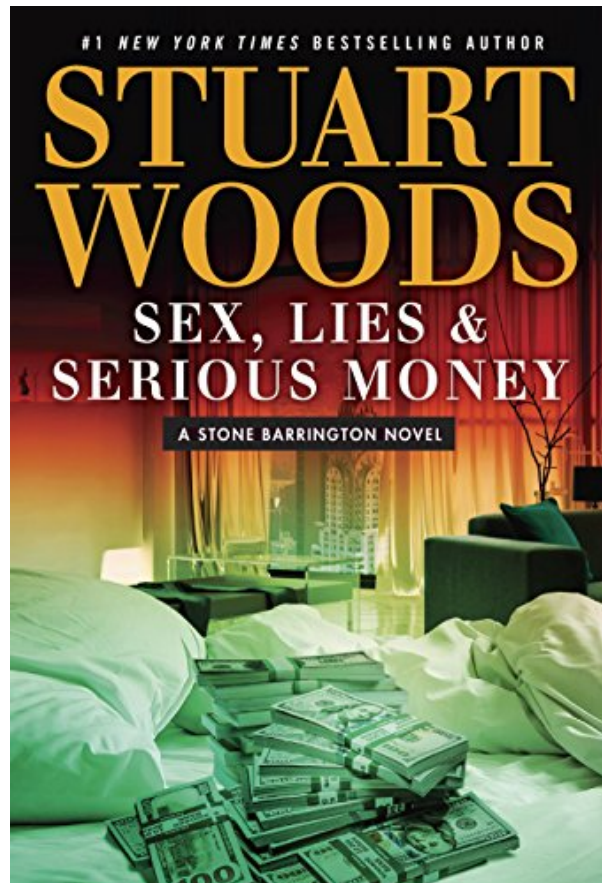
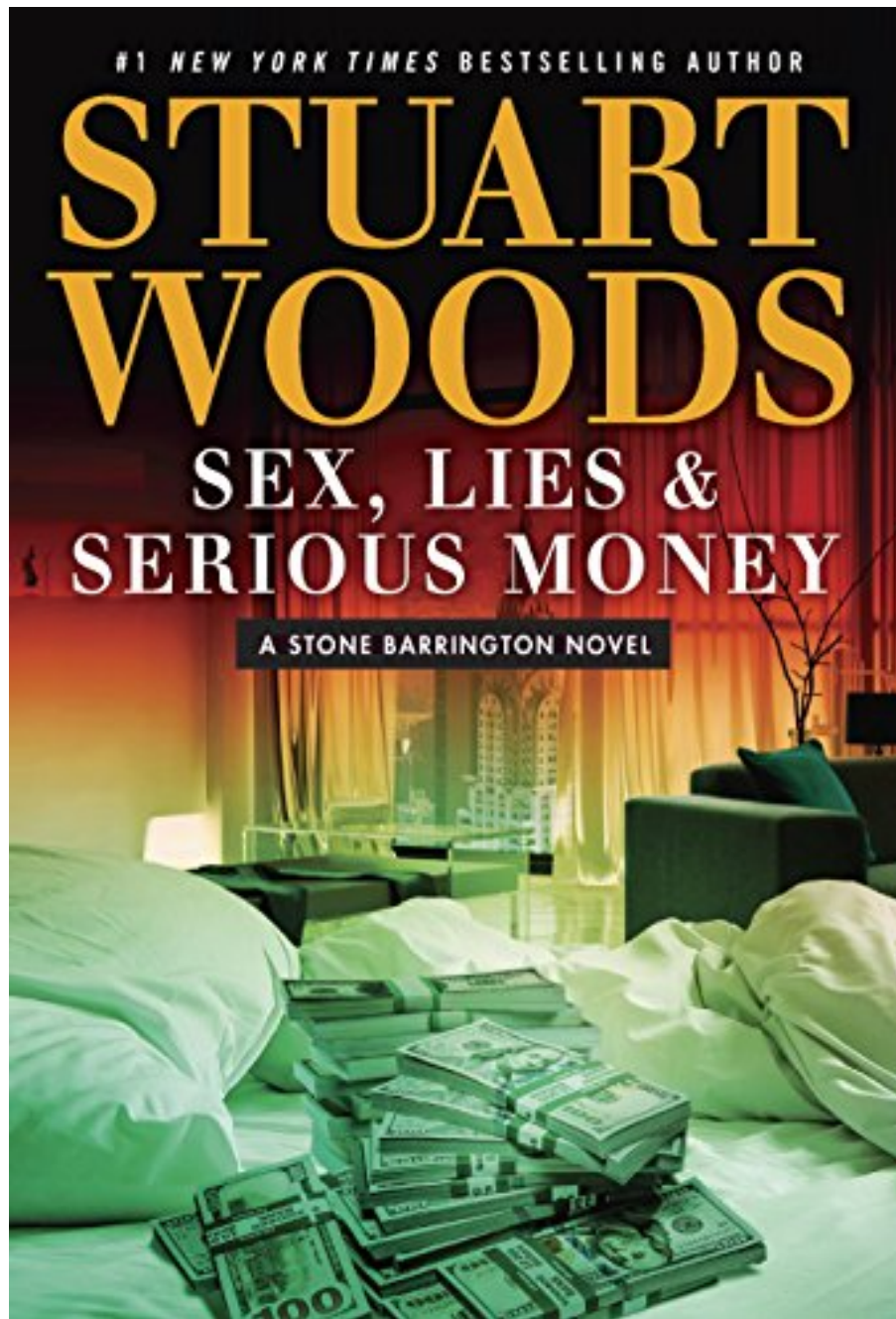


