

Zucca needs a defining shot. It could it be a psychopolitical introspective leader inside an action scenario. It could be a scenario inside an introspection. Really, Zucca doesn't know. He needs a front-page pic, one for the whole world. Could bolshy be the one? Is he a meal ticket, photo-historian of the year, Time Man-of-the-Year portrait? Zucca's last breadwinner was a fizzog he had to throw away. Zucca needs a payday. 'Come on big guy.'

Zucca can't afford to keep losing them, small or big. He's convinced he saw something in the guy's eyes. He pegged the guy as a pilgrim. Zucca pushes further up in through the kids barging their way through the doors of La Salle Truffaut now, a sign saying a Directors on Directors Directing Genre session is on, the white-haired startled audience looking up almost with one face. Zucca scans around for a perfect position. Wherever his subject goes he's going. So far, nobody looks fazed by the intrusion, a woman telling everyone: 'It's improvisational theatre.'

'Let's hope not,' someone behind her says.

When the protesters parade their leader in front of the screen the audience falls silent. A black and white film still running goes white. The projector judders to a halt. A kid yells through an intercom, 'Stop phony festivalism,' his high-pitched voice and message not really carrying or going over that well, but the audience gets the drift. This is unscheduled and disruptive and is going to take time to resolve. Many sit shaking their heads and sighing, the first woman saying loudly again, only with a little less conviction this time: 'It's street theatre.'

When the house lights come up a big intruder is on stage blinking out at people his own age, everyone caught in a type-situation. In the over-heated cinema everyone is

sweating. 'It's showtime big guy,' Zucca whispers, hoping the unimpressed faces all around won't multiply. A voice says: 'Larry Linsteeg, gimme a break.' A man laughs.

Zucca's heart sinks a notch. A backlash is close. The lights in this Larry's eyes. Not only is he looking underconfident, he's beginning to look like a true phoney. Those closest to the stage glare at him. Some grin. Zucca's brain does a rethink and when the kid with a banner Gruppo dell' Apprezzamento del Film forms the acronym GAF, Zucca's about to give up. Titters spread as more demonstrators pour inside, tipping the numbers in favor of the protesters for the first time. Big Larry springs to life, raising himself up.

'Friends, comrades, film lovers. I come neither to praise Léo nor to bury him.'

Zucca isn't the only one with his mouth open. Larry moves to the edge of the stage dragging his minders with him. 'Friends I was here in 1968. My first year. I was an ingenu in film but I understood the error authorities made in removing Henri Langlois as chief of the Cinémathèque Française.'

Zucca is stunned by how clearheaded Larry sounds. His voice isn't shaking. The mood change has guests in front vacating their seats, Zucca's photo opportunity staring out at what he seems now to believe is his own private captive audience. At least by the look on his face. Silence lingers in the room, some hanging on to what Larry's next words might be, grinning nervously as if they're half-expecting a stand-up experimental theatrical comedy routine might break out, audience members being asked to come up on stage. Among those who get that Larry might now understand the power he has, are smiling with Zucca, who's quietly urging Larry not to shut up. The photo op he thought he had only minutes

before is back on the agenda. Many in the audience are on the edges of their seats, some by their faces looking like they're getting ready to make a run for it. When Larry lifts his arms into a V everyone sees this is no bathroom rehearsal by an amateur. Larry's in the zone. Zucca sees the eyes of a man with only one way to go, forward. Slipping into Gregory Peck's voice, taking on the actor's steely gaze, Larry's voice fills the silent auditorium: 'I have joined this protest to stop another mistake being made with the removal of today's Henri Langlois—Léo Stern.'

Protesters all-around are stunned.

'I am a producer aware of what people want.'

Even if his grasp on the facts might still be a touch dubious his confidence is suddenly sky-high. Larry seems to be channeling someone stronger than himself. Mike Douglas at the end of *Traffic*? Throwing his arms up into another V, Zucca sees who Larry is playing. 'This protest deserves a place in history. 68's protesters demanded Langlois' return. I say bring Léo back. Bring back the great white shark of 21st century film.'

'Léo is a great white shark?' a white-haired woman asks near the front. Larry probably meant great white hero but even the truly great make some mistakes. Let's not get hung-up on detail, Zucca nearly shouts. Larry is in the zone and he's staying there. 'Langlois championed Welles—Bergman—Kurosawa. Léo championed Spielberg—Coppola—Campion—Almodóvar. Who could force Léo out?'

'You're trying to save your tanking film,' someone shouts. A voice tells the speaker to shut-up. Scepticism is now dead officially in this cinema. If Larry's a fraud he's the best fraud Zucca's seen. 'Go for the throat!' he whispers, 'Avanti!'

