

FELBERG ENGLISH READERS

THE KILER DUO

A crime comedy based on
a JULIUSZ MACHULSKI film
screenplay by JULIUSZ MACHULSKI
and RYSZARD ZATORSKI



SIMPLIFIED EDITION


Felberg SJA

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UPPER INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

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PROLOGUE

In the crime comedy *Kiler*, to which *The Kiler Duo* is a sequel, Jurek Kiler, a Warsaw **cabbie**, landed behind bars, having been mistaken by Inspector Fish for the most dangerous **contract killer**. But he was **sprung from jail** even faster than Siara, a Warsaw mafia boss, wanted him. Jurek's bad luck did not **let up**, though. As he had to work for his living, Jurek, though honest **through and through**, couldn't help taking a contract to off Siara's troublesome partner Lipski. Moreover, Siara's attractive wife Gaby threw in another one **for good measure to off** . . . her husband. It took some smart moves, a nice girl, Ewa, by his side, and tons of luck to get loads of fatal money that turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Jurek. Finally, fabulously rich, he engaged in charitable activity, like saving the national budget from crisis by **bailing out** a number of public institutions. Rich and famous, living the life of a gentleman of leisure, he seemed to have forgotten his modest beginnings. Yet, there's **no rest for the wicked**, as the saying goes . . .

cabbie [*Informal*] taxi driver; **contract killer** a professional killer hired to murder someone; **spring from jail** to (help) escape from prison; **let up** to diminish, lessen in intensity, stop; **through and through** thoroughly, from beginning to end, in all respects; **for good measure** as an extra; **off** [*Slang*] to kill; **bail out** to relieve or help in a crisis; **no rest for the wicked** said about a person kept extremely busy

CHAPTER ONE

A year passed . . . His philanthropist reputation well established, Jurek Kiler's popularity continued to grow. Having befriended the likes of Bill Clinton, Queen Elizabeth II, Helmut Kohl, and other **luminaries**, it came as no surprise to see him in front of the presidential residence one morning. Walking toward the gate, **casually** dressed with a tennis racket in hand, Jurek bit off a piece of banana. As it happened, he stepped on the banana peel he had just thrown away. A spectacular slip followed. Jurek landed on his back and his shoe hit the ground a moment later. At once, the place was full of the president's bodyguards. All in sunglasses, earphones plugged in. Their chief nailed Jurek to the ground with his pistol.

"Freeze!"

"Excuse me, I have an appointment," said Jurek on his back.

"What?!"

"With the president at 7 a.m."

In the motorcade, Jurek was in the back seat of the presidential limousine. Beside him, suntanned, in his trademark blue shirt, the president was talking in a friendly way.

"My wife and I and our nation are grateful for your bailing out a number of institutions. As you know, the First Lady also runs a charitable organization."

The motorcade pulled over in front of an exclusive tennis club. The smiling president got out and opened his arms wide to welcome reporters, running toward them. Security surrounded the Head of State immediately. Excited, the reporters, however, bypassed the president and rushed toward Jurek. Microphones in hand, they showered him with questions:

"What do you do with such massive donations?"

luminary a famous person in his field or an inspiration to others;
casual appropriate for wear on informal occasions

“How big is your cut?” asked another.

“You only accept gold **bullion**, right?” pressed the third one.

“Why don’t you ask the president?” Jurek told them, embarrassed by his **upstaging** the president. “I’m only his guest here.”

Frustrated, the reporters turned to the ignored Head of State. One of them, mercifully, came up with a question:

“How’s the country, sir?”

The tennis TV commentator was in his element, reporting:

“The president has invited Jurek Kiler, a media sweetheart, for a game of tennis. Kiler’s backhand and donations are equally impressive. He has saved the underpaid police, **orphanages**, and Polish movie industry from going under. This year his beneficiaries are going to be schools, hospitals, and the state prison system . . .” Turning to the court, he added, “So far Jurek leads 2-1 in the first set.”

Although they were both poor players, Jurek couldn’t help winning the first set. There was something about the president, though, that made one wonder. Whatever he did on the court looked like promoting products: the mineral water and coffee he ostentatiously drank or the racket he was holding. Even his shirt **featured** a large *NIKE* inscription. Underneath, however, in small print and brackets, was written “*of Warsaw.*” To the non-sporting types, it could also have referred to the ancient Greek goddess of victory, the symbol of fighting Warsaw in **WW II**.