SEX, LIES & SERIOUS MONEY (A STONE BARRINGTON NOVEL) BY STUART WOODS



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Review

Praise for Stuart Woods"

Scandalous Behavior"

Woods offers another wild ride with his hero, bringing readers back into a world of action-packed adventure, murder and mayhem, steamy romance, and a twist you don't see coming. "Booklist"

Extravagant . . . a series of escalating, sometimes amusing, tit-for-tat maneuvers ensue and eventually turn deadly. . . . Stone remains unflappable. "Publishers Weekly"

"Foreign Affairs"

Appealing . . . boasts Woods's customary combination of panache and brio. "Publishers Weekly"

Purrs like a well-tuned dream machine . . . Mr. Woods knows how to set up scenes and link them to keep the action, emotion, and information moving. He presents the places he takes us to vividly and convincingly. . . .

Enjoy this slick thriller by a thoroughly satisfying professional. "Florida Weekly"

About the Author

Stuart Woods is the author of more than sixty novels. He is a native of Georgia and began his writing career in the advertising industry. "Chiefs," his debut in 1981, won the Edgar Award. An avid sailor and pilot, Woods lives in Florida, Maine, and New Mexico.

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1

Stone Barrington landed at Teterboro Airport, having flown nonstop from Santa Fe, with a good tailwind. He and Bob, his Labrador retriever, were met by Fred Flicker, his factotum, at the airport. Bob threw himself at Fred. After a moment's happy reunion, they were transferred to Stone's car.

Stone had spent most of the flight trying to put Gala Wilde out of his mind after their breakup. He had not succeeded.

They arrived at Stone's house in Turtle Bay and Fred pulled into the garage. Stone got out of the car to be greeted by his secretary, Joan Robertson, but Bob got there first and did his happy dance.

"There's somebody waiting to see you," Joan said.

“Anybody I know?”

“Apparently a friend of somebody you know in Palm Beach.”

Stone’s circle of acquaintances in Palm Beach was not wide. “Dicky Chalmers?”

“Right.”

“Give me a minute, then send him in.” Stone went into his office, rummaged among the mail and messages on his desk and found a pink message slip.

Stone, I’m sending you somebody you will find interesting.

Dicky

Stone looked up to see a young man standing in his doorway: late twenties or early thirties, unkempt hair, scraggly beard, dressed in a current style Stone thought of as “adolescent lumberjack”—checkered shirt, tail out, greasy jeans, sneakers, hoodie, top down.

“Mr. Barrington?”

“Come in,” Stone said, “and have a seat.”

“Your friend Richard Chalmers suggested I should see you.”

“How are the Chalmerses?”

“Dicky and Vanessa are very well.”

“Do you have a name?”

“Sorry. I’m Laurence Hayward.” He spelled both names.

“Larry, to your friends?”

“Laurence, if you please.” He sounded vaguely English when he said that.

“Laurence, it is. I’m Stone, and this is Bob.” Bob came over and sniffed the young man, accepted a scratching of the ears, then went to his bed and lay down. “How can I help you, Laurence?”

“I’m being pursued,” Laurence replied.

“Pursued by whom?”

“Everybody.”

Oh, God, Stone thought, not one of those. He took a deep breath. “Well, Laurence, why don’t we start with your telling me about -yourself?”

“What would you like to know?”

“Sixty-second bio.”

“All right. I’m thirty years old. I was born in West Palm Beach, Florida. When I was eight, my mother, who was the manager of a small hotel in our community, was swept off her feet by an Englishman, who was an investor in the hotel. She subsequently divorced my father, married the Brit, and he took the two of us to live in England, where, except for summers, when I visited my father, I grew up. In fact, I became, for all practical purposes, English, including my accent.”

“I thought I caught a bit of that.”

“My American accent comes back when I’m here.”

“Go on.”

“I was educated at my stepfather’s old schools, Eton and Oxford, and after I graduated, I became a tutor at Eton, later an assistant master, teaching English and art history. My stepfather has a successful advertising agency, and I had no interest in a career in his company or any other business.”

Fred knocked on the door and stepped in. “Shall I take your bags up, sir?”

“Please, Fred. Oh, and this is Mr. Laurence Hayward.”

“How do you do?” Laurence said, becoming English, and they shook hands.

