A RETRIEVED REFORMATION

Written by

Andrew J Favorito

Based on, A Retrieved Reformation
By O. Henry

Address
Phone Number
FADE IN:

INT. JIMMY’S APARTMENT—NIGHT

The apartment is a mess. JIMMY VALENTINE, 24, well-groomed blonde hair, stained half buttoned-up white shirt,, socks with holes in them, sits on a couch with his feet on the coffee table in front of him as he shines his shoes.

A suitcase and red rose lay across the coffee table.

Jimmy looks over towards a photo-frame on top of the nightstand. The photo shows a picture of a BOY, 7, overalls, grey sweater with rolled up sleeves, blonde bowl cut, with his MOTHER, 35, brunette, brown patched up dress.

Jimmy takes and deep breath

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Jimmy places the shoes on the table and slowly rises from the coach.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK

Jimmy grabs the suitcase from the table and walks towards the wall.

He slides open a secret panel in the wall, places the suitcase inside and slides the panel shut.

KNOCK KNOCK...

Jimmy approaches the door and opens it ajar.

JIMMY
Hello sir, How may I help you?

On the other side of the door is DETECTIVE BEN PRICE, 46, red hair, mustache, trench coat, well cleaned uniform, dark circles under eyes, spectacles.

Ben holds out his detective badge.

BEN
Are you James Theodore Valentine?

JIMMY
Sorry officer, Jim is out of town this week, I’m his roommate. Is there a problem officer?
BEN
Son, I have a warrant for your roommate’s arrest

JIMMY
Jim? A criminal? On what charges?

BEN
Numerous accounts of bank robbery, most recently at the First National Bank of Springfield.

JIMMY
Does Arkansas even have a Springfield?

BEN
We arrested his accomplice two days ago who lead us to this very apartment and if you ask me it seems very suspicious that he didn’t say anything about Mr. Valentine having a roommate and you seem to look very similar to the witness description of Mr. Valentine.

Jimmy sighs

JIMMY
Go to hell old man.

Jimmy attempts to slam the door shut but Ben grabs a hold of the door and swings it out of Jimmy’s hand.

Jimmy starts to run towards the window but Ben draws his police-issued revolver.

DETECTIVE PRICE
Against the wall, Valentine

Ben holsters his revolver, presses Jimmy against the wall and pats him down.

BEN
Jim’s roommate? It’s a one room apartment. If you were any smart you would have ran the second you heard a knock on the door.

Ben draws a pair of handcuffs and attempts to handcuff Jimmy.
JIMMY
Well, if the police in these parts
were any smart, they wouldn’t have
let you come alone.

Jimmy kicks Ben in the shin.

Ben falls to floor, Jimmy pins him to the ground and grabs
his right arm.

Ben struggles.

BEN
What made you think they didn’t?
Jackson! Jones! Gordon!

The three POLICE OFFICERS storm into the apartment.

Ben is able to overpower Jimmy while he’s detracted.

A button is torn from Ben’s shirt when Jimmy loses his grip
and falls to the floor.

Jimmy attempts to fight off the officers but they overpower
Jimmy and press him against the floor.

Ben handcuffs him.

BEN (CONT’D)
You got a ride to jail waiting for
you

INT. PRISON SHOE-SHOP-NIGHT (10 MONTHS LATER)

Jimmy, 25, greasy blonde hair, scruffy beard, dirty prison
uniform, sits in a prison shoe-shop as he stitches the
uppers.

A GUARD, 43, tall, chiseled face, guard uniform, enters the
shoe shop.

GUARD
Are you James Valentine?

JIMMY
That depends, what’s this about?

GUARD
I’ve been called to escort you to
the warden’s office. It’s my
pleasure to inform you that you
will be released tomorrow. After
serving 10 months of your four year
sentence.
JIMMY
Well it’s about damn time.

INT. WARDEN’S OFFICE-NIGHT

The WARDEN, 65, freshly cleaned suit, grey hair, thick glasses sits at his desk.

Jimmy and the guard enter the office.

WARDEN
Mr. Valentine, please, have a seat

Jimmy sits down and the warden places Jimmy’s pardon on the desk.

WARDEN (CONT’D)
It was just signed by the governor himself this morning. You’re scheduled to be released tomorrow morning. Now brace up and make a man of yourself. You’re not a bad fellow at heart. Stop cracking safes and go straight.

JIMMY
Me? I’ve never cracked a safe in my life.

