

(Tanner, a thirty six year old man sits at a bar. He is smooth and very attractive. He wears a stylish suit and tie.

Eli enters. He's roughly the same age but looks weathered. His head is shaved covering a receding hairline. He wears a black suit jacket over jeans and an open collared shirt.

Eli sits beside Tanner.)

ELI
Tanner.

TANNER
Eli, oh my god.

ELI
What?

TANNER
You look different. But I guess I probably do too.

ELI
Not really.

TANNER
Oh.

ELI
It's okay.

TANNER
Thanks.

ELI
No problem. You want a drink?

TANNER
I'm having a Sam.

ELI
Don't know him.

TANNER
A Sam Adams.

ELI
Uh-uh.

ELI calls the bartender over with his finger

ELI
Glenlivet. Eighteen. Neat.

TANNER

Now that's a drink. I bet it puts hair on your chest.

ELI

It's what I like to drink when other people are buying.

TANNER

Oh.

ELI

Get me?

TANNER

Yes.

ELI

Yes. Ok.

TANNER

All business. That's probably better.

ELI

Business? Business is good.

TANNER

Oh, great. Glad to hear it.

ELI

But personal is better. Everything is personal these days, you know?

TANNER

I ... sure.

ELI

Everything. Marriage. Friends. Work. Getting fired. Getting hired. They tell you it's not personal but it is.

TANNER

Yeah.

ELI

Now you're hearing me. Right? "You're fired. Now we fucked your whole life up. Now your dreams are busted. By the way, it's not personal." That's what they say, but it is really personal. I mean it's your life, right?

TANNER

Right.

ELI

God-damn right. But they say you have to be professional.

TANNER

Sure they do. That's the corporate lingo. The buzz they try to sell...

ELI

Exactly, Tanner. Exactly right. That's the *lingo*. I'm not a professional.

TANNER

What?

ELI

No way. I'm a professional, yeah. As in, I'm a pro at what I do. The dictionary definition of professional. That's me. But not the lingo. Fuck the lingo, Tanner, fuck it.

TANNER

Right.

ELI

And I'm not all business. Like you said before. All business? That's not me either. I am ... personable. Get me?

TANNER

Sure.

ELI

I mean, I like to know about my business. All the angles, all the details, I want to know them.

TANNER

Okay.

ELI

That's why I think it's good we know each other. We don't know everything. You can't ever know everything. Especially thoughts, the mind, you know? But we have a history.

TANNER

High-school.

ELI

High-school. Yes. What a Petri Dish for life that was. Huh? What a bait and switch job? But we got through it. Like doing time, you know? You get through it with someone and now you have a history with that person.

TANNER

I guess that's true

ELI

You know it's true. That's why I agreed to take this job. I don't work much anymore. I think I'm retired.

TANNER

Retired? You're like thirty-six.

ELI

Thirty five.

TANNER

And you're retired. I guess, well, fuck, what do you do all day?

ELI

I don't know. What can you do? You know what? I chase skirt. I guess that's what I do. I chase skirt now. Professionally.

TANNER

That sounds like a tough life.

ELI

It is tough. Women are crazy, Tanner. You must know. Absolutely insane.

TANNER

I know.

ELI

Yes you do.

(Conversation trails off and Tanner looks around nervously.)

TANNER

Yeah, but a, um ...

ELI

Ready to get down to it? You got it, Tanner.

TANNER

Here? Right here?

ELI

This is as good a place as any. It's not like the movies. That's the first thing I have to say right now. It's not like the movies. And thank you for being patient with me. I imagine it's got to be unsettling, seeing me.

TANNER

No. Uh. A little.

ELI

Going through the process, I mean. Looking for someone to do a service for you, a personal service, and then finding out, you know them, that you went to high school with them, him - me.

TANNER

Yeah.

ELI

Right. So thank you. You let me run my mouth a little. I appreciate that. It makes me feel comfortable. Now I want you to feel comfortable.

TANNER

Okay.

ELI

Okay, shoot.

TANNER

So, I'm having some problems at work.

ELI

Uh-huh.