“Fred, what is Laurence’s accent?” Stone asked.

“Eton and Oxford, I should think,” Fred replied.

“Thank you, Fred. You can take the bags up. I’ll be here for a while.”

Fred departed.

“That was remarkable, the way Fred picked up on my accent.”

“Fred is very good at speaking and recognizing British accents of all sorts,” Stone said. “On with your bio.”

“I took a leave of absence from Eton and came home to Palm Beach a couple of months ago, after my father fell ill. He had moved to the island from West Palm some years ago as his legal practice grew.”

“What sort of legal practice?”

“Real estate. He spent most of his day closing sales and mortgages. Did quite well at it, and used the job to find good investment opportunities in real estate. He died three weeks ago.”

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you. He was good friends with the Chalmerses, who were his neighbors until they bought the big

house on the beach, and they visited him often during his illness. I've known them most of my life."

"All right, let's get to the pursuit part."

"A week or so ago, I bought a lottery ticket, then forgot about it. Then I saw the winning number in the local paper, and I remembered I had one. I checked the numbers, and they matched. I called in at the lottery office in West Palm Beach, and this morning, after some days for them to investigate and see that I was who I said I was, I received the check. I also learned that, in Florida, there's a state law against concealing the identity of the winner. I've quickly learned that a great many people have an untoward interest in lottery winners, thus the pursuit. They released my name early this morning, and when I left their office, I was surrounded by media people and others who had come to beg for money. I got out of there as quickly as I could, and when I turned on the car radio, I heard my name on the air. I drove to Palm Beach International Airport, where I had taken flying lessons, and somebody I know there found me a seat on an executive charter flight to Teterboro, for only five thousand dollars."

"What kind of airplane?"

"A Gulfstream 450."

"How did you do in the lottery?"

Laurence reached into a pocket and handed Stone a crumpled envelope. "There were two other winners, in Texas and Washington state, so I got only a third after they took out the taxes."

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"There are some things I'd like to buy, and Dicky thought you might advise me on how to invest the rest of it."

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"Well, I think I'll need some clothes."

"Good idea," Stone said drily.

"Oh, I know I'm not appropriately dressed for the Upper East Side of New York. My good clothes are all in England and Palm Beach. I'll need some suits and jackets, I think."

"Anything else?"

"Perhaps a car?"

"What sort of car?"

"A Porsche, perhaps."

"Good choice."

“Oh, and I’d like to buy a New York apartment.”

“That seems within your means, depending on the neighborhood,” Stone observed. “What sort of apartment did you have in mind?”

Laurence produced a folded newspaper page and handed it to Stone. It was half a page from the real estate section of the previous Sunday’s New York Times. “This one,” he said.

“Oh, yes, I saw this. It’s the penthouse of an old hotel on Park Avenue that has been remodeled and gone condo. Problem is, Laurence, the asking price for the apartment is twenty-two million dollars, but your check is for six hundred and twelve thousand. Do you have other means I’m not aware of?”

“Perhaps you’d better have another look at the check.”

Stone removed the check from the envelope, read it, and gulped. “Six hundred and twelve million dollars?”

“You missed a few zeros the first time,” Laurence said.

“And this is a third of the prize?”

“It was the biggest Powerball ever.”

2

Stone took another deep breath.

“The limo driver from Teterboro this morning recognized me,” Laurence said. “I can’t go anywhere. It’s crazy.”

“How long has this been going on?”

“Since this morning—that’s when I went to the lottery office.”

“I heard it mentioned on TV, but I didn’t get the details.”

“It seems that a lot of other people did.”

“All right,” Stone said, “we’ve covered the clothes, the car, and the apartment. What else do you have in mind?”

“Art and American antique furniture,” Laurence replied. “Dicky and Vanessa turned me on to that—their house is full of it. There’s a big show on at the Park Avenue Armory.”

“Is that it?”

“For the moment. Oh, and I’d like to write a nice check to Habitat for Humanity. I volunteered to help build half a dozen of their houses during my summers in Palm Beach.”

“Good. Here are the things I think you should do, starting tomorrow morning. First, we need to get that check into a bank, because every day you wait will cost you considerable income in interest. Then we need to get you introduced to some investment advisors. I want to introduce you to a young partner at my law firm, Woodman & Weld. His name is Herb Fisher, and he will handle all the details of your plans. You will also need an accountant.”

“What bank do you recommend?”

“M&T Bank, which has a branch in my firm’s building, and which owns an investment company called Wilmington Trust. They were, originally, the DuPont family bank, and they handle the investments of high-end clients. You certainly qualify as that. Also, they have a branch in North Palm Beach, and your accounts should be based there, in order to protect you from being taxed as a resident of New York State. It helps that you were born in Florida. Did your father own a home there?”

“Yes, on Australian Avenue. It was his only home, and he had put it into a trust for me.”

“Good. Another thing is, to protect your anonymity, we should set up a Florida corporation in which you can hold large assets, like your apartment. Think of a name for it.”

