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The Meeting

A Short Play

by Greg Freier

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The Meeting

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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

The Meeting

by Greg Freier

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 conjunctive 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.

DIBBLE

Hence the problem.

PORTER

(Beat)

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.

JENKINS

Any ideas?

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.

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