

43. The Pay-Back

(#1 is on the phone in his/her office, late at night.)

- #1:** No. I'm going to be here for a while. *(Pause)* I don't know when I'll get home. *(Pause)* Yeah, I'll call you before I'm about to leave. *(Hangs up the phone and goes back to the computer on the desk.)*
(We hear a voice from the door.)
- #2:** My but aren't we a conscientious little worker.
- #1:** *(Jumps.)* Who is that!?! *(#2 walks into the office. #1 sees who it is.)* You scared me.
- #2:** Relax. I was just in the neighborhood and I thought I'd pop up and say, "hi." *(Pause)* Hi. *(Sits in the chair in front of the desk.)*
- #1:** What are you doing here?
- #2:** I told you, I was just in the neighborhood. Besides, I was curious as to how the new job was going. *(Looks around.)* From the looks of things, I'd say things were going pretty well.
- #1:** If you're done, I think you know the way out.
- #2:** I don't know. It's pretty big. You wouldn't happen to have a map, would you? It's a little different from when it was my office.
- #1:** Get out!
- #2:** I don't think so. You and I need to have a little talk.
- #1:** No, we don't. I'm calling security. *(Picks up the phone and starts to dial.)*
- #2:** *(Pulls out a gun.)* Put down the phone.
- #1:** What... *(Looks up, sees the gun, and freezes.)*
- #2:** I said, put down the phone! Now!
- #1:** *(Slowly puts the phone down.)* What are you doing?
- #2:** What am I doing? *(Pause)* Let me tell you a little story. There's a person I know who, up to a little while ago, had

a good job and was doing pretty well. Then in less than a month, that person is out of work, his/her reputation is shot, he/she can't pay the bills, and has no prospects. The funny thing is – that person didn't do anything wrong. So, what do you think about that?

- #1:** I don't know anything about it.
- #2:** You don't? Interesting. You know what's even funnier? You don't know anything about it, yet you wound up with that person's job. Coincidence?
- #1:** I got this job because I've worked my butt off and I deserve it!
- #2:** And landing the Roscoe Chemical account had nothing to do with it, right?
- #1:** I...um...see...no, you...
- #2:** You're stuttering. Why is that?
- #1:** I can't help it if the Roscoe people wanted to work with me and not you.
- #2:** That was my account. How did they even know about you?
- #1:** I don't know. Cheevers called me into his office and told me you were off the account and he was giving to me. That's the first time I ever saw the file.
- #2:** Now that's not entirely true, is it?
- #1:** Are you calling me a liar?
- #2:** I'm holding a gun. I can call you anything I want, but the facts are, you are a liar.
- #1:** Look I'm sorry you lost your job, but it's not my fault!
- #2:** OK, the truth. You came in here, when it was my office, photocopied my notes on the Roscoe account, and sold them to Ampex Chemical using my name. Then you told Cheevers that you had suspicions I was selling our clients' files. When it was confirmed, I was fired.
- #1:** You're demented! Why don't you get out of here before you find yourself in real trouble! I will call the police.
- #2:** *(Waves the gun.)* I don't think so.

- #1:** You're bluffing. Besides you can't prove any of this.
- #2:** I can't? You know, you may be bright, but you're not exactly clever. Do you think that none of this was traceable?
- #1:** You're fishing.
- #2:** I don't have to. It turns out that I have a friend at Ampex Chemical that I didn't even know I had.
- #1:** What are you talking about?
- #2:** Right before I got fired, I got a call at home from this guy who said that if I had anything else to sell, let him know.
- #1:** So, that doesn't prove it was me.
- #2:** Hold on, I'm not done. This guy said, he knew I couldn't talk long, but could he contact me at home or the other number I gave. I asked what number, and he gave me a cellular. I checked it against the office cellulars, and guess what? It was yours! Before I could say anything, I was fired. *(They just stare at each other.)* Nothing to say?
- #1:** What can I say. I did it.
- #2:** You wanna tell me why?
- #1:** Because this job should have been mine to begin with. I've been here longer and I'm every bit as good as you. Just because you had a friend on the board shouldn't have made any difference, but it did.
- #2:** I didn't get this job because of connections. I got it...
- #1:** Save it! You came in here demanding truth, well, try dispensing a little yourself. When you got this job, I did a little checking of my own. I saw the evaluation reports. We were dead even. The only advantage you had was a connection. Period!
- #2:** Would you have denied yourself a connection if you had one?
- #1:** I don't know, but let me ask you a question. What would you have done if you had been in my place?
- #2:** I wouldn't have destroyed another person's life. That's for sure.
- #1:** I had no other choice! I've been eating the dust of people

- like you for a long time. People I'm just as qualified as, or more. I'm sorry it had to turn out this way, but I had to think of me, not you!
- #2:** *(Moves forward to the desk.)* Well, you'd better start thinking of me, because right now, I'm your worst nightmare.
- #1:** And you think killing me will solve everything?
- #2:** I don't know about solving anything, but it will make me feel a whole lot better. But I don't think that'll be necessary.
- #1:** So what are you planning?
- #2:** *(Pulls out a letter.)* This is a confession. It outlines everything you did, in detail, and how you framed me.
- #1:** And if I don't do it?
- #2:** *(Goes for #1 and sticks the gun under his/her chin.)* Then this letter becomes a suicide note. Either way is fine with me. I'd prefer the confession, the alternative is just too messy.
- #1:** You'd never get away with this.
- #2:** Oh yeah, I would. I moved away, remember. No one knows I came to town or saw me come in here. I took a subway from the airport and by the time they find you, I'll be 2,000 miles away in my bed were I've been all night. So, don't even believe that I won't do it.
- #1:** Look, can't we just make a deal? I'll pay you. A lot. You can start over.
- #2:** Forget it! Sign.
- #1:** What about my life?
- #2:** I'll give you a quarter. You can call someone who cares. Sign! *(Puts the paper in front of #1 and pushes the gun deeper. #1 now picks up a pen and hesitantly signs the confession. #2 reads it, pulls the gun away and starts to exit.)*
- #1:** What makes you think I won't call the cops the minute you walk out of here?
- #2:** Because you're much smarter than that. You and I both know it. *(#2 exits.)*