rumour. Jack got it early on that entertaining tittle-tattle about a Russian oligarch who

just loaned him a boat wasn't in his best interests. So what if Alex Zanayev is rich enough to bet on any market and never lose. So what if he is able to kill people with impunity. As long as corpses with Zanayev's DNA attached to them don't drift near Jack's borrowed boat, no local or international cop will get anything out of him. As far as Jack's concerned it's all straight from the realm of a whodunnit novel.

That his benefactor Russian oligarch is mysteriously alive, marvellously afloat, fabulously rich and miraculously out of jail is all Jack needs to know. Everything else is blind gossip generated by a smouldering fire of envy and dismay at all the money Alex has. All the terrible things he's said to have done, deeds dead and buried because everyone who knows anything about them is dead and buried as well, adds up to the what about where which Jack is simply not investigating. Any negative image of Alex Zanayev adds up to nothing.

Jack was lucky enough to have met a man who is lucky enough to call Monaco home. He's not deconstructing the oligarch's bona fides. Any investigation into Alex Zanayev or his life ended when Zanayev became Jack's employer. Jack's not about to elevate any conjecture to a truth-exposé. Why should he. That is all that needs to be said.

Finding himself staring at recently-ground coffee in a jar that he is holding in two idle hands, Jack looks out at the morning sky recalling the moment another new friend, Rob Le Riche, introduced Zanayev to him and Merryll.

On the back of the Russian oligarch's yacht, lounging on the largest cutting-edge technology super-boat currently on the planet—he was told—that afternoon made for a wonderful moment. Jack's life took a turn toward the stars when the Russian began filling him in on the plans he

had for upending Monaco's cultural scene, streamlining it internationally. Jack is blessed with a sixth sense when not to probe for details about any famous rich person who is paying him so well. So it is a month since he first met Alex and a day since he and Merryl motored down the Côte d'Azur coastline to weigh anchor in Renne Bay in Alex's first floating home, the grace and favour bonus payment for Jack's reorganisation of the on-board entertainment system of Zanayev's current main home, the Soraya.

If Zanayev's main boat is not the biggest yacht ever built, who cares. If the Soraya a three hundred and twenty-four-foot welded steel and aluminium moulded fibre-glass ocean cruiser is a key asset a firm of Dubai based London-trained lawyers are trying to prise from Zanayev's grip, being legal representatives of two of Alex's ex-wives, how is this any of Jack's business.

If the Soraya is the ocean-going part-solar-powered ship cruiser listed in an alimony payments petition currently before Le Tribunal Suprême de Monaco, who the hell cares. It's none of Jack's business. That's all for Zanayev's ex-wives to sort out.

A burst of helicopter rotors in the eastern sky has Jack spilling the coffee meant for the Sunshine Coast's espresso machine.

'We being attacked?' he half-yells, then regrets raising his voice as he woke Merryl up, her moaning coming down the corridor to him.

Running outside in his silk pyjamas Jack sees a chopper silhouetted against the rising sun. What's he looking at? A promo-stunt trying to get the festival's attention? He's seen better on small-country TV. After watching it crossing the bay he heads back inside Zanayev's first floating home to

finish making the first steaming Jamaican brew for the day. Ah, Montego Bay, the coffee brand named after the place where Jack hopes to park his own ocean-going luxury yacht pretty soon. Once he's become a major producer making movies like Titanic, anything with a box office to make his daydreams come true.

SHAKESPEARE MIGHT SAY we know not what we may be and Edgar Gordon Olles doesn't. Staring at 09.28 on his bedside digital clock, he knows nothing of where he is or should be or what people are now probably saying about him for not being where he should have been nearly twenty nine minutes before. He stares at the clock until it flips 09.29.

'Fuck. The press conference.'

On two sore feet Edgar runs around a small apartment calling: Rob, you there? Finding no Rob or any bed slept in, Edgar keeps calling out. No answer.

Running around in circles Edgar gets himself ready, grabs his bag with a camera inside and staggers out into a corridor. Nearly falling down some antique stairs he finds himself in the black and white marble lobby of a waterfront hotel.

It dawns on him it was his suite up there. Wandering light-headed outside still having trouble staying on his feet, a passing silent scooterist nearly runs him down.

There's no press tent anywhere. Weaving his way towards the waterfront going by a merry-go-round he says over and over, 'Larry'll kill me.' He agreed to help Semi handle their first press-do, but seeing only film magazines on a seawall, he sits heavily and flicks through one cover to cover. Finding nothing of any note he stares out to sea re-hearing Rob yelling against the noise the night before.