

Flashback Scene

(Claude sits in an easy chair in his apartment, staring straight ahead at the wall. A clock ticks in the background and the TV plays in front of him, though he isn't looking at it. The doorbell rings. Claude slowly and reluctantly walks over to open it, and sees Bob standing outside, wearing a Hawaiian shirt and sunglasses.)

Claude

Bob! What a... what a surprise...

Bob

I was just about to leave for a trip to Hawaii and I heard you were staying here now! How's it going, buddy?

Claude

Oh... oh, fine. Fine! Excellent. Well, It's been nice seeing you! Do come again!

(He tries to shut the door, but Bob stops him.)

Bob

But I just got here!

Claude (Desperately)

Well, I've got a headache today, and I was working on the taxes, and everything is so busy now with my... uh, with my work...

Bob

Oh yeah! I heard you had started our old detective business again! How's that going?

Claude

Oh, fine. Wonderful!

Bob

If you don't mind me saying, Claude, you don't sound too happy about it.

Claude

Maybe it's not any of your business how I feel, Bob!

Bob

Whoa, whoa, whoa! I'll get going then. Sorry for taking up your time.

(He turns to leave.)

Claude

Gosh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you. I'm... really on edge today. Please, come back in.

Bob

Claude, there's something wrong, isn't there?

Claude

No, no, no, Bob. That was just a slip of the tongue. Everything is.... just fine.

Bob

Claude, I still think something happened to your business.

Claude

(Sighs) No, no, Bob, there isn't anything to be wrong about... anything wrong with it. Please, take a seat. I'll get some coffee.

Bob

(Sits down in Claude's chair as Claude leaves, and glances at the letters on the table in front of him.) Dear Claude.... Come home.... What is this?

(Claude comes back, sees Bob reading the letter, and puts the coffee down firmly on the table. He tries to grab the letter, but Bob stops him.)

Claude

Why are you looking at my letters, Bob?

Bob

Claude, why are your parents telling you to come home?

Claude

They're just trying to control my life, as usual. That's all.

Bob

Claude, it says here that they want you back because you've ruined your business. Just tell me the truth! I want to help!

Claude

No, Bob, they're wrong... they're wrong because... Gah! There isn't even a business to be *ruined* anymore! It's gone bankrupt and my headquarters got trashed last night. Happy now? You've got the truth.

(He stands up and glares at the opposite wall.)

Bob

Claude, I'm sorry! I didn't know it was that bad! Listen... Claude...

Claude

It is that bad! My Detective business is dead, and I don't have the money to start it again!

Bob

Claude, I-

Claude

I'll have to go home and study to be a lawyer or an accountant at my dad's firm. I can't fund myself, and-

Bob

Claude!

Claude

Darn that Bobby Krash! He did this to me! Him and Krash Computers. He ruined my life, and I- what, Bob? (He turns to face Bob.)

Bob

I was just going to say that I could help you out! I have the money you need to restart your business!

Claude

What do you...?

Bob

Yesterday I found out that I had won the lottery, and I was going to spend it on a trip to Hawaii. But I could cancel that and help you instead!

Claude

Bob, you'd... you'd do that for me?

Bob

On one condition.

Claude (Wary)

What's that?

Bob

That we'd be partners again! I miss the old days, when we teamed up in school to form our own Detective Team. Remember that?

Claude

Done in a heartbeat, Bob. I'll be glad to have you on board again!

Bob

Yay! I'm a detective again!

Claude

Now, exactly how much money are we talking about?