

MY BEST FRIEND CHARLIE

An original screenplay

by

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FADE IN:

INT. FBI FIELD OFFICE - MARTY'S CUBICLE - NIGHT

A banner hangs on the wall. It reads: "HAPPY RETIREMENT".

FIELD AGENT MARTY HARRISON (63), loyal and compassionate-looking, packs some personal belongings into a cardboard box.

Newspaper clippings, official notices and wanted posters cover a bulletin-board next to Marty's desk.

Marty pulls down one of the wanted posters. It reads:

WANTED  
CHARLES "CHARLIE" BETTENCOURT  
LAST SEEN IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO  
MARCH 2, 1987

CHARLIE (O.S.)  
Hands up. This is a robbery. Get  
'em where I can see 'em.

Marty turns to see -

CHARLIE BETTENCOURT (61), enigmatic-looking, like a kid in a grown-up's body, standing in the doorway pointing his finger at him like a gun.

A look of disbelief crosses Marty's face.

MARTY  
Jesus Christ. Charlie.

Charlie holds out his hands as if to say, "It's me."

MARTY  
What the heck are you doing here?

CHARLIE  
I heard old Marty Harrison was  
finally retiring from the Bureau.  
You didn't think I was gonna miss  
that, did you?

MARTY  
Well, it's good to see you.

CHARLIE  
Yeah. You, too.

An awkward moment of silence passes between them. Then -

MARTY

Well, hey, what are you waitin'  
for? Grab a seat.

Marty and Charlie sit down across the desk from each other.

MARTY

How you been doing, anyways?

CHARLIE

Good. You?

MARTY

I'm good. I mean, look at me, I'm  
retired.

(then)

Hey, you wanna see something neat?  
I've still got your old file here.

Marty pulls a thick file-folder off the top of a stack of documents, sets it on his desk and flips it open. He holds up -

A PHOTO OF A YOUNG CHARLIE BETTENCOURT (39)

MARTY

Seen this guy around anywhere?

CHARLIE

Not in about twenty years.

Marty smiles as he sets the photo aside and continues to flip through the file.

MARTY

Hey, remember how this all started?  
June 17, 1985. First Union Bank,  
Tucson, Arizona...

DISSOLVE TO:

A newspaper headline reads: "BANK ROBBERY SPREE HITS  
SOUTHWEST".

MARTY (V.O.)

...Vegas, Reno, Sacramento,  
Bakersfield...

DISSOLVE TO:

Red ink criss-crosses an official bank robbery report. The initials "C.B.???" are scrawled in the margin.

MARTY (V.O.)  
 ...one-hundred-and-seventy-six-  
 thousand, plus the eight-thousand  
 from the previous heist...

DISSOLVE TO:

A series of video surveillance stills shows the young Charlie holding up a bank.

MARTY (V.O.)  
 ...requested an additional twenty  
 guys to be assigned to the case...

DISSOLVE TO:

A newspaper headline reads: "BETTENCOURT CONTINUES TO ELUDE FEDS".

MARTY (V.O.)  
 ...then, March 2, 1987, we get a  
 tip and I drive six-hundred-and-  
 fifty miles all the way back from  
 Salt Lake in the middle of the  
 night...

DISSOLVE TO:

A report reads: "LICENSE PLATE #784 JYT (NEW MEX)".

MARTY (V.O.)  
 ...we descended on the motel and  
 the only we came up with was a buck-  
 fifty from the ashtray in your  
 car...

DISSOLVE TO:

Marty slaps a buck fifty down on the desk.

MARTY  
 ...and that was it. You vanished  
 and we never heard from you again.

CHARLIE  
 Good times.

MARTY  
 Yeah, they were.  
 (then)  
 Still casing the odd joint?

CHARLIE

Nah. I went to Central America for a while, did a couple of jobs down there, but it just wasn't the same.

MARTY

Well, if you ever need a job, there's a spot opening up here.

Marty taps his finger on the desk.

Charlie LAUGHS.

CHARLIE

I never held down a job a day in my life.

MARTY

Hey, who knows? You might turn out to be pretty good at it.

CHARLIE

Sure. Next, you'll be telling me to buy a house and start a family.  
(then)  
How's Irene? Still together?

Marty shakes his head.

CHARLIE

What's the matter?

MARTY

She was sick.

CHARLIE

And?

Marty doesn't answer.

CHARLIE

Oh, I'm sorry.

MARTY

Thanks.

For a moment, they sit there in silence. Then -

CHARLIE

So, what's the big retirement plan?

MARTY

I don't know. Disappear for a while, I guess. Do some fishing.

CHARLIE

Oh, yeah? Know any good spots?

MARTY

That, I'm afraid, is classified information.

They LAUGH.

MARTY

(sighing)

Charlie Bettencourt.

Marty picks up the file, turns around, reaches over and sets it back on top of the stack of documents.

MARTY

You know, the one thing I could never figure out was why everyone always seemed to like you so much--

Marty turns back around to his desk.

CHARLIE IS GONE.

For a moment, Marty just sits there. Then -

Tucking the cardboard box under his arm, he gets up, goes to the door, stops and takes one last look around the room.

On the desk sits -

CHARLIE'S WANTED POSTER -

A series of photos show the Young Charlie looking back with a big smile on his face.

Marty gives a little salute.

MARTY

See you around, Charlie.

He turns and exits.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END