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The Meeting
by Greg Freier

CHARACTERS
4 M

JENKINS: Man of any age, preferably older.
DIBBLE: Man of any age, preferably older.
PORTER: Man of any age, preferably older.
SMITH: Man of any age, preferably older.

SETTING

A Conference Room
SETTING:  A conference room with a large table in the middle.

AT RISE:  FOUR MEN dressed in suits seated around the table, all visible to the audience. Each man has a folder and water glass in front of him. A water jug sits in the center of the table.

JENKINS
I see by the notated fixations on the report that the unintended data is skewed on levels four and seven.

DIBBLE
Yes, but when you factor in the integrity dimensions from the outsourced placement team it brings levels four and seven back into a positive streamline.

PORTER
But not overseas.

SMITH
He’s right. According to the latest report the offline measurements decreased three percent over the past fourth of the last quarter.

DIBBLE
Which demographically speaking places us in the bottom ninth of our target market of no one special.

JENKINS
That’s totally inexcusable.

PORTER
The problem is staffing…you have to remember they downsized half the marketing team due to special circumstances.

SMITH
And then the half that was left, they transferred over to compliance due to an internal malaise.

DIBBLE
And let’s not forget Rogers in efficiency…a few weeks after that, he was abducted.
JENKINS
(Beat)
That’s right. I forgot about Rogers…did he ever turn up?

PORTER
About a month later in St. Thomas, but he refused to come back.

JENKINS
(Beat)
Is he still on payroll?

SMITH
Of course.

JENKINS
Good. Shows he’s got initiative.

DIBBLE
Word is he started his own consulting firm, at least according to the latest internal documents that were leaked.

PORTER
We also heard that he received a substantial bonus when he leased the subsidiary rights of our implemented system back to himself at a four hundred percent profit margin.

JENKINS
Is that legal?

SMITH
Not according to corporate.

DIBBLE
They have a hit out on him now.

JENKINS
As well they should. There’s nothing more I detest than a dishonest crook.

PORTER
Speaking of which, I’m taking the Brofsky group to lunch today. I’ll need four hundred thousand dollars.

JENKINS
(Signs a voucher)
Take this to accounting…and make sure they give you unmarked bills.
SMITH
(Beat)
Has anyone given any further thought to the bilateral communications initiative that the uppers wanted us to focus group?

DIBBLE
Can’t be done, the specs are all off.

PORTER
I noticed that too. Because the way it’s written, when you spread the hit over a seven year period, our tertiary market is downgraded to a point five.

JENKINS
Point five prime, or point five sub?

PORTER
Point five prime.

JENKINS
Damn.

DIBBLE
(Beat)
What if we farm the specs to one of our minimum wage subsidiaries overseas?

SMITH
We tried that…they were all on vacation.

PORTER
(Beat)
Could we fire someone?

JENKINS
Afraid not, we’re on a no firing freeze at the moment.

DIBBLE
(Beat)
What if we pass the blame on to someone that’s not us?

PORTER
We already have, that’s why half the marketing department is gone.

JENKINS
Good, that tends to alleviate the obvious incompetency from our department.
SMITH
(Beat)
I just hope it doesn’t get back that it was our idea to apply the conjunctural interface dismount to the network for backend reporting.

DIBBLE
He’s right, because not only didn’t it backend report, it caused a serious malware issue.

PORTER
Stimpson said it had something to do with the dialogue in the program.

SMITH
Apparently it was written in a stylistic gibberish that was based on an ancient hieroglyphic.

JENKINS
You’ve got to be kidding me? That would lend itself towards nothing but an esoteric component.

SMITH
Semantically speaking, yes.

DIBBLE
And the worst part is, technically it’s not their fault. The directive came from upper management.

JENKINS
(Beat)
But we’re upper management.

Hence the problem.

DIBBLE
What if we form a committee to study the external components of the team involved?

JENKINS
I like that…and then we can form subcommittees under the committee to study the committee.

SMITH
And once that’s done, we can form sub-subcommittees to study the subcommittees who are studying the committee at which time we can absolve ourselves from the entire matter.

