

“Sure Punkin, I believe Connie could use an assistant, what do you say?”

“Thanks but no thanks daddy, Constance has her hands full taking care of one Carter, I know she doesn’t need another one to look after.”

“You know that’s right” Constance replied, “and what makes you think I’m staying around anyway, you know it’s dangerous working for Notorious Biggy Carter.”

They laughed and joked for about ten minutes, it was like a mini family reunion.

“Well I guess I’ll take my things to the house, there’s not going to be somebody living there who thinks that two women in your house is one woman too many, is there daddy?”

“If so, you just tell her to leave her key on the table by the door when she leaves, you can stay at my place any time you want to Punkin,...I’m glad you came.”

Veronica walked over and gave her father a warm hug, “Me too daddy.” She said.

The ladies left and the tone in the room immediately changed to business. The men were synchronized when they worked, they understood what was needed at a given time and focused on the issues with pinpoint precision.

Reginald had misgivings when Gary came on board, thought he was a spoiled brat, a knuckle-head that only wanted to party and spend the money that someone else in his family had made. He was hard on him at first, wouldn’t give him a break. Reggie demanded that he work tirelessly, supervised him closely, made sure that he completed what he started, and demanded professionalism. He later discovered that

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Gary was quite capable, however no one had ever called for his best. Over time the two men developed a trusting working relationship and Reginald realized that Gary was a real asset to the business.

“So what’s up with the Colbert merger Rege?” Gary decided to take control of the conversation, he knew that Reggie probably knew that he had met with Bob Miller earlier, and he wanted to guide the conversation rather than be guided.

“We worked out the details of the agreement Saturday night. I think it’s something that we could probably live with if we have to. That Bob Miller plays the tough guy just to show that he can. We could have wrapped this thing up a couple weeks ago. He lets his ego get in the way of sound business decisions.”

“So you are signing the contract?”

“I don’t know G, Miller came over to see me last night, he seemed pretty desperate to close this deal, I think he’s getting some pressure from Cameron. But you know what they say, it ain’t over ‘til it’s over.”

“So you’re not going to sign, then?”

“I think there are some things that they could do better on. That lousy option package they offered me for one. The two million that I asked for was fair, and they were only willing to give up one and a quarter, Cameron Wilson made at least three times that amount in bonuses alone last year. I planned on exercising those options to pay off some of the debt that they aren’t willing to pick up, it’s backed by some personal property, mine and Dustin’s”

“I’m sure Uncle Dustin would appreciate that. Oh, by the way, you can have that extra three quarters of a Mil in options, Miller told me to let you know that I persuaded him to do it.”

“Is that what he said, huh?”

“Yeah, all I have to do is deliver your signature on the contract and it’s a done deal. I can also pick up an additional seventy-five thousand for myself.”

“Well that’s mighty white of him. So what do you think, did he seem under pressure when you talked with him?”

“Well, his demeanor was as cool as ever, he was smooth and in control. He had this file that he pulled out, evidently it was an investigative report on me because he looked in it and said that he could clean up my legal record. Can you believe that? Those people are something. Said he could also straighten out my credit report.”

“He was offering that, plus seventy five thousand dollars for you to get me to sign the contract? That’s a good deal G, I hope you went for it.”

“Well at first he only offered to clean up my records...had this smug look on his face like I would jump on the deal...but I told him that I wasn’t looking for a job so my record didn’t matter and that I can buy everything that I need so far. That’s when he offered me the fifty grand.”

“But I thought he offered you seventy-five.”

“I’ve learned a few things from you Rege, I negotiated up to seventy-five, and for the records to be cleaned up too.”

“Remind me to let you buy my next car.”

“Yeah, I just sat there and didn’t say a word after he told me that there was something that I could do for him and ‘the company’.” Gary raised his hands and scribed quotation marks in the air with his fingers. I let him make his offer while I just looked him in the eye. You would

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have been impressed, Rege, he thought I would wince when he brought up my past, I could have been holding four aces or a pair of twos and no one would have known, I was like stone.”

“Sounds like you had fun G, I think you were having too much fun.”

“I admit it was fun... I think he believes he has an inside man at Media now. So, to answer your question, I do think somebody is on his tail to complete this deal and I think you’re right, it’s probably Cameron.”

“Yeah, I’ve been trying to avoid escalating, this was not supposed to be difficult at all, Cameron wanted this and it should have been real easy. I may just reach out to him anyway, make sure there hasn’t been any changes in attitude at the top.”

“By the way Rege, the last thing that he said to me was that he was counting on me to get the agreement signed, whether you did it or not, so I think he feels he can do this without you if he has to.”

“So it gets curiouser and curiouser. Here’s what I think we should do.”