Laurence thought about it. “The LBH Corporation—my initials?”

“Fine.” Stone looked at his watch. “We need to get you a disguise, in the form of some barbering, I think.”

“Okay.”

He buzzed his secretary. “Joan, see if José at Nico’s can take a new customer immediately—haircut, shave, mani-pedi, facial. Book him in as Mr. Jones.”

“Okay.”

“I need all of that?” Laurence asked.

“All of it. I’m going to set up a viewing of your prospective apartment tomorrow, and you need to look as though you can afford it.”

Joan buzzed. “They can take Mr. Jones in fifteen minutes.”

“Fine. Get Fred to drive him and wait for him. Laurence, do you have any other clothes?”

“I’ve got a blue blazer and some khakis.”

“Where are they?”

“Right here, in my bag.”

Stone held up the lottery check. “And I think we should put this in my safe overnight.”

“Fine.”

“Do you have any cash?”

“About seven thousand dollars. My father kept it in his safe. I used the rest to pay for the airplane ride.”

“Let’s put six thousand of it in the safe, too. A thousand ought to get you through the next day or two.”

Laurence opened his bag, a small duffel, and handed Stone a thick wad of money, secured with a rubber band. “I’ve got a thousand in my pocket.” He went to change, and Stone opened his safe and secured the check and the cash.

Laurence came back looking more presentable. “I think I’m going to need a secretary. And I guess I should ask about your legal fees.”

“Oh,” Stone said, handing him a printed sheet of paper. “This is a list of mine and my firm’s legal fees. Please look it over when you have a chance.”

Laurence scanned the document, folded it, and put it in his pocket. “I can afford you,” he said.

“Good. I’ll see what I can do about the secretary. Fred is waiting out front with the car. He’ll bring you back when you’re done at Nico’s. You can leave your bag here.”

“I guess I’ll need a hotel room, until I have an apartment.”

“You can bunk here. I’ve got a lot of extra room.”

“Thank you.”

“Get going. I’ll start setting up our day for tomorrow.”

Laurence left and Stone called Herbie Fisher.

“Herbert Fisher.”

“It’s Stone. I have a new client for you.”

“Okay, who?”

“One Laurence B. Hayward of Palm Beach, Florida.”

“What does Mr. Hayward do?”

Stone thought about that. “Let’s call him an investor, which he will be, starting tomorrow. And get us a meeting tomorrow morning at nine, nine-thirty, with Conrad Trilling at Wilmington Trust.”

“Can I mention Mr. Hayward’s net worth?”

“Let’s surprise him. Tell him to go ahead and set up a checking account.” He gave Herbie Laurence’s address in Palm Beach. “The account should be at their North Palm Beach branch. Tell him we’ll be making a large deposit, and ask him to call somebody at American Express and get Mr. Hayward a Centurion card

instantly. He'll need a Visa card from the bank, too, and an ATM card. He's got a couple of hours before they close."

"Okay, anything else?"

"Mr. Hayward is going to need a secretary. Anybody we can steal from the firm without putting anyone's nose out of joint?"

"Funny you should mention that. You remember that one of our senior partners died about three months ago?"

"Frank Penny?"

"Right. His secretary is Margery Mason. They've kept her on to clean up Penny's affairs, and she's about done."

"Dark hair, going gray, mid-forties, on the plump side?"

"That's the one, and they've been slow to reassign her. The partners seem to go for the more fashionable-looking women."

"She's ideal. Talk to her, will you? Find out what she's making, so we can top it."

"Right."

"Oh, and set up a Florida company for Laurence called the LBH Corporation, to house some assets."

"Right away."

"He wants to buy an apartment in the old Fairleigh Hotel, on Park Avenue, that went condo. Get ahold of their prospectus and have a look at their standard contract. We should be ready for a quick closing, if he likes the place."

"Is he, by any chance, considering the one that was featured in the Times real estate section last Sunday?"

"How'd you guess?"

"Magic. I hear the apartments have gone quickly, but they're having trouble moving that penthouse. Most of the apartments are two, three bedrooms and three or four to a floor, but the penthouse takes up the whole fifteenth floor. My advice is, haggle."

"Absolutely. I'll have Mr. Hayward at Wilmington Trust at nine tomorrow morning. Meet us downstairs."

"Will do. Are you going to tell me Mr. Hayward's net worth?"

"I'll surprise you, too. And he likes to be called Laurence."

Stone buzzed Joan. "Please call Theresa Crane, a personal shopper at the Ralph Lauren store on Fifth Avenue at, what is it—Fifty-fifth?"

“Close enough.”

“And set up an appointment for Laurence Hayward”—he spelled it for her—“at, say, ten-thirty am tomorrow.”

“Right. Anything else?”

“Yes, be prepared for anything, and be prepared to handle it fast.”

“What else is new?” she asked.

“Oh, and ask Helene to get the big guest room on three ready. We’ll be dining tonight in my study.”

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Stone Barrington takes on a client who gives him a run for his money in the newest heart-stopping thriller from the #1 New York Times–bestselling author.

Fresh off the runway at Teterboro, Stone Barrington arrives home to find an unexpected new client on his doorstep, anxiously soliciting his help. But everything is not as it seems, when the client reveals the true nature—and value—of his recent turn of fortune.

From luxury New York high-rises to the sprawling New Mexico desert, his client is pursued from all angles...and Stone quickly learns that easy money isn't always so easy.

From the Hardcover edition.

- Sales Rank: #414 in eBooks
- Published on: 2016-10-25
- Released on: 2016-10-25
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Stone had spent most of the flight trying to put Gala Wilde out of his mind after their breakup. He had not succeeded.

They arrived at Stone's house in Turtle Bay and Fred pulled into the garage. Stone got out of the car to be greeted by his secretary, Joan Robertson, but Bob got there first and did his happy dance.

"There's somebody waiting to see you," Joan said.

"Anybody I know?"

"Apparently a friend of somebody you know in Palm Beach."

Stone's circle of acquaintances in Palm Beach was not wide. "Dicky Chalmers?"

"Right."

"Give me a minute, then send him in." Stone went into his office, rummaged among the mail and messages on his desk and found a pink message slip.

Stone, I'm sending you somebody you will find interesting.

Dicky

Stone looked up to see a young man standing in his doorway: late twenties or early thirties, unkempt hair, scraggly beard, dressed in a current style Stone thought of as "adolescent lumberjack"—checkered shirt, tail out, greasy jeans, sneakers, hoodie, top down.

"Mr. Barrington?"

"Come in," Stone said, "and have a seat."

"Your friend Richard Chalmers suggested I should see you."

"How are the Chalmerses?"

"Dicky and Vanessa are very well."

"Do you have a name?"

"Sorry. I'm Laurence Hayward." He spelled both names.

"Larry, to your friends?"

"Laurence, if you please." He sounded vaguely English when he said that.

"Laurence, it is. I'm Stone, and this is Bob." Bob came over and sniffed the young man, accepted a

scratching of the ears, then went to his bed and lay down. "How can I help you, Laurence?"

"I'm being pursued," Laurence replied.

"Pursued by whom?"

"Everybody."

Oh, God, Stone thought, not one of those. He took a deep breath. "Well, Laurence, why don't we start with your telling me about -yourself?"

"What would you like to know?"

"Sixty-second bio."

"All right. I'm thirty years old. I was born in West Palm Beach, Florida. When I was eight, my mother, who was the manager of a small hotel in our community, was swept off her feet by an Englishman, who was an investor in the hotel. She subsequently divorced my father, married the Brit, and he took the two of us to live in England, where, except for summers, when I visited my father, I grew up. In fact, I became, for all practical purposes, English, including my accent."

"I thought I caught a bit of that."

"My American accent comes back when I'm here."

"Go on."

"I was educated at my stepfather's old schools, Eton and Oxford, and after I graduated, I became a tutor at Eton, later an assistant master, teaching English and art history. My stepfather has a successful advertising agency, and I had no interest in a career in his company or any other business."

Fred knocked on the door and stepped in. "Shall I take your bags up, sir?"

"Please, Fred. Oh, and this is Mr. Laurence Hayward."

"How do you do?" Laurence said, becoming English, and they shook hands.

"Fred, what is Laurence's accent?" Stone asked.

"Eton and Oxford, I should think," Fred replied.

"Thank you, Fred. You can take the bags up. I'll be here for a while."

Fred departed.

"That was remarkable, the way Fred picked up on my accent."

"Fred is very good at speaking and recognizing British accents of all sorts," Stone said. "On with your bio."

“I took a leave of absence from Eton and came home to Palm Beach a couple of months ago, after my father fell ill. He had moved to the island from West Palm some years ago as his legal practice grew.”

“What sort of legal practice?”

“Real estate. He spent most of his day closing sales and mortgages. Did quite well at it, and used the job to find good investment opportunities in real estate. He died three weeks ago.”

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you. He was good friends with the Chalmerses, who were his neighbors until they bought the big house on the beach, and they visited him often during his illness. I’ve known them most of my life.”

“All right, let’s get to the pursuit part.”

“A week or so ago, I bought a lottery ticket, then forgot about it. Then I saw the winning number in the local paper, and I remembered I had one. I checked the numbers, and they matched. I called in at the lottery office in West Palm Beach, and this morning, after some days for them to investigate and see that I was who I said I was, I received the check. I also learned that, in Florida, there’s a state law against concealing the identity of the winner. I’ve quickly learned that a great many people have an untoward interest in lottery winners, thus the pursuit. They released my name early this morning, and when I left their office, I was surrounded by media people and others who had come to beg for money. I got out of there as quickly as I could, and when I turned on the car radio, I heard my name on the air. I drove to Palm Beach International Airport, where I had taken flying lessons, and somebody I know there found me a seat on an executive charter flight to Teterboro, for only five thousand dollars.”