Now Jurek’s cell phone rang. It was Ewa Szańska.

“This guy won’t give me your delivery.”

“Put him on the phone.”

“Not ‘a guy’ but Waldek,” a familiar voice said. “Why, it says here ‘To Mr. Jurek Kiler in person.’”

bullion gold or silver in the form of bars or ingots; **upstage** *przyćmić kogoś, usunąć kogoś w cień* in Polish; **orphanage** an institution for the housing and care of children whose parents are dead; **feature** to give prominence to; **WW II** World War II

“Come on, Waldek, I can’t be at the airport now. As I’m busy here I’ve sent Ewa my fiancée to you.”

“I’m just looking after your interests.”

“But she’s my Ewa, not a **cheat**.”

“Finish the game and come here, Kiler,” Ewa finished the call.

Skinny was carrying a silver tray with breakfast. When he stopped at a jailhouse gate, it opened and let him in. The tennis match was on TV. Siara was having breakfast in his cell, watching the match from the corner of his eye. It was a real VIP cell. Its Persian rugs, Italian furniture, stereo unit, and king-size bed made Siara forget his gloomy temporary residence. Now Jurek’s face has shown up on the screen.

“Skinny, do I see that right? It’s Kiler, the object of my revenge, who humiliated me. **But for** him I wouldn’t have to be in jail.”

“I’m just keeping you company,” Skinny was quick to explain.

“And he plays tennis with the president? We **gotta** off him.”

“Jesus, who?”

“Kiler . . . I thought you’d get me that Coyote, Hyena . . . **whatsisname?**”

“Jackal.”

“Where *is* he?”

“I’m waiting for him.”

“And you think your lousy contract is all he’s got to do?”

“His agenda is full till 2008, like Penderecki’s.”

“You’ve gotta give him an offer he can’t refuse.”

“He’s flying in in 30 minutes.”

“I’m really impressed now, Skinny. How long will it take?”

“That’s the first set.”

“So drive to the airport and tell Jackal . . . ”

“What?”

“To kill’im!”

cheat *oszust* in Polish; **But for** *Here*: If it hadn’t been for . . . ; **gotta** [*Slang*] have got to, have to

Skinny was waiting in the Arrivals Hall of Warsaw Airport. High above his head, he was holding a card with the Polish equivalent of *JACKAL, Esq.* An international crowd of new arrivals **filed out** the door. A dark African in Bedouin clothes suddenly **loomed** up in front of Skinny.

“Me Shah-al! From Africa. I love Bolanda.”

A bit disappointed, Skinny invited the African to his car. But at the sight of a banner with *Mr. SHAH-AL* on it, the African excused himself and left. Relieved, Skinny failed, however, to notice a handsome sporting type at his side. So he suddenly heard:

“Do you want to help Interpol?” said in excellent Polish.

“Oh, no!” Skinny was instantly frightened.

“Drop the card, stupid!”

“Hey, your Polish is excellent!”

“And you think a Pole can’t **make the big time**? Then what about the Unabomber?”

“My name’s Skinny,” Skinny introduced himself.

“And you look it,” **quipped** the new arrival.

Siara’s limousine pulled over at the tennis courts. A suit bag in hand, Jackal disappeared into the men’s room. A minute later, he was back, dressed exactly like a presidential bodyguard, sunglasses on and an earphone plugged in. Nobody stopped him at the gate, so he rushed to the court. Once there he set a miniature clock stuck in a tennis ball, which he pushed gently toward Jurek . . . Soon he was back in the car.

“He’s only got 15 pathetic seconds to live.”

In the court, Jurek picked up the nearest ball and hit it with his racket. The ball hit the opposite court and . . . exploded. **Pandemonium** broke loose.

file out to come out, one after another; **loom** *wyrosnąć nagle przed kims*; **make the big time** [*Informal*] to reach the highest and most important position in any profession or occupation; **quip** to remark sharply, sarcastically; **pandemonium** wild tumult or chaos

Superintendent Fish was enjoying his opium pipe in a massage parlor. He was listening to a half-naked girl read to him from *The Song of Songs*:

*“Silence, my love. He comes running over
the mountains, across the hills.
My love is like a gazelle . . . ”*

A police general entered. He was absolutely amazed. But Fish and his masseuse failed to notice him.

