

WHATEVER IT TAKES

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FADE IN

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

A man's feet, in white patent leather shoes, stride down the sidewalk. He's carrying a stainless steel briefcase, a fine watch on his wrist.

Hair drawn back tight in a pony tail hangs over the collar of a designer Hawaiian shirt. He's got an intense look: There's serious business afoot. This is TOMMY BACON.

He arrives at a glass door. Enters.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

He approaches an unmarked office door. KNOCKS. It swings slowly open on its own.

TOMMY

Hello?

He leans in.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

He steps into the office.

TOMMY

Anybody home?

It's a large space, mostly empty. A couple of cubicles, some work lights and a ladder at the far end.

At the close end, BILL MARCOM, middle-aged middle-manager in a cheap suit, sits at a cluttered desk.

He's on the phone, an aggressive-looking KNIFE in his free hand. He motions Tommy in with the knife without pausing.

MARCOM

(into the
phone)

No, no, of course not. I have no idea what happened. I'll look into it. Right away. I'll have a meeting with AP, and I'll have someone get back to you ASAP.

He looks at Tommy with a wry smile, sticks his tongue out, makes a "jerk off" motion with the knife.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

Absolutely. I'll take care of it.
All righty. Bye bye.

He hangs up the phone, STABS the knife into a ball of cheap port wine cheese, turns to Tommy.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

Saps. We don't make any money if we give it all away. Y'know who said that? Tony Robbins said that. Frickin' genius. Chin like a Buick, but a frickin' genius.

(pause)

Who the fuck are you?

TOMMY

Tommy. Tommy Bacon. I'm here to see Mr. Marcom.

MARCOM

Like the actor?

TOMMY

Actor?

MARCOM

Kevin Bacon?

TOMMY

Footloose?

MARCOM

Footloose. Love that shit. They say everybody in Hollywood is related to him. You related to him?

TOMMY

No. No relation.

MARCOM

That's a damn shame. Everybody should be related to somebody. Me, I got a cousin who dated a girl who made out with Bruce Willis. Die not so Hard. Y'know what I mean? Just between you and me.

(pause)

So why are you here?

TOMMY

Chick sent me. He said he'd call ahead.

MARCOM
Chick Cubano?

TOMMY
Chick Cubano.

MARCOM
Sent you.

TOMMY
Yeah...

MARCOM
You work with Chick?

TOMMY
I work with Nathaniel.

MARCOM
Nate works for Chick.

TOMMY
Right.

MARCOM
So you know Marty.

TOMMY
Martin.

MARCOM
Marty Monkey.

TOMMY
He doesn't like that. I heard a
guy called him that, they found
him in a water cooler.
(beat)
Mostly.

MARCOM
I never got that. What's the
connection? I mean, monkey, water
cooler. I don't see the point.

TOMMY
I always thought it was awfully...
dramatic.

MARCOM
I mean, a guy calls you Marty
Monkey, you feed him to a monkey,
right? Or you whack him with a
monkey wrench. Or something.
Personalize it.

TOMMY

A signature.

MARCOM

Right. They're mean fuckers,
monkeys. Can't trust 'em. Like
donkeys. And lawyers. Saw it on
Animal Planet. Great shit.

TOMMY

I don't think monkeys eat people.

Marcom leans back a moment, considers Tommy while cutting
himself a hunk of cheese.

MARCOM

So what do you do for Chick?

TOMMY

I sell things.

MARCOM

I got a sales guy.

TOMMY

I create partnerships. I persuade
people.

MARCOM

You don't seem too persuasive so
far. So what does Chick think I
need with you?

TOMMY

He says your operation needs new
blood.

MARCOM

New blood?

TOMMY

Says I should drop in. I thought
he called ahead. I didn't think
there'd be a problem.

MARCOM

I'm not sure where I can use you,
is all. It's a complex operation.
Like I said, I got a sales guy.

TOMMY

I just do what Chick says.

Marcom rocks a bit, chases a hunk of cheese with a slug of
water. Sits up abruptly.

MARCOM

Fine. Let me show you around.

They stand. Marcom picks up the knife and cheese, which he works on as they walk. He spreads his arms, knife in hand, indicating the cluttered corner that is his office.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

You've seen the Executive Suite.

TOMMY

Nice.

MARCOM

Yeah, they treat me real well.

They walk down the empty room. Marcom sticks the knife in the cheese ball, pulls his bottled water out of the crook of his arm. He swigs from the water.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

You drink water? Can't drink too much water. It's great for you. What do they call, "hydrates" you. Good for the brain. Makes you think better. Like a cat. We run the whole operation from right here... heart and soul.

He taps the knife on a cubicle door.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

This is where the money moves.
This here is Accounts Payable...

The door swings ajar. No one is there. Marcom laughs at his joke, then taps on the next door. It drifts open. PAULIE is on the phone, feet on a desk.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

And this here is Paulie. Paulie!
Wake up! Dumb as a bag of hair,
but he sells this space okay.

Paulie puts his hand over the phone for privacy.

PAULIE

It's Johnny K. He wants the space
for Friday. Another rave.

MARCOM

No fuckin' fireballs this time.

PAULIE
 (into phone)
 No pyrotechnics this time.
 (pause)
 A thousand.
 (pause)
 Sweet.

He gives the "thumbs up" sign.