'Political controls are the enemy of art,' Larry shouts at his audience.

'YES,' the kids shout: 'And the jury and management must resign right now!'

Larry's learned the ropes of what he has to do, and he seems to know he must do it fast. He's enjoying himself, a good sign, most in the audience and all the protesters now clearly with him. It's remarkable. Larry the faux leftie with a tanking film stands sweating and enjoying his power. When a woman holding a walker stands up and shakes her fist, shouting, 'Yes!' Zucca snaps her doing it and swinging back gets his subject's grinning face. Zucca would vote for Larry in any constituency. He's a candidate with a workable quorum anywhere right now. Larry could win a seat in any parliament. Zucca's even ready to shout 'Democracy Now. Jury Out,' more loudly than these kids. Larry's pumped. So too are the kids. 'Stay cool, Larry,' Zucca whispers. 'Don't you lose it now.' A Jean-Luc Godard moment is at hand, Larry now demanding that the jury president come down and face the music, yelling: 'THE JURY'S THE PROBLEM.' Kids throw their fists in the air and yell 'DEMOCRACY.' Zucca's even shouting now: 'If the képi fits wear it, Larry. Your die is cast. Cross your Rubicon. Don't look back.' Larry looks straight at Zucca as he says it, Zucca repeating the words so Larry doesn't miss a syllable, aiming his camera at Larry's forehead. 'Godard and Truffaut are on stage with you,' he continues, Larry's eyes going as wide as they can go hearing this. Larry the leftie is raising festival hell, pulling himself up to his full five-feet-eight inches from where with his arms up he could easily be over six feet. Arms aloft, his voice hoarser than Jack Nicholson in *A Few Good Men*, the kids' winner on fire takes aim: 'IN SOLIDARITY WITH MY

FRIENDS TODAY I AM TAKING DEATH AT INTERVALS OUT OF COMPETITION.’ Zucca got him in that moment—The Definitive Portrait. Larry the Leader with his arms aloft in vintage Charles De Gaulle style.

TOGGLING THE REMOTE in the living room of Elena’s Belle Époque apartment on Rue des Nations-Unies Viktor Andreyevic stares at the replays of the fracas on television with protesters flooding again and again into the bâtiment.

‘What on earth is going on?’ he says to an empty room. The Promenade des Rois is only a short walk away but he’s not going near it. Switching off he stalks around on Elena’s polished boards scuffing her Persian carpets furiously rubbing his forehead.

Viktor has no information on this Larry Linsteege, what he wants or represents, who he is even. In the past Viktor would have received a character file inside five minutes, with a thorough summary of his weaknesses and strengths.

Turning to a photograph of Tolstoy Elena has in her entrance Viktor asks the dead author if his enthusiasm about being in Renne is misguided. ‘Things are bad.’

On the TGV to Renne, Viktor told himself all he had to do was peddle his vast experience in intelligence to various producers, convince people what a great film he has to make, explain how many Rubles they’d make together, then stand around in cocktail parties telling Russian jokes. Bingo the wheels would start turning. Well, they are turning now, only in ways Viktor never imagined. He walks around in circles stopping to face Leo again telling the author that Ivan’s reliability as the money-man is now up in the air, his past as a porn operator known all over town. ‘God knows who’ll be in power after this mess. The people of Renne will force

us to leave. The dream is gone Leo, all in a day.' Viktor's brow is saturated, his breathing shallow, everything around suddenly so remote to him. Sighing, he heads back into Elena's sitting room. Falling hard on the sofa he manages to hurt his back and pointing the remote he stares wide-eyed at the images: Protesters barging by security, taking over the bâtiment, charging into a cinéma.

'Where the hell were the police?'

Blinking at the scenes Viktor bangs his nose with his fist, the buzzer sounding. Leaping up he runs to the intercom his heart fluttering as he says, 'Hallo.'

'C'est moi.' Viktor presses the button, sitting himself down in a chair by the door and clasping his knees. His palms are sweating. Hearing Elena's footsteps on the marble stairs he stands up too fast putting a hand on a wall to steady himself. Rubbing both hands on his hips, trying hard to smile as the lock turns, he blinks at Elena's blurry figure coming inside.

'Uff,' she exclaims putting down her bags. 'Ça va? Tout va bien?'

'Speak Russian Elena. This talk everywhere what do you think it means?'

Straightening up to the full 5'5" height the former cabaret-dancer often boasts is actually more, she stares back at Viktor. 'What talk? I bought you some nice things.'

'This is not what I expected when I came here.'

Elena frowns at his tone.

'People are saying this American's a communist sympathizer.'

'What American Viktor?'