“Fish, don’t you know me? It’s me, Zenek.”

*“Don’t wake me from my sleep,
don’t wake my love until she is willing.”*

“**Rise and shine**, Fish. Your nation needs you!” the general was getting impatient. “There was an **assassination** attempt on the president!”

“A successful one?” Fish asked.

“Luckily, it failed. But you must find the assassin.”

“But I’m retiring soon,” Fish wasn’t very enthusiastic. “What happened?”

“The president was playing tennis. Guess with whom.”

In his study, his gala uniform on, Fish was having coffee, cakes and ale with Jurek. Despite his massive **hangover**, Fish was conducting clever questioning.

“And you served the ball to the president?”

“No, to his court.”

“Right where he was standing?”

“That’s what tennis is all about.”

“How was it? Tell me from the beginning.”

“So I hit . . . ,” Jurek started.

“I’m happy you **call a spade a spade**. So it was a **hit**, after all.”

“No, not in that sense. I just hit a ball.”

Rise and shine! an order to get out of bed (of military origin); **assassination** a sudden or secretive killing of especially a politically prominent person; **hangover** *kac alkoholowy* in Polish; **call a spade a spade** to call something by its real name; **hit** [*Slang*] a criminally prearranged killing, murder, or assassination

“Why?”

“To score points.”

“Why score points?”

“To win the match.”

“Why win the match? Aren’t you popular enough?”

“Am I a suspect?”

“Of course not!” Fish gave him a long look.

At the airport cargo section, Ewa noticed Jurek get out of his car, so she ran toward him and fell into his arms.

“Are you all right?”

“Why? What’s up?”

“There was an assassination attempt on the president! And you were there!”

“As his guest.”

Now Waldek came up to them.

“Since you’re here, everything’s in order. Here’s your delivery, sir.”

“Is that all?” asked Jurek at the sight of a small box. “And you couldn’t give that to my fiancée?”

“There are **ironclad rules**. When it says, ‘In person’, ‘In person’ it is.”

“That call during the game worried me. But for the assassination attempt I might have lost.”

“Rules are rules. No Kiler—no delivery.”

“Let’s cut a deal: I have no time to come for each box. Some serious donations are coming this week. Call me Saturday and I’ll come to pick them up. But on Saturday.”

“To me each bar is worth its weight in gold,” Waldek had his last word.

A man in overalls came up.

“Where to?” he asked about the box Jurek had received.

“Where? What’s that over there?” Jurek lost patience.

“A garbage dump.”

“**Dump** it there, then.”

“You kidding, sir?”

ironclad rules unbreakable rules; **dump** to throw away

“So why the stupid question?”

“I’m new here. To Jasna Street?”

“Of course.”

A van was parked outside the prison gate. A lunch tray in hand, Skinny was surprised to see Senator Lipski leave through the gate along with his lawyer. A group of reporters waiting outside surrounded them immediately and showered him with questions.

“Senator, did they **humiliate** you?”

“Why did they let you go?” asked another.

“Senator Lipski is released for the holiday,” answered the lawyer.

“But Easter is over and Christmas is half a year away,” they wondered.

“It’s because of his daughter’s wedding.”

“That’s **stretching** it a bit,” commented a reporter.

“Who have you hired?” asked Siara sitting to his lunch. “I can’t believe that guy. Is that the famous Jackal who costs me so much? Why, he is supposed to be the best money can buy!”

“Come on. He hardly had time to have a bite to eat,” Skinny tried to calm down the angry Siara, “**let alone** wash his hands. But I got something important for you.”

“What’s more important than my money? A Jackal who can’t kill?”

“Didn’t he **outwit** the security and plant the explosives . . . ?”

“But he **botched up** the job!”

“Just his luck. But he won’t leave until he kills Kiler . . . French fries or mashed?” Skinny tried to attract Siara’s attention to the food. “**Have I got news for you!**”

“Mashed,” answered Siara, “What’s up?”

“Lipski’s outside. I passed him at the gate.”

humiliate to cause someone a painful loss of pride; **That’s stretching it** *Czy aby nie przesadzają?* in Polish; **let alone** + verb *nie mówiąc już o* + treść następującego czasownika; **outwit** *przechrzyżyć* in Polish; **botch up** to spoil by poor work; **Have I got news for you!** I have information that you’ll find unwelcome

“And you’re telling me now?! Get me Warden Mietek!” Siara roared.



