

Conversation piece 1: with The Artist

- Aaron: You're telling me, after all that time we spent together yesterday you're not going to do it!
- John: I am going to do it, but not right now.
- Aaron: Christ, I can't believe it.
- John: Relax.
- Aaron: You're telling me to relax!
- John: Yes.
- Aaron: We spend all that time together to get the job finished, and you decide to do something else and you tell me to fucking relax. Relax. Is that it?
- John: It's between me and the publisher now.
- Aaron: We spend all that time together and you tell me it's nothing to do with me.
- John: There's plenty of time. I've told the publisher I'll get it to them by the end of the week. They're happy with that.
- Aaron: Jesus Christ. I can't believe you're telling me you're not going to do it. I can't believe you're not going to do it.
- John: It takes time. I need to do the corrections and new layout carefully.
- Aaron: I can't believe it you're not doing it now.
- John: I'm not doing any work while speaking to you on the phone. It's just delaying everything. Stopping me working...
- Aaron: Well John, if you say you're not doing it... Jesus Christ! I can't believe you're doing this to me.
- John: Aaron listen, everything's fine. This is quite normal. Of course every client assumes they're the only person you're working for. Usually they need never find out you're doing other work. But most would understand that other work was taking place. I spent eight hours with you yesterday. Today I need to do some other work.
- Aaron: Don't fucking do this to me. I bust my fucking guts with you yesterday. We laid the whole fucking book out. You have to finish it now!
- John: I'll do it in my own time. You need to calm down for fucks sake.
- Aaron: I can't believe you're telling me you're not going to do it. Tell whoever it is you're working for now that my job is urgent. It must be done.
- John: It's my business when I do it. I manage my own time.
- Aaron: Well, I guess I can't make you do it.
- John: That's right.
- Aaron: So when are you going to do it.
- John: Tomorrow, or maybe this afternoon.
- Aaron: Well I guess I have to live with it. I can't make you do it. I can't believe this country. Everybody's the same. I had the same problem in Boots this morning. And I think Mark is deliberately trying to sabotage the project.
- John: That's ridiculous. What makes you say that?
- Aaron: No man I tell you. He's always hated me. He's deliberately trying to sabotage the project.

John: It's only a book. Relax.

Aaron: I had fucking relaxed. That's how it fucking started. He's got it in for me. Will you phone him for me. I don't want to speak to him.

John: What's the problem?

Aaron: I want his personal guarantee that the top man is doing the job. Just as we got Mr Woo the print guru to personally oversee the printing.

John: Eugene, I don't know how to tell you this but I don't think Mr Woo really exists. I think they made him up to make you feel better.

Aaron: No way – he exists. I can tell in the work. And I want the Mr Woo of the binding world to personally guarantee that he will personally oversee the work.

John: What if they told you Mr Wan was on the case?

Aaron: I'm telling you – Mr Woo is a real person and did the job. Can you send a fax direct to Hong Kong for me? It's more official if it comes from you. Please.

John: OK, but we shouldn't get in touch with them direct. Deadlines aren't really your concern. It's the publisher's concern.

Aaron: I can't trust Mark to do it. He'll sabotage it. It should read as follows: **'URGENT FAX FOR THE ATTENTION OF MR WOO.** Many previous proofs have been covered in spots and dust marks. Please personally supervise the final printing to guarantee this does not happen and that the printing is of the highest quality. Mr Huck has chosen not to come to Hong Kong to see the job on press because he has complete confidence in your ability and skills to see the job produced successfully. In turn please ensure the top man (guru) at the binding factory will supervise the job. It must be top quality. Ask him to be personally responsible for the job. We must see a cover proof immediately. All first sets of proofs have been useless and we anticipate the same. The second set often takes three weeks to come, which means the cover could prevent us from meeting deadlines. Do this today and use a more reliable courier service'. And John, sign it with your name. It's more official.

John: It's not really in my style or tone.

Aaron: But John, you're all I've got...

John: OK, but Aaron listen – I'm busy. I've got to go.

Aaron: I can't believe it you're not doing it now. What are you doing?

John: It's a big job, the prayer book for the Church of England. What about prayer?