TANNER

It's with my boss ...

ELI

Hold on, Tanner.

(Eli stands and waves the bartender down.)

ELI

Can we get another round down here? Glenlivet, neat. And, uh, I don't know, beer. And that's eighteen on the Glenlivet.

(Eli sits)

ELI

Sorry

TANNER

It's fine.

ELI

Continue.

TANNER

So, I've been working at this company for four years now.

(The Bartender returns with drinks, interrupting Tanner.)

ELI

Thank you. Don't worry, we tip big at the end.
Okay? Don't worry.

(The Bartender leaves, annoyed)

ELI

Sorry, again. I know I said it's not like the movies, but I want to be careful. This is sensitive. Your issue is sensitive and I understand that.

TANNER

Okay

ELI

Continue.

TANNER

My boss, I think he's going to fire me.

ELI

Back up. What do you do?

TANNER

I'm a VP.

ELI

VP? Very person? Very what?

TANNER

Vice President.

ELI

Ah-ha. There's that lingo. VP. Nice. Where are you a VP?

TANNER

Web company. MacroSearch.com.

ELI

What is that exactly? Web stuff? This is New York, you know. Not fagland, California.

TANNER

It's a search company, like yahoo, or MSN, or google.

ELI

Fuck the lingo, Tannner. Now you're speaking fucking greek to me, you know that?

TANNER

It's a website. You put in terms, words, it finds information.

ELI

No shit?

TANNER

Yeah

ELI

That's nice. That sounds like a good business.

TANNER

It is.

ELI

So how does it work?

TANNER

Well, we have techs that work out most of the search algorithm...

ELI

So you don't know. You're the VP and you don't know.

TANNER

I know, all right, I know. I've just, this is what I've been trying to tell you. I've been marginalized there. I'm an outlier.

ELI

An outlier? That sounds bad. Okay, sorry. Continue.

TANNER

I think, the CEO, that's Chief Executive Officer, wants me out.

ELI

What's his name?

TANNER

His name is Bob Gerengard.

ELI

And how do you know Bob?

TANNER

We were partners.

ELI

Partners? *That* is bad.

TANNER

Why?

ELI

You got language in your world. In my world, 'partners' is bad. It's a buzz word. Partners. It's a disaster waiting to happen.

TANNER

I don't know. Maybe it means the same thing in my industry.

ELI

Maybe, you tell me. You were partners.

TANNER

In Brisbane. That's in California. And we met these guys. They were college guys, or right out of college. Anyway, they had the real new stuff.

ELI

New Stuff?

TANNER

Technology. They were coming at search in a whole new way. It was like eighteen months, maybe two years ahead of anybody.

ELI

Ah-huh.

(Tanner pauses, suddenly considering is line of conversation)

TANNER

I don't know why I am telling you any this. It doesn't have anything to do with our, arrangement.

ELI

Wait. Stop. You're telling me for two reasons. One. You want to. Which is fine. I'm safe, you can tell me. It's natural, but it's optional. Right? Two. I need to know. Our arrangement, which is really just a figment right now. But still, the arrangement hinges on what you're telling me. I have to know. Like I said, this is personal business. I'm not just some thug. You know me. We went to High School together. We're shooting the shit. You're telling me your woes.

TANNER

All right.

ELI

Okay. Bob. Brisbane. New Stuff. Go.

TANNER

So we have a meeting. We tell them we have a platform they can launch on.

ELI

Platform? I don't know what that is but it sounds like bullshit.

TANNER

Yeah. We had nothing. But we took them out, got them drunk, I mean really drunk. And we picked up these girls for them.

ELI

Hookers?

TANNER

Yeah.

ELI

Tanner. You're an animal. You got some teeth I didn't see. Hookers and nerds. That's a fucking secret formula there.

TANNER

So we get back to their place. And their stuff, the new stuff, it's all out on their kitchen table. Fucking piles of it. So Bob says lets look at it.

ELI

And, what do you say?

TANNER

I say fuck it. Let's just take it. Take it all.

ELI

Wow. Balls. You've got the combination, friend. Balls and brains.