JENKINS
(Beat)
Brilliant.
SMITH
I’ll begin a feasibility study next Monday.

JENKINS
And make sure you factor in an over exaggerated budget. That way it’ll look more impressive to our share holders.

SMITH
I’ll even bill us by the hour as consultants, that way we can write the entire thing off as an outside of work business expense.

PORTER
Make sure to pad the expense accounts then, we don’t want to appear as if we weren’t going first class.

DIBBLE
And let’s teleconference, that’s always impressive.

JENKINS
Teleconference… good idea.

SMITH
That way we can put our logo in the background for aesthetics.

JENKINS
And we’d also get to wear makeup to make us look more supple and luxurious.

DIBBLE
Plus we could use that circus clown again for a moderator.

JENKINS
I like that…I like that a lot.

PORTER
(Raises his hand)

Excuse me sir?

JENKINS
What is it Porter?

PORTER
Clowns scare me.

JENKINS
Then you’ll have to take one for the team Porter, this thing is bigger than all of us.
PORTER
Yes sir…for the sake of the team…I understand.

SMITH
(Beat)
Can we get one of those popcorn machines as well?

JENKINS
For the teleconference or just in general?

SMITH
For the teleconference…it might make the clown feel more at home. Plus the visuals would reflect a more caring company.

DIBBLE
I think he’s on to something. Because studies do indicate that popcorn generates a positive stimulus on the brain.

JENKINS
Yes, but can we fit that into the budget?

PORTER
We can if we have naked women standing by the popcorn machine.

SMITH
He’s right, that way accounting can deduct the entire facade under the delusional expense account.

DIBBLE
(Beat)
But don’t we need a certain number of naked women for it to fit under that heading?

PORTER
(Matter-of-factly)
Seven…we’ll need seven naked women.

JENKINS
Get Utterson on the naked women ASAP.

SMITH
(Shakes his head)
Can’t, he’s hospitalized.

DIBBLE
He was disemboweled over the weekend by his pet monkey.
JENKINS
(Beat)

What about Westervelt?

PORTER
No good either…prison. He was caught photographing little kids by a tree again.

JENKINS
(Beat)
Then one of you is going to have to deal with it, that’s all there is to it.

DIBBLE
I’ll get right on it.

JENKINS
And for god’s sake make sure we get a variety of naked women this time, because last time they all looked the same…It got very embarrassing not having a favorite one to stare at.

SMITH
Plus the clown should be a eunuch. That way we won’t have a repeat of last time.

JENKINS
And make sure all the naked women are really women…there was one last time that was debatable.

PORTER
That one would have been my wife sir…sorry about that.

JENKINS
Apology accepted…but in the future I’m holding you accountable…I don’t ever want to see her naked in this office again.

PORTER
Understood.

DIBBLE
(Beat; snaps his fingers)
A theme song…we’ll need a theme song for the intro to the teleconference.

Any ideas?

JENKINS

SMITH
We could get Evans. He’s a master of the pan flute.

PORTER
Evans died three years ago.
DIBBLE
What about Tittleton? I once heard him hum.

SMITH
Yes, but he was on his knees at the time.

DIBBLE
That’s right, I forgot about that part.

JENKINS
And his pitch was horrible…completely tone deaf.

PORTER
(Beat)
Should we, and I say this in the most tentative sense, consider the outside minimalistic, microscopic chance of hiring a professional? It might save us time.

JENKINS
(With anger)
You must be joking. Hire a professional? Come to your senses Porter. That’s not how we do things here. You of all people should know that.

PORTER
Yes, but considering past ventures…maybe it’s time to move into the future.

DIBBLE
You can’t be serious?

SMITH
Dear god, come to your senses you fool.

PORTER
It was just a thought.

DIBBLE
And it’s a thought that should never have been.

JENKINS
You’re just damn lucky we’re on a no firing freeze.

SMITH
I mean the last fool to suggest such nonsense was Hanrahan, and I still pray for his soul.

DIBBLE
It was a lesson to all of us.
SMITH
And it was a lesson that should never be repeated. (To JENKINS) Isn’t that right sir?

JENKINS removes a gun from his pocket.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes