



## Hoover is Recruited

“And this week’s number one record on the Billboard top one hundred is,” the DJ paused, “nine to five by Dolly Parton.”

“Oh yes!” whooped Bill Hoover and punched the air. He picked up his transistor radio and turned it up as loud as it would go.

“Working nine to five, what a way to make a living,” he sang tunelessly, swinging his bulky physique around the room as he did so. Halfway through the song his energy levels dropped and he had to stop. As he turned the radio down, he laughed. He no longer worked nine to five. In fact the distinction between when he now worked and when he didn’t were becoming increasingly blurred.

“The key to not working is doing something you love,’ someone had once told him and finally he understood this.

A year ago, a friend of his had come across a truckload of the first colour videocams that used a charge-coupled device or CCD. It was the smallest camera on the market, weighing only two point eight pounds, and his friend had fifty of them. Bill’s mom had just died, and much to his friend’s surprise, he used most of his inheritance money to buy them all. Bill knew that they were stolen but didn’t care. Since leaving high school, he had been working in an electronics store. He was bored and wanted to do something new.

After a bit of tinkering, he had turned all the videocams into surveillance cameras. He set up ‘Hoover’s Security Firm’ and used the last of the inheritance money to advertise in the national press. Within a month, he had sold all his surveillance kits and was finding it hard to keep up with demand.

He was making more money than he had ever made in the store. Even better was that he could afford to employ someone to work with his customers, while he stayed at home and adapted the cameras that his friend acquired for him.

Dolly reached the end of the song on the radio, “9 to 5, yeah, They got you where they want you, There's a better life, And you dream about it, don't you, It's a rich man's game, No matter what they call it.”

I’ve got a better life, thought Bill, I’m living the dream.

He slumped into his mom’s favourite armchair and looked at the TV sets in front of him. One was showing a repeat of ‘Different Strokes’ on NBC, two were showing the bedroom windows of neighbours he thought were hot, one was pointed towards his front lawn and another to the back yard. On the floor in front of them, were cameras that he was in the process of adapting.

He took a swig of Dr. Pepper from a can, took a handful of chips and slunk onto the floor to finish the cameras. That was when he saw them.

Three men were hanging around in the road at the front of the house. They wore suits, looked official and kept looking toward his Mom’s porch. There were another two men around the back of his house. They stepped onto the yard and walked towards his back door.

Bill’s head moved rapidly between the two TV sets as if he was watching a tennis match. Sweat began to form on his brow and fresh patches formed under the arms of his baggy T-shirt. He grabbed the radio, turned it off and waited.



There was a knock on the door. Bill lay on the carpet and didn't move. He waited for the men to go away. One man appeared at the window and tried to look in, but the curtains were almost closed and he would have struggled to see Bill.

Suddenly there was a loud crash. The front door flung open and smashed down on the floor. The men entered the lounge. Two stood by the doorway while the other walked right up to Bill and stood over him.

"Good morning, Mr Hoover. My name is Buddy Angel," he said. "Don't get up."

Buddy Angel was a bear of a man; Bill feared that he could be killed with one punch if he dared to move.

Buddy Angel stepped forward, so his feet were pressing against Bill's shoulders.

"I'm looking for intelligent, resourceful people, who know what they want and don't always play by the rules. I need them to join my organisation. Are you one of those people?"

Bill shook his head.

"You're a modest man, Mr Hoover. From my point of view, someone who starts a surveillance business using stolen videocams and who spies on their female neighbours would fit that description perfectly."

"You can't prove that," Bill spluttered.

"You can't prove that... Sir! I think you meant to say", corrected Buddy Angel, aiming a sharp kick into Hoover's ear. "Oh, I can prove it. I have more than enough evidence to put you behind bars and tarnish the Hoover name for the rest of your life. When you finally get out of jail, there is no way you would be welcomed back here with open arms. No one likes someone spying on their private life, do you understand?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Here's what I am offering you. Listen carefully as this is a once in lifetime opportunity. You will get more dollars than you are making at present. Unlimited access to technology. Funds to develop surveillance for my organisation. And, of course, your own office. Did you get that?"

Bill was kicked hard in the ear again. His head throbbed.

"Yes, Sir."

"Good. Now, while I take a leak, you consider my generous offer," smiled Buddy Angel and, as if in slow motion, undid the flies on his trousers.

"I'll do it!" shouted Bill Hoover, panicking.

"I can't make that out, Bill," said Buddy Angel, reaching into his flies. "My bladder is distracting me."

"I'll do it, Sir. I'll join your organisation."

Buddy Angel did his flies back up and stepped away. The two men at the door came forward and helped Bill up. On one of the TV sets, his favourite neighbour had appeared at her bedroom window, but he was no longer interested.

Buddy Angel held out a large paw of a hand and Bill took it. They shook firmly.

"Great to have you on board, Bill. I look forward to working with you."

The three men escorted Bill out of his Mom's house forever.

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