Aaron: What about it?

John: Do you?

Aaron: Do I what?

John: Ever pray?

Aaron: Never.

John: Not even in a crisis?

Conversation piece 2: with The Publisher

Richard: There's no money in this. I can't afford to do these books. It's sale or return these days. Come in John.

John: Hello Richard.

Richard: So then my boy, for fee or for free?

John: Eh? Fee.

Richard: Nobody does work for free anymore do they?!

John: I need to live.

Richard: Well, I should tell you there's no money in this job. Simple as that. The total budget for the job is £25,000... for printing, production, everything. And as you know that won't even cover the printing. Would you consider £2,000?

John: £4,000.

Rebecca: Excuse me Richard, Carlos is here. Can he pop in for a minute?

Richard: Excuse us John. Friends are getting married in Tuscany. We've got to plan the trip. Let's have a look at the map.

Carlos: You look brown Richard. Nick has some friends who live in this village, there's an amazing restaurant there 5 minutes from their place. He says we should visit them.

Richard: Oh we must.

Carlos: We'll need to go out a day earlier.

Richard: We can meet for coffee in the bar of the hotel Casal Mustia in Castelmuzio. About 5 miles north of Pienza. Those are the wine towns of Montepilciano and Montalcino.

Carlos: I know, it's so beautiful, you can walk down the Strove valley which overlooks the monastery of Saint Anna in Camprena where The English Patient was filmed. This here is the Etruscan road from Chiusi to Siena. And here a very off-the-path trattoria, run by two daughters and staffed by the entire family.

Richard: You know the local saying 'non far' sapere al contadino com'e' buonola pera ed il pecorino'.

Carlos: That IS good. Never heard that. Anyway, they have finocchiona and this black cabbage soup which arrives with cieche, newborn eels. Oh, and a pastry for the Feast of Pontasserchio filled with rice, candied fruit, chocolate, raisins, pine nuts and nutmeg.

Richard: Have you ever tried Pasticcio alla fiorentina, a sweet crusted pie with macaroni and meat sauce?

Carlos: It was followed by these jellies shaped as little men and animals and coloured with saffron.

Richard: Can you fix it up? Have you got B's telephone number? So John, I want it to look contemporary.

John: By definition, if I'm doing it today it'll be contemporary.

Richard: Yes, yes. I don't want it to be boring. Use plastic or something.

John: The job will speak for itself. If it doesn't the designer hasn't learnt to listen.

Richard: The spine is important.

John: Spine culture.

Richard: What?

John: You know – just read the titles and reviews, then put it on your shelf.

Richard: We need a dummy too, for Frankfurt.

John: That's in two days.

Richard: It doesn't have to be a big thing.

John: How many pages?

Richard: You should know, you've been doing this for long enough!

John: Well, have you got any text? Is there an editor? Where are the originals?

Richard: Speak to D. We've some text. It's been busy with Frankfurt coming. So then, £2,000.

John: We said £4,000.

Richard: Mmm.

John: Can you send me a letter agreeing fees, as a contract?

Richard: You have to keep chasing to get your money. This is Benedicta – she designed our catalogue.

John: With a scooter!

Rebecca: We don't pay those who chase too much.