The van with the gold pulled over at the Central Bank to Support the Budget and soon Jurek and Ewa got out of their car behind it.

CHAPTER TWO

On the rooftop across the street from the Central Bank, Jackal assembled his sniper rifle and aimed it at the CENTRAL BANK TO SUPPORT THE BUDGET inscription on the opposite wall. The van with the gold pulled over and soon Jurek and Ewa got out of their car behind it.

“What’s going on?” asked Jurek.

“Surprise!” said Ewa and kissed him.

A band was playing a happy folk tune and cheerleaders were **strutting** about to grace the occasion. Then a veteran soldier stepped forward and saluted Jurek.

“On behalf of all your **beneficiaries**, we want to express our gratitude and ask you, sir, to **unveil** the monument.”

“Thank you, my old friend,” said Jurek and the old veteran **flinched** at having been called old. When Jurek pulled the covering away, he saw a marble **slab** with *TO JUREK KILER—FROM HIS COUNTRYMEN* on it. A couple dressed in folk highlander costumes walked toward him with the symbolic bread and salt. Suddenly, the girl tripped and fell. Jurek rushed to help her up. On the rooftop, Jackal pulled the **trigger**. His silver bullet hit and shattered the base of the slab. Slowly but decisively, it began to fall on the Police General. He tried, heroically but in vain, to **prop up** the falling slab.

“And you had nothing to do with this either?” Fish asked Jurek during questioning.

“Of course not!” was the answer.

“Then the monument fell down by itself?”

“Exactly. My fiancée thinks these were assassination attempts.”

“On you?” Fish wondered. “It fell on you but it was the general who landed in the hospital. You were to be hit, but the president is in the hospital.”

“Sorry. I’ll visit them both. It’s on my agenda.”

“Killer, **tell that to the Marines**. You say they’re after you while the Premier, the Primate, the **Sejm Majority Leader**, and CEO of the Film Association all demand security. Do you see their applications?” Fish pointed to a stack of papers on his desk.

strut to walk, head high and chest thrown out, as if expecting to impress observers; **beneficiary** a person who receives benefits, profits, or advantages; **unveil** *odstonić* in Polish; **flinch** to draw back or shrink from something unpleasant or dangerous; **slab** a broad, flat, and thick piece of stone or others solid material; **trigger** *język spustowy, cyngiel* in Polish; **prop up** to support or prevent something from falling; **tell that to the Marines** *taki bajer to na Grójec* in Polish; **Sejm Majority Leader** *Marszałek Sejmu* in Polish

“So do I, if you please,” Jurek replied.

“Then you’ll get it, the best there is.”

“What’s up, Siara? Don’t you know where to find me?” Warden Klonisz asked Siara **sprawled** across the bed in his cell.

“I feel so badly, sir, that I can’t even move. I’m broken hearted and depressed.”

“What is it?”

“It’s all your fault. You’ve released my enemy from jail. Ferdinand, that is.”

“Do you mean Lipski? He’s got a family holiday. It’s his daughter’s wedding during his first time in prison. Not the twelfth as in your case.”

“True criminals never do time, whereas I can’t get rid of my lumbago.”

“Then welcome to our prison clinic, **refurbished** thanks to Mr. Kiler.”

“Let me out.”

“I can’t even if I wanted to. What if there were a **roll call**?”

Now Siara motioned to Skinny. “Ready?” Skinny nodded, so Siara turned to Klonisz, “Could you close your eyes for a minute?”

“Okay, sure I can.”

Siara motioned to Skinny to open the door while Klonisz was sitting with his eyes closed. Siara’s look-alike entered and sat down beside the gangster. Klonisz opened his eyes, only to see two Siaras in front of him.

“A striking likeness, but I see some differences.”

“Cause you’re the best warden, but the guards won’t notice a thing. Now which is which?”

“You’re Siara,” Klonisz guessed correctly. But when Siara asked him to close his eyes again and **switched** places with his look-alike, Klonisz could not tell the difference.

sprawl to stretch or spread out arms and legs in an ungraceful manner, sitting or lying; **refurbish** to renovate; **roll call** the reading of a list of names as of soldiers, students, convicts; **switch** to change