TANNER

So we just pile everything, their papers, laptops, everything into our bags and we just fucking go.

ELI

Nice. And, they don't say shit?

TANNER

They're nobodies. They're kids. Six months later we launch MarcoSearch.

ELI

Uh-huh. So what happened?

TANNER

It's okay. We're not profitable yet, but we're going public in two months.

ELI

No, man. With Bob. What happened with Bob?

TANNER

He integrated everything. I was the marketing partner. Look, Bob wants me out. He's got the board behind him.

ELI

So what? Just walk. Sounds like you're making large cash.

TANNER

No. No, see I am not. It all happens when we go out, go public.

ELI

With the information?

TANNER

No, with the stock. When the stock goes public, I sell my shares. Three hundred thousand shares at twenty dollars or more. Do you get it?

ELI

I get it. Now that you painted the picture I get it.

TANNER

All right. Now, if they get me out. If Bob gets me out I don't see a dime. I don't see a fucking penny of that money.

ELI

Wow. That is a fucking bind. They got you against the wall there, friend.

TANNER

I know.

ELI

So then you call me.

TANNER

Yes.

ELI

To handle it. To take care of Bob.

TANNER

Yes.

ELI

OK. Twenty-thousand cash. Nobody hears from him again.

TANNER

Wait, I'm not talking about...

ELI

Hey. Just think on it a minute. Okay? Just think.

(Eli stands and waves over the bartender.)

ELI

Oh, you're okay. I need one more here. Dewers, rocks. Got a little buzz on, switching to the cheap stuff.

(The bartender places Eli's drink and leaves quickly)

TANNER

I'm sorry if I mislead you Eli, but I'm not talking about, about killing anyone.

ELI

Uh-huh. Okay. I think you are, but that's not an easy thing to say. Okay? I know it isn't.

TANNER

No. I just want him scarred a little. I just need to make it through two more months.

ELI

Okay. Relax. Let's just drink minute. We're having a drink. And really, what are we doing? We're negotiating. That's it. We are negotiating what? An act? I crime? Maybe. But also we are negotiating your needs. Yes? What you need to happen. Yes?

TANNER

Yes.

ELI

Yes. So now tell me. What is so important about this money? I mean, money is important yes, but this money is important to you something fierce, or else you wouldn't be calling me.

TANNER

Yes.

ELI

Okay. Why?

TANNER

My wife. She's divorcing me.

ELI

I told you they were crazy. Right. Didn't I tell you?

TANNER

Yeah.

What's her name?
ELI

Tami.
TANNER

Tami is divorcing you.
ELI

Yes
TANNER

Why?
ELI

She hired a PI.
TANNER

A tail?
ELI

Yes.
TANNER

Uh-oh, Tami what are you doing? And I am guessing pictures.
ELI

Yes.
TANNER

Jesus. Did he catch you getting your dick sucked?
ELI

Yeah.
TANNER

Of fuck. Fuck! That's the nail in the coffin. I have seen guys talk their way out all kinds of crazy shit but as soon as the wife sees a blow job there like locked on. Like a fucking homing missile.
ELI

Yeah.
TANNER

That is bad news. I'm sorry. Pre-nup?
ELI

Yes.
TANNER

Well okay. There you go my-man. Thinking ahead.
ELI

TANNER

She gets eighty percent now, but nothing in the future.

ELI

That's a harsh motherfucking pre-nup.

TANNER

I was careful. She gets eighty percent of nothing now. I mean, it wipes me out, but compared to the stock, it's really nothing. And I am in the clear when we go public.

ELI

Think it will stand?

TANNER

What.

ELI

Do you think it will hold up? I mean, shit, you were talking a lot of money before. A fucking windfall of money. Millions. That's a magic fucking word, Millions. Nothing says made like millions. It might as well mean heaven, 'cause when you are talking millions you have died and gone to fucking heaven. It's going to mean the same thing to your ex and her fucking lawyer, let me tell you.

TANNER

I've got a pre-nup.

ELI

All right. I just hope you don't get a woman judge.