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“There are some things I’d like to buy, and Dicky thought you might advise me on how to invest the rest of it.”

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“Well, I think I’ll need some clothes.”

“Good idea,” Stone said drily.

“Oh, I know I’m not appropriately dressed for the Upper East Side of New York. My good clothes are all in England and Palm Beach. I’ll need some suits and jackets, I think.”

“Anything else?”

“Perhaps a car?”

“What sort of car?”

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“Good choice.”

“Oh, and I’d like to buy a New York apartment.”

“That seems within your means, depending on the neighborhood,” Stone observed. “What sort of apartment did you have in mind?”

Laurence produced a folded newspaper page and handed it to Stone. It was half a page from the real estate section of the previous Sunday’s New York Times. “This one,” he said.

“Oh, yes, I saw this. It’s the penthouse of an old hotel on Park Avenue that has been remodeled and gone condo. Problem is, Laurence, the asking price for the apartment is twenty-two million dollars, but your check is for six hundred and twelve thousand. Do you have other means I’m not aware of?”

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“You missed a few zeros the first time,” Laurence said.

“And this is a third of the prize?”

“It was the biggest Powerball ever.”

2

Stone took another deep breath.

“The limo driver from Teterboro this morning recognized me,” Laurence said. “I can’t go anywhere. It’s crazy.”

“How long has this been going on?”

“Since this morning—that’s when I went to the lottery office.”

“I heard it mentioned on TV, but I didn’t get the details.”

“It seems that a lot of other people did.”

“All right,” Stone said, “we’ve covered the clothes, the car, and the apartment. What else do you have in mind?”

“Art and American antique furniture,” Laurence replied. “Dicky and Vanessa turned me on to that—their house is full of it. There’s a big show on at the Park Avenue Armory.”

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“I need all of that?” Laurence asked.

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"You can bunk here. I've got a lot of extra room."

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"Get going. I'll start setting up our day for tomorrow."

Laurence left and Stone called Herbie Fisher.

"Herbert Fisher."

"It's Stone. I have a new client for you."

"Okay, who?"

"One Laurence B. Hayward of Palm Beach, Florida."

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fifteenth floor. My advice is, haggle.”

“Absolutely. I’ll have Mr. Hayward at Wilmington Trust at nine tomorrow morning. Meet us downstairs.”

“Will do. Are you going to tell me Mr. Hayward’s net worth?”

“I’ll surprise you, too. And he likes to be called Laurence.”

Stone buzzed Joan. “Please call Theresa Crane, a personal shopper at the Ralph Lauren store on Fifth Avenue at, what is it—Fifty-fifth?”

“Close enough.”

“And set up an appointment for Laurence Hayward”—he spelled it for her—“at, say, ten-thirty am tomorrow.”

“Right. Anything else?”

“Yes, be prepared for anything, and be prepared to handle it fast.”

“What else is new?” she asked.

“Oh, and ask Helene to get the big guest room on three ready. We’ll be dining tonight in my study.”

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24 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

He needs to get a new job.

By modonna wilkinson

Once again it is the same stuff over and over, dinner with Dino, sex wherever he lays his hat, overinflated egos and boring plot. I have bought my very last book of his. Woods needs a new career because his writing stinks.

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Not worth the money or the time.

By Mike 1

I have been an Avid Reader Stuart Woods , but was greatly disappointed in this book. It meandered through various scenarios , but never seem to have any plot to it whatsoever. At the end all it does is leave you hanging so that you will buy the sequel. Very disappointed and the worst money I've spent on Amazon.

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Like the person that wakes up with a horrible hangover ...

By Alberto S. Lopez

Don't ask? me why, but I continue to pad Stuart Wood's wallet by continuing to buy his books. Like the person that wakes up with a horrible hangover and swears he'll never drink again, I promise myself that this is the last Woods book I'll ever buy, until the next one.

The book was pure tripe, full of repeat scenarios, bland characters and devoid of any plot. and the ending is just insulting.

At this point, continuing to read the Stone Barrington series is like smoking or living with an abusive spouse. You know it's bad for you and you know that nothing good will come out of it, but you simply can't seem to help yourself.

Maybe we should start an A.A. group for recovering Stuart Woods readers.

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SEX, LIES & SERIOUS MONEY (A STONE BARRINGTON NOVEL) BY STUART WOODS PDF

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Review

Praise for Stuart Woods"

Scandalous Behavior"

Woods offers another wild ride with his hero, bringing readers back into a world of action-packed adventure, murder and mayhem, steamy romance, and a twist you don t see coming. "Booklist"

Extravagant . . . a series of escalating, sometimes amusing, tit-for-tat maneuvers ensue and eventually turn deadly. . . . Stone remains unflappable. "Publishers Weekly"

"Foreign Affairs"

Appealing . . . boasts Woods s customary combination of panache and brio. "Publishers Weekly"

Purrs like a well-tuned dream machine . . . Mr. Woods knows how to set up scenes and link them to keep the action, emotion, and information moving. He presents the places he takes us to vividly and convincingly. . . .