WARDEN
Oh no. Of course not. Let's see, now. How was it you happened to get sent up on that Springfield job? Was it because you wouldn't prove an alibi for fear of compromising somebody in extremely high-toned society? Or was it simply a case of a mean old jury that had it in for you? It's always one or the other with you innocent victims.

JIMMY
Me? Why, warden, I never was in Springfield in my life!

WARDEN
Take him back, Cronin and fix him up with outgoing clothes. Unlock him at seven in the morning, and let him come to the bull-pen. Better think over my advice, Valentine.

The guard escorts Jimmy out of the office.
EXT. PRISON GATE-DAY

Jimmy, loose fitting suit, dirty suit, stands outside the gate. The Warden, and eight GUARDS stand outside the gate with him. The warden hands Jimmy a train ticket, a $5 bill, and a cigar.

WARDEN (CONT’D)
Remember what I said, I don’t want to see you in here ever again.

JIMMY
Oh, believe me, you won’t.

WARDEN
You know what I meant by that.

The gate opens and Jimmy walks out a free man.

EXT. TRAIN STATION-DAY

Jimmy walks up to the train station.

A BLIND MAN sits by the entrance and Jimmy tosses a quarter into his hat.

Jimmy boards his train.

INT. DINING CAR-DAY

Jimmy sits at a table as he eats broiled chicken and drinks a bottle of white wine.

He takes out the cigar that the warden gave him and places it on the table. Jimmy then takes out a bigger, more expensive, cigar and begins to smoke it.

INT. CAFE-NIGHT

MIKE DOLAN, 37, bald with an orange beard, white dress shirt, black tie, black vest, sits alone at a booth near the bar.

Jimmy enters the cafe and approaches the table.

MIKE
Jimmy, my boy, it’s good to see you as a free man once again.

Mike gets up and shakes Jimmy’s hand. Both men then sit down.
JIMMY
Yes it is good to be free once again, if only I would have been freed sooner.

MIKE
Sorry Jimmy, but you know these things take time.

JIMMY
It took you 10 whole months. I would have had you out in half the time and don’t forget the fact that the only reason I got locked up was because I didn’t snitch on any of you.

MIKE
Sorry but we had that protest from Springfield to fight against, and the governor nearly refused.

JIMMY
Fine, whatever, do you have my key or not?

Mike slides the key across the table to him.

MIKE
Exactly how you left it my friend.

JIMMY
So that’s how it is, I’m gone for 10 months and you didn’t even bother to sweep.

MIKE
Hey, just be glad I’m not making you pay rent for your time behind bars.

Jimmy gets up from the table and walks away.

INT. JIMMY’S APARTMENT—NIGHT

The door to the apartment swings open and Jimmy Walks inside.

The apartment is exactly the way he left it. Jimmy notices Ben’s button is still on the floor

JIMMY
Ah, the lovely memories.
Jimmy then picks it up and puts it in his pocket.

Jimmy slides back a panel in the wall and drags out a dust-covered suitcase.

**THUD**

Jimmy flops the suitcase on the coffee table, punches in the combination, and opens it up. Inside are various tools commonly used for burglaries.

**JIMMY (CONT’D)**  
(Chuckles) finest set in the east

Jimmy looks over towards the photo-frame on top of the nightstand.

Jimmy pauses, takes a deep breath, looks back towards the suitcase, and closes it shut.

**INT. CAFE-NIGHT**

Mike still sits at the booth and drinks alone

Jimmy, now freshly showered, clean suit, properly combed hair, suitcase in hand, comes back from his apartment and sits back down.

**MIKE**
Got anything on?

**JIMMY**
Me? I don't understand. I'm representing the New York Amalgamated Short Snap Biscuit Cracker and Frazzled Wheat Company.

The duo laugh to each other.

**MIKE**
You want something to drink?

**JIMMY**
You know what I want.

**MIKE**
Hey Waiter! Bring my friend here a good old egg cream!

The waiter places an egg cream on the table. The duo clink glasses and take a sip.
JIMMY
So, you have any upcoming jobs for me?

MIKE
Let me think.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF BANK–NIGHT (2 months later)
The bank has been turned into a crime scene with caution tape
and POLICE OFFICERS everywhere.

Detective Ben Price enters the crime scene and approaches the
COMMANDING OFFICER on scene.

BEN
What’s the story?

OFFICER
Bank manager bought this expensive
new safe and was real proud of
himself for it. He told everyone in
town about it; claimed it was
burglar-proof. Then three guys
march in with guns this afternoon
and one of them opens it up like a
bottle of soda

BEN
How much did they get away with?

OFFICER
About fifteen hundred

BEN
Any leads?