'They are calling him the new Trotsky, Elena.'

'The French always talk about communism at this time of year.'

'I don't mean ...' Viktor looks around himself, then whispers, 'It's not just the French, Elena. German Dutch and English television are talking about it.'

He follows her inside the kitchen watching her say over her shoulder, 'I see you've been busy.'

'This will become big.'

'What will Viktor?'

'This ... thing.'

'Viktor what thing? It is just French sociologists talking.'

He rubs his head, blinks and grimaces. 'I'm telling you communism is a major issue.'

'You said communism was dead.'

'Listen to me Elena. French intelligence will soon be all over town if they're not already.'

'The intelligentsia are always at the festival. It's just academical talk.'

'I said French intelligence, Elena, not intelligentsia. I thought with the changes in Russia, my new passports, my travel itinerary through Turkey, I could escape any attention. But with this mess I can't avoid scrutiny. Maybe I should give this whole idea a miss. Wait for another time.'

'Viktor you are seventy-five. What other time?'

He goes back into the living room banging his forehead, staggering on the carpet and almost falling.

'You're very pale.'

He sits down, puts his face in his hands.

'You are getting all worked up about this. It's nothing.'

He stares up at her. 'Damn festivals. Friends turn out to be phony then get nasty inside a day. Everyone is so competitive. Petty jealousies rivalries commitments dishonoured. The dressing up and social games you have to play. I am certainly not learning modern dancing Elena. I simply can't fathom

these explosions of irrational behaviour.'

'The KGB wasn't irrational?' Elena says walking into her kitchen.

'We had rules Elena. We behaved ourselves,' he calls back.

'Behaved, that what you call it?'

'I have dipped into bad politics before, but this is completely idiotic, plain stupid. Shallow. Impossible. Vain. Dishonest. Disloyalty in my world always had good form. Here there are no rules. Even dishonourable politics has a structure to it. Here everything is upside down. People not only don't mean what they say they tell all these lies as if they believe the lies were true all along. At least we knew when we were lying. The people here cheat on the simplest things flip ideas beliefs in seconds.'

'And the KGB was different?' she calls back.

'Elena, we had controls.'

She comes back inside the lounge room. 'That's what you call it. When I left you were fine, what's happened? Has Ivan pulled out of the deal?'

'No. This whole bâtiment thing Elena. That's what just happened.'

'I don't see anything to worry about.'

'I've been trying to tell you. This chaos at the bâtiment.'

'Every year I have been here there's been chaos at the bâtiment. It's normal.'

'Well, this time it's real chaos.'

'Coming back I heard some noise. I thought some celebrity must have arrived.'

Viktor stands up and switches on the set. 'Look Elena, there are police outside the bâtiment. A huge crowd is there.'

'It's festival time Viktor.'

'This Larry Linsteege character has taken over a cinema.'

He's taken hostages. He's locked the doors..'

'It's called an audience. A captive audience. It's probably just a genre discussion.'

'A what?'

'You are very pale. I'll make tea.'

Viktor wrings his hands watching her going out to the kitchen.

'I was promised that there wouldn't be any politics. Now the festival chief has gone. Where? Nobody knows. This Linsteeg has lost his mind. In my world a man steps out of line like this, dishonours the power that put him where he is like this you stick a gun to his head and renegotiate his priorities. If the French find out about me I have no FSB friends here. I'll be removed in broad-daylight Elena.'

'Have you taken your pills?'

Viktor wrings his hands mumbling again as he walks out into the entrance hall. 'If intelligence here doesn't know about this I'm a monkey's uncle.' He paces back inside the big room, Elena following him around with a tray with a teapot, cups and a plate of strawberries on it.

'Sit down. Have some tea. Aren't these strawberries wonderful? Viktor the fruit here at this time of year is heaven. I got those wonderful biscuits you like. You're getting yourself all worked up over nothing. Maybe you need some vitamins.'

Viktor keeps pacing. 'Elena, they will see me as washed-up wannabe trying to reignite old glories. Worse a never-was. A never-can-forget-his-past kind of guy. A hopeless case on a pension. How humiliating. This whole free-for-all set off by this bloody Larry me-me whoever he is. He's going to explode everything in to a thousand pieces. The French will think I'm part of it.'

'How?'

'There are so many Americans here, Elena. Any one of them could be from Langley. They might even decide to take me and Ivan out.' He points his index finger at his head.

'You're sweating.'

'Of course, I'm sweating. In Moscow temperatures like this in May it's called high summer. Here it's spring. There's no air-conditioning. The fan isn't even working.'

'The man is coming today.'

'Fat chance with this mess at the bâtiment.'

'What mess? I don't see anything strange.'

