A Crime with No Victim

It is difficult to find a movie that has won as many important awards, including the Oscar for Best Documentary, as *Man on Wire*. This is not surprising, as the documentary has almost everything that a great **heist** movie needs: a great story line, suspense, action, police involvement, and interesting characters planning an impossible crime. The only difference between it and the average heist movie is that nobody suffered as a consequence of the crime and nothing was stolen.

Man on Wire is the true story of Philippe Petit, a French **tightrope** artist, who at the age of 18, saw an article about the plans to build two 104-story-high towers for the World Trade Center in New York City, and became obsessed with the crazy dream of walking between the top of the two **skyscrapers** on a **wire**. Walking on a wire above the ground requires great strength, the ability to control every muscle to keep your balance, and complete concentration. Doing it 1,350 feet above the ground means that the smallest mistake or loss of concentration will kill you. Philippe trained and waited for six years until the Twin Towers were built, and then, with the help of some friends, he did it on August 7th, 1974.

The "heist" required complicated planning. First of all, the Twin Towers were private property, so entering without a **permit** was **trespassing**. Philippe needed to study their structure, so he and two friends said they were journalists writing an article about the towers for an important French magazine about architecture, got access to the towers, and took all the photos they needed. Then on the evening of August 6th, two of them went to the North Tower and two to the South Tower with fake IDs, carrying the heavy equipment to the roofs, and they worked all night to install the wire. In the morning, other friends met in the street below, and when Philippe, dressed in black, started walking on the wire a quarter of a mile above the ground, they pointed at him, shouting, "Look!" People looked up: from the street they could not see the wire, so what they saw was a man walking on the clouds—something they were not going to forget. He was up there for 45 minutes and made the crossing eight times.

He was arrested and charged with trespassing and **disorderly conduct**—he did, after all, stop traffic and put himself and others in danger. However, nobody was hurt, nothing was damaged or stolen, and he created wonderful memories for all the **witnesses**. So, he was freed on condition that he did a free show for children in Central Park. His "heist" has been called "the artistic crime of the century."

Philippe Petit performing a tightrope walk

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they studied the buildings and created the complex design to secure the wire between the top of the two buildings safely.

A **Read the article. Write the words and phrases in bold next to the definitions.**

_____ **1.** a long piece of thin metal, or many pieces twisted together

_____ **2.** very tall buildings

_____ **3.** the act of going onto someone's land or building without permission

_____ **4.** people who see an event happening, especially a crime

_____ **5.** a crime in which a place is entered illegally, and something is stolen from it

_____ **6.** a behavior that threatens the safety of other people

_____ **7.** an official document that allows you to do something

_____ **8.** a long piece of material stretched above the ground that skilled people walk on

B **Read the article again and complete the notes.**

1. *Man on Wire* is _____
2. It is like _____
3. Philippe Petit is _____
4. For six years, he _____
5. He lied to _____
6. The evening of August 6th 1974, he and some friends _____
7. The morning after, he _____
8. People in the street _____
9. The police _____
10. He was freed _____

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C Complete the summary of the article with suitable words.

Man on Wire is an unusual (1) _____ that is (2) _____ exciting as a heist movie. It tells the story of Philippe Petit, a French tightrope artist who (3) _____ six years training and (4) _____ how to install a wire (5) _____ the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, and to (6) _____ on it. He (7) _____ to get access to the Twin Towers and, with the (8) _____ of some friends, (9) _____ photos of the structure. Then, on the evening of August 6th, 1974, he and his friends (10) _____ into the towers with (11) _____ IDs and (12) _____ the wire during the night. The morning (13) _____, he walked (14) _____ the roofs of the towers eight (15) _____, while (16) _____ in the (17) _____ below could (18) _____ believe their eyes. He was (19) _____, but his action, although (20) _____, was so admired (21) _____ he was freed on (22) _____ that he performed a (23) _____ show for (24) _____ in Central Park.

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