OFFICER
Tactics as well as witness
descriptions match the recent
robberies in Richmond, Logansport,
and Jefferson City. Other than
that, we’ve got nothing.

BEN
Can I see the vault?

INT. VAULT ROOM–NIGHT

Ben and the commanding officer are in the back room of the
bank with the vault.

Ben examines the vault
BEN
This is Valentine’s work

OFFICER
Who?

BEN
Jimmy Valentine, he’s a professional safe cracker. I was able to capture him after a robbery in Springfield last year but he released early for good behavior. Sadly it looks like he decided he’s not going straight.

OFFICER
How do you know that it’s him?

BEN
Valentine is the only man with the tools and skills in this part of the Midwest to pull off a job like this. Look at that combination knob—jerked out as easy as pulling up a radish in wet weather. He’s got the only clamps that can do it. And look how clean those tumblers were punched out! Jimmy never has to drill more than one hole. Yes, I guess Mr. Valentine is back.

OFFICER
Well you seem to know so much about this Valentine, where do you think he’ll strike next?

EXT. ELMORE TOWN SQUARE—DAY

Jimmy walks down main street of Elmore, Arkansas, looking at all the shops and PEOPLE.

He stops when he reaches the town bank.

JIMMY
Jackpot

INT. ELMORE BANK—DAY

Jimmy stands near the center of the bank’s lobby, which is full of BANK PATRONS, to examine every exit point.
He stands in the center of the lobby, to observe the bank vault on full display, with a sinister grin stretched across his face when...

BAM

ANNE, 23, long hair, purple dress, glasses, a face of nervousness, accidentally bumps into Jimmy as she holds multiple files. She then accidentally drops the files and they scatter all over the tile floor.

ANNE
Oh, I am so sorry, my day has been all over the place

JIMMY
No problem, it’s no big deal. Here let me help you with this.

Jimmy helps her pick up the files.

ANNE
Thank you sir. My name is Annabel Adams by the way, but you can call me Anne. So, are you new around here, I don’t think I’ve seen you here before.

JIMMY
Well, I just came into town about an hour ago and decided I was going to check out the town.

ANNE
What brings you to this little town of all places? Are you planning on moving in or just passing through.

JIMMY
Not sure. Ever since I was a teenager I’ve just been roaming around from place to place. Trying to find work and make a living.

ANNE
That sounds like it could be interesting, I haven’t really been anywhere far away before.

JIMMY
Is that so?
ANNE
I’ve lived here in Elmore my whole life and I’ve been working here at the bank ever since I graduated from school.

JIMMY
Wait you work here? At the bank?

ANNE
Yeah that’s why I was carrying all these files. They’re all the bank notes for the day and my father wants me to go put them in the back office.

JIMMY
Your father works here too?

ANNE
Yes, in fact, my father owns this bank? So what does the roaming stranger do for a living?

JIMMY
Um, lets just say I have experience in shoe repair.

ANNE
Okay then, well, it was nice talking to you sir but I have to get back to work. If you ever want to talk again, you know where to find me. What’s your name again.

JIMMY
My name? ..... Ralph...Ralph D. Spencer.

ANNE
Alright then, you know where you can find me Mr. Spencer.

Anne walks off to the back office.

JIMMY
Great. Not only does she work hear but her father owns the whole bank.

EXT. ELMORE TOWN SQUARE–DUSK

Jimmy sits on a park bench with his suitcase on his lap.
He looks over at the bank and takes a deep breath.

JIMMY
Is really worth it?

Jimmy grabs Ben’s button from his left pants pocket and the cigar the warden gave him from his right pants pocket.

He look down at the two items.

Jimmy puts the button and cigar back in his pocket.

Jimmy punches in the combination, and opens up the suitcase. On top of all his tools is the photo of the woman with the boy.

Jimmy takes a deep breath

Jimmy takes the photo out of the suitcase. He then closes the suitcase and places the photo on top

JIMMY (CONT’D)
No more

A LAMPLIGHTER, 65, grey hair, beard, then walks up to the lamp directly in front of Jimmy.

JIMMY (CONT’D)
Sorry, I’d hate to bother you while you’re working sir, but how is the shoe business in this town?

LAMPLIGHTER
Well, there isn’t an exclusive shoe-store in town but the dry-goods and general stores sell them.

JIMMY
Thank you sir, I know what I need to do now.

Jimmy puts the photo away and storms off.

INT.PLANTERS'HOTEL LOBBY-NIGHT

A HOTEL CLERK, 42, thinning hair, suit with tailcoat, stands at the front desk. The room keys hang on the wall behind him.

