

# JOB FOR LIFE

By Wayne Roberts

## EXTRACT

*A sparsely-furnished room, with bland grey walls. There is a table with a wooden box on it, and a chair to either side of the table. An elderly man, dressed in a security guard's uniform, enters. His uniform, which includes a hat marked "security", shows signs of wear. His movements are slow and deliberate befitting his age, and he limps on his right leg. He walks across to the table and taps the box with his hand, looks around the room and then settles into one of the chairs and promptly falls asleep.*

*After a couple of seconds, a young man enters from the same direction. He is also dressed as a security guard although his uniform is more modern. He looks around curiously and notices the sleeping guard.*

*The young guard coughs. There is no reaction from the sleeping guard. The young guard coughs again, louder.*

OLD GUARD: *(Startled from his sleep)* Wha..what? It was like that when I got here!

YOUNG GUARD: Excuse me, what was?

OLD GUARD: *(Regaining his composure)* Oh, it's you.

YOUNG GUARD: Me?

OLD GUARD: Yes, you.

YOUNG GUARD: Well I know it's me, but how do you know it's me? We've never met.

OLD GUARD: Management said you'd be along.

YOUNG GUARD: Did they?

OLD GUARD: Yes, I've been expecting you, you're late. Shouldn't you have started last week?

YOUNG GUARD: Yeah, that's right, but I was unwell. I did call.

OLD GUARD: Huh, never told me anything. Then again, they hardly ever do. You'll learn that being stuck down here. So what was wrong with you? Nothing catching, I hope?

YOUNG GUARD: No it was just a virus

OLD GUARD: Oh, a virus eh? Well, I'm glad you're being specific! No point in beating around the bush. *(He clears his throat, then adds, disparagingly)* Virus indeed!

YOUNG GUARD: Well, if you must know, it was a stomach upset.

OLD GUARD: Oh I see, so you had the squits then.

YOUNG GUARD: The what?

OLD GUARD: You know... "the squits", "the trots", "green apple quick-step", "the splatters", "colon blow"...

YOUNG GUARD: Oh, you mean diarrhoea! Well..erm.. if you must know.. it was a side effect, yes.

OLD GUARD: Ooooh nasty! Not nice, not nice at all. You don't wanna be caught down here with that, you take my word for it.

YOUNG GUARD: Why's that?

OLD GUARD: Well, for starters you can't leave your post until you're relieved. Sorry.. probably the wrong word to use there... but, also, the nearest toilet is two floors up.

YOUNG GUARD: *(Rather disconcerted)* Er.. yes. Okay. I'll bear that in mind. Thanks.

OLD GUARD: Right! I'll put the kettle on, then we can start your training.

YOUNG GUARD: Okay.

*The OLD GUARD limps off stage right. The YOUNG GUARD wanders around looking at nothing in particular. He walks to the front of the stage, looks around and draws out his gun. He re-enacts an imaginary scene from Taxi Driver*

YOUNG GUARD: *(In an American accent)* You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? You talkin' to me? Then who the hell else are you talking...you talkin' to me? Well I'm the only one here! Who the f...*(He is interrupted by the return of the OLD GUARD who carries two cups of tea. The YOUNG GUARD quickly returns his gun to its holster.)* Yes.... well.. um, *(Covering his confusion)*, everything seems to be in order over here.

OLD GUARD:           *(With a wry smile)* That's good to hear. That empty corner always had me a little worried. Now, come on. Sit down and drink your tea.