Enjoy this slick thriller by a thoroughly satisfying professional. "Florida Weekly""

About the Author

Stuart Woods is the author of more than sixty novels. He is a native of Georgia and began his writing career in the advertising industry. "Chiefs," his debut in 1981, won the Edgar Award. An avid sailor and pilot, Woods lives in Florida, Maine, and New Mexico.

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1

Stone Barrington landed at Teterboro Airport, having flown nonstop from Santa Fe, with a good tailwind. He and Bob, his Labrador retriever, were met by Fred Flicker, his factotum, at the airport. Bob threw himself at Fred. After a moment's happy reunion, they were transferred to Stone's car.

Stone had spent most of the flight trying to put Gala Wilde out of his mind after their breakup. He had not succeeded.

They arrived at Stone's house in Turtle Bay and Fred pulled into the garage. Stone got out of the car to be greeted by his secretary, Joan Robertson, but Bob got there first and did his happy dance.

"There's somebody waiting to see you," Joan said.

“Anybody I know?”

“Apparently a friend of somebody you know in Palm Beach.”

Stone’s circle of acquaintances in Palm Beach was not wide. “Dicky Chalmers?”

“Right.”

“Give me a minute, then send him in.” Stone went into his office, rummaged among the mail and messages on his desk and found a pink message slip.

Stone, I’m sending you somebody you will find interesting.

Dicky

Stone looked up to see a young man standing in his doorway: late twenties or early thirties, unkempt hair, scraggly beard, dressed in a current style Stone thought of as “adolescent lumberjack”—checkered shirt, tail out, greasy jeans, sneakers, hoodie, top down.

“Mr. Barrington?”

“Come in,” Stone said, “and have a seat.”

“Your friend Richard Chalmers suggested I should see you.”

“How are the Chalmerses?”

“Dicky and Vanessa are very well.”

“Do you have a name?”

“Sorry. I’m Laurence Hayward.” He spelled both names.

“Larry, to your friends?”

“Laurence, if you please.” He sounded vaguely English when he said that.

“Laurence, it is. I’m Stone, and this is Bob.” Bob came over and sniffed the young man, accepted a scratching of the ears, then went to his bed and lay down. “How can I help you, Laurence?”

“I’m being pursued,” Laurence replied.

“Pursued by whom?”

“Everybody.”

Oh, God, Stone thought, not one of those. He took a deep breath. “Well, Laurence, why don’t we start with your telling me about -yourself?”

“What would you like to know?”

“Sixty-second bio.”

“All right. I’m thirty years old. I was born in West Palm Beach, Florida. When I was eight, my mother, who was the manager of a small hotel in our community, was swept off her feet by an Englishman, who was an investor in the hotel. She subsequently divorced my father, married the Brit, and he took the two of us to live in England, where, except for summers, when I visited my father, I grew up. In fact, I became, for all practical purposes, English, including my accent.”

“I thought I caught a bit of that.”

“My American accent comes back when I’m here.”

“Go on.”

“I was educated at my stepfather’s old schools, Eton and Oxford, and after I graduated, I became a tutor at Eton, later an assistant master, teaching English and art history. My stepfather has a successful advertising agency, and I had no interest in a career in his company or any other business.”

Fred knocked on the door and stepped in. “Shall I take your bags up, sir?”

“Please, Fred. Oh, and this is Mr. Laurence Hayward.”

“How do you do?” Laurence said, becoming English, and they shook hands.

“Fred, what is Laurence’s accent?” Stone asked.

“Eton and Oxford, I should think,” Fred replied.

“Thank you, Fred. You can take the bags up. I’ll be here for a while.”

Fred departed.

“That was remarkable, the way Fred picked up on my accent.”

“Fred is very good at speaking and recognizing British accents of all sorts,” Stone said. “On with your bio.”

“I took a leave of absence from Eton and came home to Palm Beach a couple of months ago, after my father fell ill. He had moved to the island from West Palm some years ago as his legal practice grew.”

“What sort of legal practice?”

“Real estate. He spent most of his day closing sales and mortgages. Did quite well at it, and used the job to find good investment opportunities in real estate. He died three weeks ago.”

“I’m sorry for your loss.”

“Thank you. He was good friends with the Chalmerses, who were his neighbors until they bought the big

house on the beach, and they visited him often during his illness. I've known them most of my life."

"All right, let's get to the pursuit part."

"A week or so ago, I bought a lottery ticket, then forgot about it. Then I saw the winning number in the local paper, and I remembered I had one. I checked the numbers, and they matched. I called in at the lottery office in West Palm Beach, and this morning, after some days for them to investigate and see that I was who I said I was, I received the check. I also learned that, in Florida, there's a state law against concealing the identity of the winner. I've quickly learned that a great many people have an untoward interest in lottery winners, thus the pursuit. They released my name early this morning, and when I left their office, I was surrounded by media people and others who had come to beg for money. I got out of there as quickly as I could, and when I turned on the car radio, I heard my name on the air. I drove to Palm Beach International Airport, where I had taken flying lessons, and somebody I know there found me a seat on an executive charter flight to Teterboro, for only five thousand dollars."