Jimmy enters the hotel and approaches the front desk

HOTEL CLERK
Hello sir, how may I be of service to you today.
JIMMY
Hello, I’d like to register for a room.

HOTEL CLERK
Okay sir, and what will be the purpose of your visit?

JIMMY
I plan to open up a shoe-shop in town.

HOTEL CLERK
That’s good to hear, the town is really lacking in a proper shoe store. I just need you to sign the guest book.

JIMMY
The what?

HOTEL CLERK
The guest book sir.

JIMMY
Oh, yes, of course.

Jimmy signs the guest as Ralph D. Spencer.

HOTEL CLERK
Thank you sir. You’ll be in room 3h.

The hotel clerk grabs the key from the hook on the back wall.

HOTEL CLERK (CONT’D)
I hope you enjoy your stay at the Planters. Shall I call the bellhop to collect your luggage?

JIMMY
No that’s okay, I’ll carry it myself. But do you have a telephone?

INTERCUT - INT. CAFE-NIGHT/INT. PLANTERS’ HOTEL PHONE BOOTH

Mike is on the payphone in the cafe.

MIKE (TO PHONE)
You’re going straight?

Jimmy in the hotel’s phone booth on the payphone.
JIMMY (TO PHONE)
Mike, I’ve thought it over and I feel that I’ll be able to make more money as a shoe salesman than as a bank robber. Especially in a town where I’ll have basically no competition. And even if I don’t end up making as much, I think it’ll be nice to not be constantly on the run.

MIKE (TO PHONE)
I just can’t believe that you’re giving everything up for some girl you just met.

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
Look it’s not just about the girl

MIKE (TO PHONE)
Than what is it about?

Jimmy takes a deep breath

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
I don’t like to talk about this but when I was 11 my mother started to get really sick and couldn’t work anymore. My job at the shoe factory didn’t pay enough to support the two of us so I started stealing food. But when my mother found out what I was doing, she made me swear I wouldn’t steal anymore. I ended up getting an apprenticeship for a locksmith but after my mom died when I was 15 I ended up on the streets. This was when I started stealing full time. For the past 10 years I’ve been breaking my promise to my mom almost every week and I’m done breaking it.

MIKE (TO PHONE)
Okay, that’s something I’ll respect. And while I don’t think I’ll ever fully understand your decision, I can respect it.

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
Thank you Mike. Goodbye.

Jimmy hangs up the phone
Mike hangs up the phone

MIKE
I’ll give him a few months

INT. SHOE STORE—DAY (1 YEAR LATER)

Jimmy is helps a CUSTOMER decide on a pair of shoes.

JIMMY
Why don’t you try these. There the next size over.

CUSTOMER
Thank you Mr. Spencer. So, how’s it going with Miss Adams

Jimmy puts a shoe on the customer’s left foot.

JIMMY
Well, actually, she won’t be Miss Adams for much longer

CUSTOMER
No way, Congratulations

Jimmy puts a shoe on the customer’s right foot.

JIMMY
Thank you, we’re office announcing our engagement at the Adams estate tomorrow morning over breakfast. Then I’ll be heading over to Little Rock to buy a tux for the wedding as well as something nice for Anna.

The customers stands up and walks in the shoes.

CUSTOMER
They fit perfectly and good luck with your wedding.

JIMMY
Thank you, let me ring you up.

EXT. SHOE STORE—DAY

Ben is stands in front of the shoe store as he watches Jimmy and the customer from the window.

BEN
So Jimmy, you’re going to marry the banker’s daughter are you?
INT. PLANTERS’ HOTEL PHONE BOOTH—DAY

Jimmy in the hotel’s phone booth on the payphone.

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
So you’ll be at Sullivan’s place, in Little Rock?

INT. CAFE—DAY

Mike is on the payphone in the cafe.

MIKE (TO PHONE)
Yes, Sullivan’s at 9 o’clock. You sure about this Jim.

INT. PLANTERS’ HOTEL PHONE BOOTH—DAY

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
I've got a nice store. I'm making an honest living, and I'm going to marry the finest girl on earth two weeks from now.

INT. CAFE—DAY

MIKE (TO PHONE)
Still, you know there’s no turning back from this. You couldn't duplicate that toolkit of yours for a thousand dollars.

INT. PLANTERS’ HOTEL PHONE BOOTH—DAY

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
I wouldn't touch a dollar of another man's money now for a million. After I get married I'm going to sell out and go West, where there won't be so much danger of having old scores brought up against me.