TANNER

It's a fucking pre-nup.

ELI

Shit man. You're right. I am sure its fine. I'm sure you knew what you were doing. It's nice. I bet you got the best fucking lawyer, with the magnifying glass out, building in every fucking windfall clause in the book.

TANNER

Windfall clause?

ELI

That's why I brought it up. Windfall. It's a legal term.

TANNER

Holy shit.

ELI

Oh brother, come on. We live in an escalating world my friend. Stakes don't drop. The turn of the screw only gets tighter. How long have you been married?

TANNER

Eight years.

ELI

Yeah, that was '92. Okay. In '94, in jersey, this guy has a pre-nup, right? Gets the divorce, cut and dry. A year later he hits lotto. Insert magic word. *Millions*. Lawyer comes after him saying the pre-nup didn't cover 'windfall events'. And his ex, who's now doing his best friend of course, right? They're off, living it up on the French fucking riveria. While this guy, this fucking hump who hit lotto, is back working at the car dealership.

TANNER

How do you know all, I mean...

ELI

It's my job to know, Tanner. This is a case I worked on. It's my business.

TANNER

You mean...

ELI

Oh yeah. He put spent his percentage, his meager fucking percentage on peace of mind.

TANNER

Wow.

ELI

That's something that's harder to come by than you think. Peace of mind. Freedom. They don't use words like that in business. The only time you hear those words you're talking to a priest, politician or insurance salesman. That's their lingo. That's their line of bullshit. But when people are talking, really talking, those words are powerful stuff.

TANNER

Yes. You're right.

ELI

That's what this world is suffering from. Not enough real conversation. You got fucking agendas, you got angles, everywhere you look people are trying to screw you. And you're just trying to get by.

TANNER

No shit.

ELI

No shit is right. So, since we're in agreement to be frank here. Candid. Let's talk about Bob. He sounds like an asshole, I'm sorry. He does. I'm running a company. I have to pick between two guys to take care of things. I've got Tanner and I've got Bob. Come on. The guy just sounds like an asshole.

TANNER

He is. He really fucking is.

ELI

All right. So he wants you out. You want him to just lay off.

TANNER

Right.

ELI

Okay, I got your motivation. Now, what's eating his apple? Huh?

TANNER

Things went bad. It was time for us to part ways a long time ago but we've both been hanging on. For the stock. We're stuck there. Working tandem even though we're not the right fit for each other.

ELI

Come on, Tanner. You're back to the fucking Lingo. Tandem? Right Fit? What the fuck?

TANNER

All right. You caught me.

ELI

Yes. Now, let me guess. When things 'went bad', it was personal.

TANNER

Yeah.

ELI

Uh-huh. Continue.

TANNER

When we got the tech stuff, he set it all up. And I was the marketing manager.

(Tanner waits for a moment of understanding in Eli but it never comes)

ELI

Yeah, so?

TANNER

So, he fucking thinks I didn't do anything. He says he did everything and I don't deserve it the stock.

ELI

Don't deserve it? You don't fucking deserve it? You're the fucking balls. Does the brain tell the balls they don't deserve to fuck? This guy is an asshole.

TANNER

I know it.

ELI

And what else?

TANNER

What?

ELI

You said it was personal. What's personal about it? He doesn't think you deserve it, that's business. What's the personal element?

TANNER

Well, I'm not even sure. You know? But I had a thing with his wife.

ELI

You're not sure if you had a thing with his wife?

TANNER

No. No. We did. I'm not sure if he knows about it.

ELI

Of course he knows. Holy shit of course he knows.

TANNER

Why?

ELI

Because he wouldn't chance it. He wouldn't chance pushing you out. You guys fucking stole to get this big shit started. He's going to cut you out now? You could ruin everything. You got the fucking whistle right in your hand, he doesn't want you to blow it. But! But you fucked his wife. That changes the game. You can't know what he's fucking thinking now. Who knows what he's fucking thinking.

TANNER

You're right. I didn't see it. Maybe I didn't want to see it.