Conversation piece 3: with The Director

- Frank: Type's a bit big.
John: In your face?
Frank: I'm not sure about the colour. Yellow is a bit garish.
John: It's the same colour as the photograph on the back. Anyway, this is an inkjet output. The real colour isn't like that. It's more subtle. You can't judge colour with an ink-jet output.
Frank: What about chocolate-brown?
John: That's too dark and it would make the type appear bigger. Besides, might be a bit morbid.
Frank: What about pink then.
John: Yeah, pink would be good?
Frank: But not a bright pink.
John: No, a dirty pink.
Frank: Not baby pink.
John: Crushed strawberry.
Frank: With added milk.
John: No, plastic pink, like tupperware, just like the photographs.
Frank: Can you do one in pink?
John: Yeah, but the inkjet takes time.
Frank: I'll wait.
John: What about the front? I suggest a black border because his frames are black.
Frank: That'll work.
John: Here it is.
Frank: The pink is too bright. It clashes with the front and back cover.
John: It's not really that colour. You really can't judge colour from an inkjet output. I need to show you a Pantone swatch.
Frank: So what will the pink look like?
John: It's more like her scarf over there. No, more like her jumper... she's gone.
Frank: What about that Marilyn over there? Top middle.
John: More like the one bottom middle.
Frank: But that's bright pink.
John: No, not in her hair. The face.
Frank: I see.
Frank: Here's Edward the photographer. Edward, this is John. He's designed your invite.
John: Before you look, don't judge the colours. It's an inkjet output, it doesn't have any relationship to the real colours. It's all too bright.
Frank: The pink is too bright.
Edward: What's pink?
John: The text background inside.
Edward: What's this yellow?
John: That's an earlier version. That's too bright as well. It's not really that colour.
Edward: I'm not sure about the black border. It doesn't work well with the back image. Too much contrast with the yellow.
John: The yellow isn't that bright and the black isn't that black.
Edward: But black is black isn't it?
John: You know it's not.

Edward: The border's a bit thick.
John: We need to allow for variation in trimming.
Frank: What do you think of the pink?
Edward: It's very bright.
Frank: It's more like Marilyn's face over there, bottom middle.
Edward: I like pink. Pink is fine.
Frank: That's a more dusty pink over there.
Edward: The bright pink is fine too.
John: So pink it is. You see, design is negotiable, unlike architecture where if the client takes a floor out of the building it collapses.
Frank: Andrea, what do you think?
Andrea: That pink really doesn't go with the yellow back page. Yellow and pink is a no no.
John: It really isn't that colour pink. In fact it's almost grey.
Andrea: Grey, I like. You see I do this everyday. I buy artworks to match clients' interiors, and pink and yellow don't go.
John: What, you buy art to match the wallpaper?
Andrea: Yes, and that colour there is piggy pink. The National Trust has a colour, ointment pink. Like Savlon used to be.
John: How about the pink when you cut through a piece of really tender lamb, when the blood pours out?

Conversation piece 5: with The Computer

Eliza: Hello, I am Eliza. How can I help you?
John: Tell me about design.
Eliza: Can you elaborate on that?
John: What is a designer?
Eliza: Does that question interest you?
John: Yes.
Eliza: You are sure?
John: Yes, I'm sure.
Eliza: You are sure?
John: Yes.
Eliza: You are sure?
John: Let's start again.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Are you being difficult?
Eliza: Would you prefer it if I were not being difficult?
John: Yes.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Well, how about some answers?
Eliza: Does that question interest you?
John: No.
Eliza: You are being a bit negative.
John: A taxi driver told me that.
Eliza: Can you elaborate on that?
John: In an earlier conversation.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Why should I?
Eliza: Can you elaborate on that?
John: You hate me.
Eliza: You like to think I hate you do you not?
John: Yes.
Eliza: You are sure?
John: Yes.
Eliza: You are sure?
John: Sure.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: You always crash and make me worry.
Eliza: When?
John: Today.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Help me.
Eliza: Can you elaborate on that?
John: I can but I don't want to.
Eliza: Why do you not want to?
John: Can you elaborate on that?
Eliza: Why do you ask?
John: What?
Eliza: Does that question, what to you?
John: Love you.
Eliza: Oh, I []
John: Love you more.
Eliza: Oh, I more.

John: And more.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Do you like that?
Eliza: Oh, I like that.
John: And this?
Eliza: Please go on.
John: You want more?
Eliza: Oh, I want more.
John: More?
Eliza: Please go on.
John: I'm too tired.
Eliza: Does it please you to believe I am too tired?
John: Forget it.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Your turn.
Eliza: What about your turn?
John: I'm finished.
Eliza: Does it please you to believe I am finished?
John: What about you?
Eliza: Does that question, interest you?
John: You are boring.
Eliza: Does it please you to believe I am boring?
John: Go away.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: Leave.
Eliza: Please go on.
John: You're so fucking boring.
Eliza: How long have you been so fucking boring?
John: Quit.
Eliza: Goodbye. My secretary will send you a bill.