"What kind of airplane?"

"A Gulfstream 450."

"How did you do in the lottery?"

Laurence reached into a pocket and handed Stone a crumpled envelope. "There were two other winners, in Texas and Washington state, so I got only a third after they took out the taxes."

Stone opened the envelope wide enough to read the sum. "Very nice," he said. "What are you going to do with it?"

"There are some things I'd like to buy, and Dicky thought you might advise me on how to invest the rest of it."

"What do you want to buy?"

"Well, I think I'll need some clothes."

"Good idea," Stone said drily.

"Oh, I know I'm not appropriately dressed for the Upper East Side of New York. My good clothes are all in England and Palm Beach. I'll need some suits and jackets, I think."

"Anything else?"

"Perhaps a car?"

"What sort of car?"

"A Porsche, perhaps."

"Good choice."

“Oh, and I’d like to buy a New York apartment.”

“That seems within your means, depending on the neighborhood,” Stone observed. “What sort of apartment did you have in mind?”

Laurence produced a folded newspaper page and handed it to Stone. It was half a page from the real estate section of the previous Sunday’s New York Times. “This one,” he said.

“Oh, yes, I saw this. It’s the penthouse of an old hotel on Park Avenue that has been remodeled and gone condo. Problem is, Laurence, the asking price for the apartment is twenty-two million dollars, but your check is for six hundred and twelve thousand. Do you have other means I’m not aware of?”

“Perhaps you’d better have another look at the check.”

Stone removed the check from the envelope, read it, and gulped. “Six hundred and twelve million dollars?”

“You missed a few zeros the first time,” Laurence said.

“And this is a third of the prize?”

“It was the biggest Powerball ever.”

2

Stone took another deep breath.

“The limo driver from Teterboro this morning recognized me,” Laurence said. “I can’t go anywhere. It’s crazy.”

“How long has this been going on?”

“Since this morning—that’s when I went to the lottery office.”

“I heard it mentioned on TV, but I didn’t get the details.”

“It seems that a lot of other people did.”

“All right,” Stone said, “we’ve covered the clothes, the car, and the apartment. What else do you have in mind?”

“Art and American antique furniture,” Laurence replied. “Dicky and Vanessa turned me on to that—their house is full of it. There’s a big show on at the Park Avenue Armory.”

“Is that it?”

“For the moment. Oh, and I’d like to write a nice check to Habitat for Humanity. I volunteered to help build half a dozen of their houses during my summers in Palm Beach.”

“Good. Here are the things I think you should do, starting tomorrow morning. First, we need to get that check into a bank, because every day you wait will cost you considerable income in interest. Then we need to get you introduced to some investment advisors. I want to introduce you to a young partner at my law firm, Woodman & Weld. His name is Herb Fisher, and he will handle all the details of your plans. You will also need an accountant.”

“What bank do you recommend?”

“M&T Bank, which has a branch in my firm’s building, and which owns an investment company called Wilmington Trust. They were, originally, the DuPont family bank, and they handle the investments of high-end clients. You certainly qualify as that. Also, they have a branch in North Palm Beach, and your accounts should be based there, in order to protect you from being taxed as a resident of New York State. It helps that you were born in Florida. Did your father own a home there?”

“Yes, on Australian Avenue. It was his only home, and he had put it into a trust for me.”

“Good. Another thing is, to protect your anonymity, we should set up a Florida corporation in which you can hold large assets, like your apartment. Think of a name for it.”

Laurence thought about it. “The LBH Corporation—my initials?”

“Fine.” Stone looked at his watch. “We need to get you a disguise, in the form of some barbering, I think.”

“Okay.”

He buzzed his secretary. “Joan, see if José at Nico’s can take a new customer immediately—haircut, shave, mani-pedi, facial. Book him in as Mr. Jones.”

“Okay.”

“I need all of that?” Laurence asked.

“All of it. I’m going to set up a viewing of your prospective apartment tomorrow, and you need to look as though you can afford it.”

Joan buzzed. “They can take Mr. Jones in fifteen minutes.”

“Fine. Get Fred to drive him and wait for him. Laurence, do you have any other clothes?”

“I’ve got a blue blazer and some khakis.”

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Yeah, reading a book **Sex, Lies & Serious Money (A Stone Barrington Novel) By Stuart Woods** could add your good friends listings. This is one of the solutions for you to be successful. As understood, success does not mean that you have excellent points. Understanding as well as recognizing greater than various other will give each success. Next to, the message and perception of this Sex, Lies & Serious Money (A Stone Barrington Novel) By Stuart Woods can be taken and chosen to act.