

HOTEL GRAMERCY PARK

Pilot Episode

By

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Based on a *Rolling Stone* article published 3/11/2018

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FADE IN:

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL (1973) - DAY

A bright February morning. The 18-story sand-colored hotel overlooks iron-gated Gramercy Park. Inside is a statue of Edwin Booth in the role of Hamlet.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

Dead, crimson-colored carpet. 1920s chandeliers. Chestnut paneling. The sound of phones and distant conversation. Everywhere GUESTS wear polyester, leisure suits, and loose, frizzy hair.

PINKY (late 50s), jockey-sized, broccoli-colored bellhop uniform, wheels a full luggage cart in the direction of the elevators. A BRITISH COUPLE, 60s, follow behind him.

The elevator PINGS its arrival.

Out walks HERBERT (53), gravelly voice, hair graying at the temples, gray Oxford suit, and a white shirt monogrammed with the letters "H R W." In his hand, an unlit cigar.

Herbert passes Pinky.

PINKY
Morning, Mr. Weissberg.

Herbert's smile wrinkles into a frown.

HERBERT
Pinky, you smell like booze.

PINKY
Must be the uniform.

Herbert lifts his eyebrows like a patient father.

HERBERT
Then pay a visit to the laundry.

Pinky smiles at the British Couple sheepishly.

Herbert exits the lobby into-

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL LOUNGE - DAY

Rose-colored candles and a baby grand piano, with a fish bowl on top (for tips).

Herbert enters from the lobby.

A plate of leftover food on an empty table catches his eye.

Herbert buses the table, mumbling to himself in frustration.

Exits to-

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL BAR - DAY

Worn stools, a couple of bouncy tables, two red velvet couches, a big mirror.

An autographed picture of a grinning Babe Ruth hangs on the wall.

The female BARTENDER (30), a dirty blonde Montenegrin, takes immediate notice of Herbert who leans on the near end of the bar.

HERBERT

All right, let's see how we're doing.

Like an assembly line worker, the Bartender pours a small amount of beer from each tap and sets the half-dozen glasses on the counter. Herbert tastes them one-by-one, judging their flavor.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

Excellent...Excellent...Flat...Stale
...This one's also gone stale...Not bad.

BARTENDER

Shall I change the stale taps, Mr. Weissberg?

HERBERT

Let's not do anything drastic. Put the stale one on special.

Herbert grabs a salt shaker.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

And when a customer orders a beer that's flat, sprinkle a little salt like this.

He pours some salt into the glass of beer. It foams up immediately.

BARTENDER
Will do, Mr. Weissberg.

The Bartender places 3 opened wine bottles on the counter, in front of Herbert.

HERBERT
Who was the rat bastard that ordered one glass of the Cru Du Lac and didn't order a second?

BARTENDER
That would be Mr. Carmine DeSapio.

HERBERT
Carmine, huh? Drinking away our profits one glass at time.

Herbert tastes the wine. The phone rings. Herbert almost chokes on the wine.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
Don't answer it.

The phone keeps ringing.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
All right, answer it. But ask who it is first.

The Bartender answers. Listens.

BARTENDER
It's the Resident Manager, Tuttle.

Herbert exhales in relief.

She hands Herbert the phone.

HERBERT
Uh huh... Room six-o-nine? I'll be there. Two minutes.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL 6TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

The walls carry heavy coats of cream paint with gold trim. On the floor, yellow and brown, hexagon-patterned carpet - designed to hide a stain, if anything. Leftover room service trays scatter the floor.

Herbert exits the elevator and is met by James TUTTLE (42), mustache, cheap brown suit, patterned shirt, middle-class accent, sideburns that are starting to wander.

HERBERT
Tuttle, what's shaking?

TUTTLE
A couple of groupies have overstayed
their band's reservation.

HERBERT
From the sound of your voice I can
assume they're not paying customers.

TUTTLE
I was going to kick them out, but I
know you have a soft spot for the
RCA account.

Herbert exhales, as if the problem were now less serious.

HERBERT
As I always say, if no one's
complained about water leaking from
the ceiling, it can't be *that* bad.

Herbert reaches for the doorknob to room 609.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM 609 (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

The door CREAKS as Herbert and Tuttle enter.

Herbert looks around the room and, through haze, sees broken
beer bottles, two overturned lamps, and a pile of trash.

