

The Pickpocket

Written by

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Final Draft

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**INT. PLATFORM OF A LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION - DAY.**

Fade in on a crowd of commuters, who press forward as a train approaches.

A view from track-side reveals a poster on the subway wall. It reads: **Beware of Pickpockets.**

The train comes to a stop, and the crowd begins to board.

Among their number is BERNIE BARTLETT (47); a short balding man whose conservative attire is completely congruous with that of his fellow passengers. He might be a businessman or office worker...

CUT TO:

**INT. INSIDE THE TRAIN CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS - DAY.**

Which is the image Bartlett wants to convey - for our 'businessman' is in fact a member of the fraternity the poster warns about... a pickpocket.

Bernie carries a tan briefcase in his left hand and approaches a girl in her twenties standing in the carriage's busy passageway. The girl is in earnest conversation with an older man. A handbag hangs at her shoulder.

Bernie closes in, and we see his right hand dexterously open the bag. His THUMB AND FOREFINGER closes around a black leather purse.

The purse's extraction is timed to coincide with the movement of the carriage. The train lurches suddenly, causing Bernie to bump into the girl.

BERNIE  
(to girl)  
Sorry.

GIRL  
It's okay.

During this exchange we see Bernie take the purse and reseal the girl's handbag. Next, he thumbs a catch on his briefcase, which opens a fraction. He drops the purse inside, presses the catch a second time, and the briefcase closes.

The pickpocket moves swiftly along the aisle, seeking further prey.

CUT TO:

**INT. ADJOINING SUBWAY TRAIN CARRIAGE - DAY.**

SHORT MONTAGE -

- Bernie picks his way through a neighbouring - equally busy - car, deftly picking pockets, opening handbags, transferring all kinds of booty to his briefcase.

- Not an eyebrow is raised. No-one entertains the slightest suspicion. Everything appears hunky-dory.

But is it?

Sitting at the end of the carriage is a MAN WEARING A HOMBURG, who WATCHES Bernie. He pulls his jacket lapel close and speaks into a buttonhole microphone.

MAN WITH HOMBURG (INTO RADIO MIC)  
Bernie Bartlett. Halfway along the carriage. Approaching you now. See him?

CUT TO:

**INT. RAILWAY CARRIAGE (CONTINUOUS) - DAY**

A middle-aged WOMAN wearing pink earrings and a matching cameo brooch is seated a few feet from Bernie's location. The woman turns briefly, covers her face with her hand, and COUGHS. Her hand remains in that position. She speaks into a microphone hidden in her cuff.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
Balding. Well-tailored coat?

MAN WITH HOMBURG (V.O.)  
That's the one.

WOMAN (V.O.)  
We take him?

MAN WITH HOMBURG (V.O.)  
When he passes your position.

CUT TO:

**INT. RAILWAY CARRIAGE - CONTINUOUS) - DAY**

Bernie continues on, eyes darting back and forth, assessing opportunity.

Then, suddenly, his gaze comes to rest upon the man with the Homburg.

We see Bernie in CLOSE UP: his eyes wide, a look of panic on his face.

For the man is none other than Inspector James Reilly - a cop who arrested Bernie some years before. The policeman whose testimony got him sent down for two years.

Bernie executes an immediate about-turn. Heads in the direction of the first carriage.

INSPECTOR REILLY (V.O.)  
He's spotted me.

WOMAN (DS MOSS - V.O.)  
(turns)  
I see him. He's approaching the connecting door of the next carriage.

INSPECTOR REILLY (V.O.)  
(stands)  
Don't lose sight of him. We'll be at Green Park Station soon. Guaranteed he'll exit, melt into the crowds.

CUT TO:

BERNIE - BACK IN THE FIRST CARRIAGE.

We see him from the front, desperately making his way through the crowded car.

Just then - a HISS of brakes - the train is approaching Green Park station.

Behind Bernie are dozens of passengers who also get ready to alight.

Some way beyond them is DS Moss, at this point unable to make an arrest, but determined not to let Bernie out of her sight.

And - a short distance behind - DI Reilly, the top of his homburg just visible at the back of the crowd.

Suddenly, A TALL MAN bumps into Bernie. Bernie looks up - sees the guy looking in the direction of Moss and Reilly.

Bernie gasps. Why his interest - he's not one of their team, surely?

TALL MAN

Sorry.

Bernie sighs with relief.

BERNIE

(shakily)

Eh? Oh, right. No problem.

The train slows, rolls to a stop. Passengers begin to exit.