Elena stares at the screen completely perplexed trying to comprehend what she is missing. 'I'll get you a glass of something. There's something you're not telling me.'

'Isn't this enough?'

'Maybe you ate something. I'm sure the blueberries I bought yesterday were okay. Did you have any more? I hope you washed them well.'

Viktor walks into the kitchen, wipes his face on a tea towel staring at Elena's collection of fridge door reminder cartoon character magnets. 'Get a grip,' he says to himself furiously. Walking unsteadily back inside the living room he sits down and pours some tea.

Swallowing he splutters the drink all over himself as it goes down the wrong way.

'You put vodka in the tea?'

'I'll make another. You should lie down. Or go for a walk.'

'A walk? Did you see all the armed officers? Turn up the volume and listen. Listen to the TV Elena. Listen.'

Grabbing the remote she stands listening to a journalist speaking. 'It looks like a protest.'

'Elena, it's a revolution.'

'People in the market were talking about something going on and they don't usually care about the festival. Someone said an American producer was leading something.'

'It's what I'm saying. This Linsteege fellow's leading a major revolt.'

Elena stands trying to grasp what Viktor is saying. 'What's so awful?'

'It's nineteen sixty-eight all over again that's what's awful. They've occupied the bâtiment. Linsteege is leading it.'

'I didn't know these Americans were so political.'

Viktor grins in spite of himself.

'The French love a protest.'

'Remember Prague, Elena?'

'I was a little girl. What do I know about Prague?'

'Well, I saw it. I was there. I don't forget.'

Viktor stands up, both eyes wide, his mouth open as he stares at the TV remembering Prague as if it is happening in Elena's living-room.

'That was another time, Viktor. Times have changed.'

'Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose.'

'I thought you said we had to speak Russian. You really should lie down.'

He obeys her this time feeling suddenly exhausted. Leaning his head back on the couch he stares up at the mottled ceiling, allowing her to take off his shoes.

'Your heart pills Viktor, where are they?'

'In my small black shaving case on the bedside table.'

He looks at her face filled with worry, following her with his eyes as she rushes into her bedroom. Staring back at the TV screen he listens to her go into the kitchen, pouring water and coming back again.

'Here take this. She hands him a glass and two pills.'

'What's this?'

'Your pills.' He stares at them. 'Viktor ... they are your heart pills.'

'You don't see what's happening because you've never experienced it. You think these are French kids just being kids. It's not. This is how it all begins.'

'How what begins?'

'This on the TV. They were talking about Linsteeg and Trotsky.'

'Viktor, Trotsky is dead.'

She studies him staring back at her.

'There's something you're not telling me. What else has happened?'

Viktor puts his hands over his face. 'Ivan's shark fell from a helicopter.'

'WHAT!'

'I told him drawing attention to himself like this was a very bad idea. He said that's why people come to Renne every year, to draw attention to themselves.'

'What happened?'

'He was in the speedboat right under where it was being lowered to the platform. The wires broke and the shark came straight down on him and the driver. Ivan nearly drowned but was saved by some young director. Federico's disappeared.'

'Disappeared?'

'He was driving and the shark landed right smack on top of him. Swallowed him.'

'Oh my god.'

'The shark's gone too.'

'Where?'

'Into the bay.'

'I thought it was dead.'

'So did I.'

'Was this on TV?'

'Nowhere. It's all hush hush.'

'My god. How did you find out?'

'A crewmember called me. I went searching for some news and I saw this mess at the bâtiment.'

'So, this is why you're upset.'

'Elena. I think it is part of the whole thing. It has that feel to it. Two things happening together. A two-pronged attack. I've seen it before.'

'Viktor, take your pills. Okay. Now drink the water.'

STEPHEN KING IS RIGHT. Déjà-vu is a hallucination you can only have in French. Daniel Martin found this statement on the Web earlier this morning: Le déjà-vu est la sensation d'avoir déjà été témoin ou d'avoir déjà vécu une situation présente accompagnée d'une sensation d'irréalité d'étrangeté. The sense of being punched is with Daniel again and how, Daniel staggering around as if only half-conscious accompanied by an inner glow of the higher purpose associated with all current ambitions, defining the leader he always knew he could be in time. Pacing the floor in front of the picture window studying the Soraya, hoping his vision isn't too optimistic he does a little jig. One more luxury yacht at anchor is one more vote in the bank. A thought stops him—he has to keep his coup alive.

Opportunity came courtesy of a director's fist at the bâtiment. Daniel convinced Léo it was Edgar Gordon Olles's fault, or so Daniel is convincing himself now that he convinced Léo. Whatever the truth pans out to be he won't let this chance fly out the door. After examining every inch