

A TAXING VISIT

by Robert L. Crowe



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(Scene: Office of a tax preparer. Bo is sitting alone in a waiting room.)

CHIP: *(enters, looks around)* Number 136. Number 136?
(looks at Bo) Are you number 136?

BO: Yes.

CHIP: Why didn't you ...? Never mind. You're next.

BO: Before we start my tax return, I have a couple of questions. When you came out of your office just now and called number 136 ... did you notice I was the only one in the waiting room?

CHIP: Yes.

BO: And I won't even ask why I had to take a number, but why one-hundred-thirty-six? Is that the number of tax clients today?

CHIP: *(laughs)* Oh, no, I'm afraid not.

BO: This week?

CHIP: No, no. It's the number of clients since I began doing federal tax returns.

BO: When was that?

CHIP: Twenty-ten

BO: Twenty-ten. Is that the number of a tax form?

CHIP: No. it's a year. Two-thousand-and-ten. Right this way, please. *(They walk in circle to imply walking to an office. They rearrange the chairs.)* Have a seat. And you are ...?

BO: Yes, yes I are.

CHIP: Your name, please. I must warn you that the questions get tougher from this point forward.

BO: *(reaches into imaginary folder and hands Chip some papers)* Here. I have all the contact information on this paper.

CHIP: *(looks at page)* Yes. Yes. Welcome, _____.
(use actor's real first name) Let me just glance at this. *(nods)* Uh-huh. I see you have your social security number, your license plate number, your Sam's Club number and others. *(He*

nods.) Very thorough. Ok. We will need to file form 1040. Now. Do you want to file the long form or short form?

BO: What's the difference?

CHIP: With the short form the government gets all your money; with the long form, I get all your money.

BO: The long form, by all means. You know, I tried to fill out that form by myself. 1040 is the IQ you need to understand it.

CHIP: Thanks for the compliment. 1040 is the government's way to get you to squeal on yourself. You know, everyone complains about taxes but they are really necessary to fund our government. Every citizen shares in the payment process.

BO: Yes, I understand that. It's a system where millionaires and sharecroppers pay the same amount.

CHIP: Let's see about your share. What was your income this past year?

Bo. (hands him another paper) It's all right there.

CHIP: *(looks, turns the paper over)* Are you missing some zeros here?

BO: Nope. That's it.

CHIP: We might be able to use the short-short form for you.

BO: Short-short form.

CHIP: After your expenses, did you have any money left over last year.

BO: A little.

CHIP: Well, just send it in. That's all there is to it.

BO: If Patrick Henry thought it was bad to have taxation without representation, he should see it *with* representation. I don't think I want the short-short form. I had expenses and I want to file the long form.

CHIP: Very well. *(reaches in desk drawer and pulls out a long ... long ... form)* I'll just write in your income here on this top line. Did your employer give you a W-2 form?

BO: Yes. Here. *(hands it to him)*

CHIP: With your income, they could have sent you a W-1.

BO: W-1. Is there such a thing?

CHIP: No. Is this right? It shows you were employed by the CIA.

BO: Yes. That's right.

CHIP: What did you do?

BO: I was an agent.

CHIP: (*pause and stares at Bo*) Did you do secret missions?

BO: Secret missions?

CHIP: Oh. How silly of me. If they were secret you couldn't talk about them could you?

BO: (*hesitant*) No ... I guess I couldn't.

CHIP: Wow. That's really something. An agent for the Central Intelligence Agency.

BO: No. That's Carl's Insurance Agency. I was an O.A. ... Occasional Agent.

CHIP: I see. (*back to business*) Any other income to report? Dividends? Interest?

BO: Well, I'm interested in a lot of things but no interest to report. (*laughs*)

CHIP: (*not amused*) Delightful sense of humor. Any miscellaneous income, such as tips? No, scratch that. I'm sure you didn't get any tips.

BO: No. But I have some tips for the government. They spend an extravagant amount for basic tools ... like ... \$1000 for a hammer! What do you think of this idea? If my income tax is \$3000, I'll send them three hammers.

CHIP: I think the idea of a hammer will land you in the slammer. Let's forget about your income.

BO: I wish I could. You know ... I'm just a regular _____. (*use your first name*) I'm not important and I don't make a lot of money. Just an average guy. Nobody even knows I'm around.

CHIP: If you think that nobody cares about you, try filing your income tax late. The IRS has a lot of interest ... in you. Now. About your expenses.

BO: (*hands paper*) Here's a page that shows the total of my deductions.

CHIP: Wait. That's exactly the total of your income.



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