CUT TO:

**INT. PLATFORM/CORRIDORS OF GREEN PARK STATION - DAY**

A SERIES OF MONTAGES:

- Bernie is the first to alight, picking up his heels and sprinting towards the escalators.
- DI Reilly and DS Moss, fifty yards behind, weave their way through the milling throng, determined not to lose sight of him.
- The corridors take a number of sharp turns before they arrive at the escalators. The crowd starts to thin.
- We see Bernie jink around a corner and almost collide with a trash can. He looks at his briefcase and glances behind. No one in the vicinity.
- His thought is an obvious one - *get rid of the evidence.*
- He dumps the briefcase into the trashcan and carries on running.

CUT TO:

**INT. A STRAIGHT SECTION OF CORRIDOR - DAY.**

Bernie's almost on the last lap. The escalators a few feet ahead.

Suddenly - a voice behind.

DI REILLY

Stop that man!

CUT TO:

THE FOOT OF THE DOWN ESCALATOR (CONTINUOUS).

A passenger is passing as Reilly shouts. He turns and rugby-tackles Bernie.

A few minutes later -

Bernie has been taken into custody. Reilly and Moss stand alongside him at a wall near the escalators.

The man who brought Bernie down is a short distance away. A uniformed constable, notebook in hand, is taking his statement.

DI REILLY

You led us a merry dance.

BERNIE

Don't know what you're talking about, guv.

DI REILLY

In the tube. You saw us and scarpered. Why?

BERNIE

I never saw you, guv. Honest.

DI REILLY

(nods back towards  
the platform)

Then I suppose if we make inquiries, we'll discover no one on that train has anything missing?

BERNIE

Couldn't say, guv. Nothing to do with me if they have.

DS MOSS

You were carrying a briefcase. What have you done with it?

BERNIE

(extends his hands in  
a gesture of  
innocence)

Case? No, Ma'am. You must be mistaken.

DI REILLY

Empty your pockets.

A VOICE then, interrupting.

ELDERLY MAN

I say there!

A well-dressed elderly man approaches.

ELDERLY MAN (cont'd)

One of the platform staff pointed me in your direction. I've just exited a tube train. My wallet's been stolen.

DI REILLY

Your name, sir?

ELDERLY MAN

Sir Stafford Livesey. Wouldn't worry me all that much, except the card for my club's in it - St. James's. (strokes the sides of his luxuriant moustache) New fella on the door - Mightn't recognise me.

DI REILLY

I see, sir. (points to the constable). If you'll give your details to the PC, I'll come over and speak to you in a minute.

SIR STAFFORD LIVESLEY

(turns and sees the policeman)

Eh? Oh yes. Very well. Won't take long. Will you?

DI REILLY

No, sir. I'll be right over.

Livesley departs and Reilly turns back to Bernie.

DI REILLY (cont'd)

Okay, Bernie. Where were we? Oh, yes. Empty your pockets.

Bernie complies. He takes a wallet from his inside jacket pocket. Keys and handkerchiefs from one of his trouser pockets. An Oyster card from the other.

BERNIE

That's all there is, guv.

DI REILLY  
 (pointing to his  
 overcoat)  
 What about the coat?

BERNIE  
 Nothing in it, Guv.

DI REILLY  
 (cynically)  
 Humour me, Bernie. Empty it. Please.

Bernie places his hand in the inside coat pocket. A bewildered expression comes over his face. He removes his hand, now holding a wallet.

Reilly extends his own hand.

DI REILLY (cont'd)  
 Hand it over, Bernie.

BERNIE  
 Don't know how it got there, Guv.

Reilly says nothing. He takes the wallet and examines the contents. He extracts one of the items - an embossed card.

He nods in the direction of Livesley, who is in animated conversation with the policeman.

DI REILLY  
 Well, well, well. Sir Stafford will  
 be pleased.

A SHORT TIME LATER:

Bernie is still in the underground station with Reilly and Moss.

He appears dumbfounded, then sees the Tall Man approach the foot of the escalators.

The man carries Bernie's tan briefcase. He looks in Bernie's direction, smiles, then taps his forehead in salute.

It's then that reality dawns on Bernie...

FLASHBACK

The last few minutes on the train. Bernie knocks into the man, who looks in the direction of Reilly and Moss.

- A fellow pickpocket, who realises the cops are after Bernie.



- Time to plant incriminating evidence; take any heat off himself.

- Then, what really happens when he bumps into Bernie:

MAN

Sorry.

BERNIE

(the man slips  
Livesley's wallet  
into Bernie's coat  
pocket)

Eh? Oh, right. No problem.

CUT TO:

In the corridor with the trashcan. The guy follows Bernie and sees him get rid of the evidence. He waits until the detectives and other passengers have passed, and retrieves the briefcase.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

BACK IN THE CORRIDOR.

BERNIE

(the Tall Man is now  
halfway up the  
escalator)

Bastard!

DI Reilly turns to Bernie as two uniformed officers approach.

DI REILLY

No fun getting caught, is it Bernie?  
Never mind, old son. Your transport's  
arrived.

End