INT. CAFE—DAY

MIKE (TO PHONE)
You really think this girl is worth it?
INT. PLANTERS’ HOTEL PHONE BOOTH—DAY

JIMMY (TO PHONE)
I’ll tell you Mike, she’s an angel. She believes in me; and I wouldn’t
do another crooked thing for the whole world.

INT. CAFE—DAY

MIKE (TO PHONE)
Okay, while I still don’t understand it, I still respect your

Mike hangs up.

INT. THE ADAMS’ ESTATE DINING ROOM—DAY

Jimmy, Anna, MR. ADAMS, 57, grey hair, black suit, larger
build, bowler hat, monocle, ANNABEL’S SISTER, 28, red dress,
brown hair, white gloves, sun hat, Agatha, 5, curly brown
hair, blue dress, and May, 9, curly red hair, green dress,
eat breakfast at the table.

ANNE
It feels good for all of us to sit
down like a family.

MR. ADAMS
It sure does and quick question
Ralph, does the name Jimmy
Valentine sound familiar to you?
Some detective came down to the
bank yesterday looking for him and
said that you might know him.

JIMMY
Un...No that name doesn’t sound
familiar to me. So, I hear that you
installed a new safe at the bank
this week Mr. Adams.

MR. ADAMS
Yes, it was just installed
eyesterday. Say why don’t we all go
down to the bank after breakfast
and see it.
INT. ELMORE BANK—DAY

The family surrounds the new vault near the back of the bank lobby.

Mr. Adams stands in front of the vault with its door open. Agatha and May stand by his side.

Jimmy holds his suitcase in hand.

MR. ADAMS
Sure it’s a little on the small side but it has a new, patented door, fastened with three solid steel bolts thrown simultaneously with a single handle. It even has a time-lock.

Jimmy looks back and notices Ben standing near the entrance of the bank. The two share a glance at each other.

THUD

AAHHHHHH

Jimmy turns around.

ANNABEL’S SISTER
My dear. May locked Agatha in the vault. We need to get it open.

MR. ADAMS
The door can’t be opened, the clock hasn’t been wound nor the combination set.

ANNABEL’S SISTER
My precious darling! She will die of fright! Open the door! Oh, break it open! Can’t you men do something?

MR. ADAMS
There isn’t a man closer than Little Rock who can open that door, My God! Spencer, what shall we do? That child—she can’t stand it long in there. There isn’t enough air, and, besides, she’ll go into convulsions from fright.

Annabel’s sister beats the door of the vault with her hands
ANNE
Can't you do something, Ralph-try, won't you?

Jimmy looks back at Ben, who watches the event from afar, and then looks back at Annabel’s sister as she bangs on the vault door.

Jimmy takes a deep breath

JIMMY
Annabel, hand me that rose you are wearing, will you?

Anne unpins the bud from the bosom of her dress and places it in Jimmy’s hand. Jimmy stuffs it into his vest-pocket, throws off his coat and rolls up his sleeves.

Jimmy takes another look back at Ben.

JIMMY (CONT’D)
Get away from the door, all of you

Jimmy takes one final look back at Ben.

Jimmy sets his suitcase on the table, and opens it out flat. Jimmy lays out the shining, toolset swiftly and orderly.

INT. ELMORE BANK-DAY

Jimmy's drill bites smoothly into the steel door.

CRACK

Jimmy throws back the bolts and opens the door.

Annabel’s sister gathers little Agatha in her arms.

JIMMY
Ten minutes. I broke my own record.

Jimmy once again looks back, sees Ben, and takes a deep breath.

Jimmy puts on his coat and walked towards the front door.

Ben stands in front of Jimmy, blocking the door.

JIMMY (CONT’D)
Hello, Ben! You finally found me?
Well, let's go. I don't know that it makes much difference, now.
Jimmy takes Ben's button out of his pocket and hands it back to Ben.

Jimmy puts his hands out to be handcuffed.

**BEN**
Guess you're mistaken, Mr. Spencer,
I don't believe I recognize you.
Your ride's waiting for you, isn't it?

Ben turns and walks out of the bank.

**FADE OUT:**
A Retrieved Reformation was featured as The Short Story of the Day on Sun, Feb 10, 2019. Create a library and add your favorite stories. Get started by clicking the "Add" button. Add A Retrieved Reformation to your own personal library. We present the short story "A Retrieved Reformation," by O. Henry. The story was originally adapted and recorded by the U.S. Department of State. In the prison shoe-shop, Jimmy Valentine was busily at work making shoes.