ELI

Right. Now you're thinking. So he knows. How do you know he wants you out?

TANNER

His secretary.

ELI

Uh-huh. How is that?

TANNER

I'm seeing her. She saw it on Bob's email.

ELI

You're fucking his wife and his secretary? Shit. You are the balls. Shit. You're going to be fucking me if I don't watch it, right?

TANNER

No, Mina, the secretary, I like her. And Bob's wife, that was like a fling.

ELI

Oh excuse me, Tanner. Why don't you tell that shit to Bob?

TANNER

No, Mina is real.

ELI

Mina might be real but the way your thinking sure isn't.

TANNER

What?

ELI

I'm seeing it now. You're telling me about it and now I got the X-ray vision. You're dropping the old wife. I mean fuck, eight years, I'm surprised you didn't hire the tail yourself. You got wife two about to come across. And as I nice little wedding present you're going to fucking heaven. Magic word. Millions.

TANNER

Yeah.

ELI

But there are problems. You can sense them, even though you don't want to see them.

(Tanner shakes his head yes.)

ELI

So you go on that computer. You search. You're looking for a problem solver. Someone who can patch up the little holes in your schema? Well it's not going to be easy. Ever work in a car dealership, Tanner?

TANNER

No.

ELI

All the time you get these guys coming in, looking to trade up. They got the fucking jalopies they want to pawn off on you and drive away in a beamer. That's what you're trying to pull.

TANNER

Come on.

ELI

No, you come on. A little bit, that's what you're trying to pull. It's okay. That's your job. You got to dream. I need to supply you with the reality of the situation.

TANNER

And, what is that, exactly?

ELI

You're doing good. You're almost there, but you have to dream a little bigger. You got to come on a little stronger. Getting to heaven ain't easy.

TANNER

Be plane.

ELI

Fair. Totally fair. Fuck the lingo. Well then here it is. You can't scare Bob. You fucked his wife. And you can't just shake your ex with pre-nup. Not when you hit corporate lotto in two months. These fucking problems, Tanner. You need to fix them and you can. Fifty-thousand fixes your problems.

TANNER

Are you, are you fucking up-selling me?

ELI

Is that how you want to swallow it? Go ahead. You told me to be plane.

TANNER

Holy shit.

ELI

It's okay. These are not easy decisions. Let's have one more drink. This time a real drink for you. You deserve it.

(Tanner hails the bartender)

ELI

Two Glenlivet. Eighteen. Neat.

TANNER

Holy shit.

(The bartender bring the drinks to Eli. He puts one in front of Tanner and keeps one)

ELI

Relax, my man. It's okay. Come on.

(Eli raises his glass to Tanner)

ELI

This is what I drink when someone else is paying.

(Tanner raises his glass)

TANNER

To them both.

ELI

To them both.

(Tanner and Eli both drink. Eli immediately checks his watch)

TANNER

You have to be somewhere?

ELI

In a little while.

TANNER

Another job?

ELI

Yeah. Picking up my check.

TANNER

I thought you were retired. Kinda?

ELI

Like I said, I still do personal jobs.

TANNER

Sure. So what are our next steps here? Takeaways?

ELI

Shit. You are smooth with that lingo. Just like High School. You know I always hated you, Tanner?

TANNER

What?

ELI

I'm sorry, I haven't been one hundred percent honest with you.

TANNER

What the fuck!

ELI

Just listen. It's over.

TANNER

What?

ELI

It was in the drink. The scotch. It'll look like a heart attack.

TANNER

Holy fuck. Holy Shit.

ELI

It was your wife, and Bob. Together. They hated you too. Bob, he's crazy. He hooked me up. Look right here.

(Eli moves his jacket lapel.)

ELI

Wireless Web Cam. Crazy! They wanted to watch. Mina, your secretary, they brought her in, she wanted to watch too.

(Eli opens his wallet and puts money on the bar.)

ELI

I told you someone else was paying.

(Tanner chokes, and looks like he might throw up. Eli checks his watch.)

ELI

You've got about two minutes. So, if you want, go ahead and try to say something real. I'll try and remember it.