

47. The Set-Up

(In an office of a large advertising agency. #1, an ad executive, is on the phone. During the course of the conversation #2 enters.)

- #1: Harold, you want to relax? I told you yesterday that it was just a preliminary campaign strategy, didn't I? *(Pause)* Yes, of course I have some other ideas. *(Pause)* No, you can't have them this afternoon. *(Pause)* Because they're not fully written out. *(Pause)* Tomorrow...afternoon. *(Pause)* Have we ever let you down? *(Pause)* I'll talk to you tomorrow, Harold. Good-bye. *(Hangs up.)*
- #2: That's was some pretty good tap dancing. Mr. Bo Jangles would have been proud.
- #1: Do you have something relevant to say, or do you just get off lurking in other people's doorways?
- #2: Actually, I was coming to tell you that Harold McBride has been trying to reach you, but I see that he got hold of you. He seems...upset.
- #1: It was nothing serious. Harold's just the excitable type.
- #2: Funny, he wasn't when Marsha was his account executive.
- #1: That's because she never gave him any ideas that were worth getting excited about. That's why I handle his advertising now.
- #2: Is that why?
- #1: What do you want?
- #2: Aside from Harold's message, we're having an accounts meeting at two.
- #1: Sorry, can't be there.
- #2: "Can't be there"? This isn't a request. All account executives are expected to be at the meeting. Mr. Lawrence's orders.
- #1: Well, I'm not like the rest of the account executives, am I?

- #2: What makes you so cocky?
- #1: Why is it that when someone has some guts, they're referred to as "cocky" in that derogatory fashion?
- #2: Cocky's not always derogatory. It's a compliment to some people. Not you of course, but to some people.
- #1: I'm pretty sure you used to like me, didn't you?
- #2: Like you? I hired you.
- #1: Then what happened? I moved up the ladder too fast for you? You uncomfortable now that we're equals?
- #2: No, you've just got a little too...slick. Let it go at that, OK?
- #1: I don't think so. Why don't you like me?
- #2: Because you want to get by on a pass.
- #1: Meaning what, exactly?
- #2: You've just horned in on everyone else's accounts.
- #1: That's simply not true.
- #2: Really. Harold McBride and McBride Toys used to be Marsha's account. Southeast Airlines, used to be Bob's, Chunky Cookies used to be David's. Need I go on?
- #1: Is it my fault I came up with some fresh new ideas for these accounts and Mr. Lawrence turned them over to me?
- #2: Not if the ideas were actually yours.
- #1: Are you insinuating that I stole my ideas?
- #2: There are some who believe you did.
- #1: Well, they're wrong! I'm just one step ahead.
- #2: If you say so.
- #1: You don't believe me?
- #2: I figure it's best to stay out of it. *(Starts to exit.)* By the way, just so Mr. Lawrence doesn't think you're off playing golf or something, why won't you be at the two o'clock meeting?
- #1: Contrary to popular belief, I'm securing a new account.
- #2: Really? Who?
- #1: I'd rather not say.
- #2: Come on. I thought we were on the same team. We don't

- steal around here. Remember?
- #1: Have you ever heard of Harper Electronics?
- #2: Harper Electronics. Someone just mentioned them. *(Pause)* I know, Gail said something about them at lunch the other day.
- #1: Really, well, I've researched them and it seems that they're a rising computer company. So, I got to their VP of advertising and it looks like we'll be handling them. I have the preliminary contracts right here. *(Shows #2 a large envelope.)*
- #2: Well, it sounds like you got really lucky.
- #1: Luck had nothing to do with it.
- #2: That's good, because luck does have this funny way of running out. Anyway, I've got to get back to work. *(Starts to leave, but turns back.)* Oh, since you won't be at the meeting, you want to sign this for Mr. Lawrence? *(Takes out a letter and brings it over to #1 and puts it in front of him/her.)*
- #1: What is it?
- #2: A resignation letter. Yours to be exact. Effective immediately.
- #1: *(Drops his/her pen.)* Whoa, did I just miss something in the last ten seconds? Who the hell said I was resigning?
- #2: I did.
- #1: And why would I do that? *(#2 pulls a Polaroid picture out of his/he pocket and gives it to #1.)* Wait a minute. This is...
- #2: Bill Conrad. VP of Harper Electronics. Also... my brother-in-law.
- #1: I...don't understand.
- #2: I can see that. Let me explain. Some of your fellow employees came to me saying they thought you were going through their desks...
- #1: Wait, that's not...
- #2: Hold on. Now, none of them had any proof. I had my own suspicions, but like them, I had no proof, either. So we

- decided to get some.
- #1: You set me up?
- #2: Exactly. We created a company, got it a voice mailbox, talked a lot about it around the office, left a file about it with the name of the VP of advertising in my desk then you and nature ran its course. My brother-in-law was happy to do me a favor and play the VP.
- #1: That doesn't prove anything.
- #2: Give it up. The minute you called the number proved you went into my desk. Because that's the only place it was. We went through with the meeting because I wanted concrete proof. And we got that with your signature.
- #1: What do you want?
- #2: I told you, you're out of here. The letter says you've been offered another job and you're taking it.
- #1: Why don't you just tell Lawrence what happened?
- #2: Bottom line, I just want you out. I'm not out to ruin anyone's life. Not even yours. Believe it or not, I think you're good at advertising. After you steal someone else's client, that is. Who knows, maybe you'll learn something and clean up your act. I doubt it, but maybe. And if you don't, you can ruin someone else's company.
- #1: I can fight this and you know it.
- #2: No you can't and you know it. So why don't you just ooze on out of here like the scum that you are before I forget I'm a nice person. OK? *(Starts to exit and turns back.)* You'll forgive us for not getting you a going-away gift, but you understand. *(Exits.)*