A mirror sits atop the coffee table. A layer of cocaine dust
blurs the reflection. In the corner, the carpet smolders.

Herbert takes some water from an ice bucket and pours it on
the smoking carpet. It SIZZLES.

Herbert observes a passed-out female GROUPIE (19), asleep on
the couch.

Herbert looks around as if he just noticed something.

HERBERT
The TV is missing.

TUTTLE
Haven't been able to find it.

Herbert opens a closet door. Looks up.

HERBERT

Not in here. But there's blood on
the ceiling.

Herbert mimics pushing a syringe and glances upward, like a forensic scientist investigating a crime scene.

TUTTLE

Noted.

The Groupie wakes up.

GROUPIE

Huh?...

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM 609 BEDROOM - DAY

Herbert enters. On the wall: burnt markings that faintly spell "Byrd." He's seen this all before.

Herbert walks to the bathroom and opens the door. A naked brunette GIRL (21), is passed out in the bathtub. Herbert silently observes her beauty.

HERBERT

Miss?...

She wakes up. Covers herself.

Herbert shuts the door, giving some privacy.

Turns and sees the open window. Thinks for a second.

Herbert approaches the window and leans out over the street below.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

(shouting, to Tuttle)

Found the TV!

EXT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL 6TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Herbert exits the room and walks with Tuttle.

TUTTLE

Should I call security, Mr.
Weissberg? Have the deadbeats thrown
out?

HERBERT

Let's not do anything drastic. Why don't we let them stay the night. And we'll send the bill to the record company like always.

Tuttle frowns.

TUTTLE

As you wish, Mr. Weissberg.

They arrive at the elevators. Herbert presses the "up" button. The elevator immediately arrives.

Herbert enters and presses "8."

HERBERT

I need to stop at home for a minute. Where are you off to?

TUTTLE

The office.

Tuttle presses the "down" button in the hallway

HERBERT

I'll see you, then.

The elevator doors close.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ELEVATOR (CONTINUOUS) - DAY

Herbert presses "17."

The elevator arrives at 8. Herbert pumps the "close doors" button.

HERBERT (CONT'D)

C'mon...c'mon...c'mon.

The doors close and the elevator BEEPS its way up to 17.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL 17TH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Herbert exits the elevator. Fixes his hair in the hallway mirror. Brushes off a layer of dandruff.

Outside room 1714, Herbert knocks on the door. Puts on a smile.

The door opens to reveal MARLENE (40s), attractive, worldly-looking. She wears a silk bathrobe that hides her lingerie underneath.

MARLENE
 (French accent)
 Herbert?

Her startled expression confuses Herbert.

HERBERT
 Got you something for Valentine's
 Day.

MARLENE
 Come in.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM 1714 LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marlene leads Herbert in. Her room is decorated with belle-
 epoque mirrors and velvet furniture. A few modeling photos of
 a younger Marlene hang on the wall.

Herbert takes out a jewelry case, but then spots another
 man's clothes on the couch and grows uncomfortable. Marlene
 is also agitated.

HERBERT
 You have a visitor. I'll come back
 later.

MARLENE
 Wait! I need your help.

HERBERT
 What help?

MARLENE
 I fell asleep with a client. And
 when I woke up-

She searches for the words.

HERBERT
 What happened when you woke up?

MARLENE
 Nothing. Just - *he* didn't wake up.

Herbert swallows in terror.

HERBERT
 You need to call security.

He moves to the door.

HERBERT (CONT'D)
I shouldn't even be here.

MARLENE
I can't call the police - if the story gets out, it could be bad.

HERBERT
What do you want me to do?!

MARLENE
You call them. They'll listen to you.

HERBERT
Marlene...

MARLENE
You *must*. I am desperate. This could *ruin* me.

Herbert paces, full of anger.

HERBERT
It's not even ten am and you're asking me to take care of a fucking dead body?!

MARLENE
Ce n'était pas ma faute, Herbert.

Tears well up in her eyes.

HERBERT
Are you sure he's dead? How do you know he's dead?

Marlene opens her mouth. But no words come out.

INT. GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM 1714 BEDROOM - DAY

Herbert enters, eager to prove Marlene wrong.

His eyes drift to the bed. Jaw drops unhappily. Then he turns to Marlene, disappointed in her lie.

HERBERT
So your friend likes to sleep with a rubber on, huh?

Marlene turns her head away in shame.

END OF TEASER.