MARCOM
 And ten percent.

PAULIE
 (into phone)
 Plus the usual cut.
 (pause)
 Done.

"Thumbs up" again. Marcom hollers into the phone.

MARCOM
 And keep 'em the hell outta my
 desk! Last time my Mentos
 disappeared!

PAULIE
 (into phone)
 You got that?

He listens, laughs, hangs up.

MARCOM
 Come with us.

Marcom, Paulie and Tommy move on down the long room. Marcom indicates Tommy.

MARCOM (CONT'D)
 This here is Tommy Bacon.

PAULIE
 Like the actor?

MARCOM
 Don't be an idiot. That's Kevin
 Bacon. This is Tommy. He works for
 Chick. With Nate and Marty.

Paulie's eyes go big.

PAULIE
 The water cooler guy?

MARCOM

Right. We're doing the tour.

TOMMY

So what exactly are you doing here?

MARCOM

Whatever it takes. Most of the building is in use by upper management. They do some trucking and storage downstairs... waste management... and a little... automotive bodywork.

PAULIE

(laughs)

Bodywork.

MARCOM

Me, I manage the rest of the building, keep it occupied, legit. We got to keep up appearances. Stay off the radar. But in this economy, we have to get creative... sell the space, maximize income, minimize expense. For that, you gotta be sharp.

(taps his temple with the knife)

Sharp like a fox.

PAULIE

Like a fox.

Marcom shoots Paulie a "shut up" look, picks up a flyer from a stack on a box, hands it to Tommy.

MARCOM

The DMV uses us every third Friday for Comedy Driving School. Little Jewish guy, with a glass eye. Like Sammy Davidson. But he don't dance. Funny shit. Last month we had thirty Asian blue hairs in here at sewing machines. Power Puff Girls. Before that, we were storing barrels of something. We had to wear masks.

TOMMY

Barrels of something?

PAULIE
Don't ask, don't tell.

MARCOM
Plausible deniability.

As they've been talking, Marcom has maneuvered them onto plastic sheets spread near the work lights and ladder. Someone's been painting.

TOMMY
Very creative indeed. So, whatever it takes?

MARCOM
Whatever it takes.

TOMMY
And the raves? Off the books as well?

Marcom eyes Tommy. The sheets crinkle as they move about.

MARCOM
I got shit under control. So why Chick's gotta send you?

TOMMY
New blood. That's all he said.

Marcom thinks on that. Turns to Paulie.

MARCOM
Chick call you?

Paulie shrugs.

PAULIE
You can trust Chick.

Marcom suddenly flips the knife around, hands it to Tommy.

MARCOM
Make Paulie buy this knife, Tommy
Bacon who Chick sent.

Tommy looks at the knife curiously.

TOMMY
You want me to...

MARCOM

Chick thinks you're the shit. Get creative. Think from the box. Make him buy the knife.

Paulie want's no part of this.

PAULIE

I... I don't want the knife, Bill.

MARCOM

Take the knife, Tommy.

Tommy takes it gingerly between two fingers.

MARCOM (CONT'D)

Like you mean it, Tommy the shit. You're in the big leagues now, cowboy up. Grab the bull by the balls.

PAULIE

Come on, Bill.

MARCOM

Make him buy the knife.

Tommy looks at the knife. At Marcom. At Paulie. He turns the knife between two fingers, considers the blade.

TOMMY

What do you want, Paulie?

PAULIE

What do you mean?

TOMMY

I mean, what do you want? Do you know what you want?

PAULIE

I'm fine, thanks. I don't want anything.

TOMMY

Everybody wants something, Paulie.

PAULIE

I got what I want. I'm fine.

Tommy and Paulie slowly circle one another; Paulie in retreat. The plastic crunches. Tommy gestures with the knife.

TOMMY

Nobody has everything they want.
To get what you want, to get that
extra, you need power. Leverage.
People with power, they get what
they want. I have the leverage,
Paulie. Right now, I get what I
want.

Tommy turns the knife handle toward Paulie.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I want you to take the knife,
Paulie.

PAULIE

Really, I'm fine. Thank you,
though.

Tommy's eyes are steely, but his voice is oddly soothing.

TOMMY

Just take it. It won't hurt you.
See what it feels like.

Shaking, Paulie takes the knife. He grasps the handle, feels
the weight. He glances at Marcom for direction.

Tommy paces, his back to the others. He pulls a glove on.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

What you feel is advantage,
Paulie. Leverage. With enough
leverage, you can move the world.
It gives you confidence. What you
need to make the most of a
situation. Right wrongs. It feels
good, doesn't it? You like it?

Paulie's gotten no direction from Marcom, who's been
watching the dance curiously. Paulie hands the knife back to
Tommy.

PAULIE

I don't think so. Thanks.

Tommy takes the knife in his gloved hand, spins it deftly.

TOMMY

Mmmm. No. Not yet.

He turns to Marcom, arm around his shoulder, leans in.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Our friend Mr. Marcom wants it, though. Don't you, Bill? You want a little power? A little... leverage?

MARCOM

It's already mine.

Tommy hisses into his ear.

TOMMY

It was never yours.

He makes a single, accurate, lightning thrust at Marcom's chest. Buries the knife to the hilt.

Marcom's eyes bug. He grasps Tommy's wrist. Tommy turns the knife with a CRUNCH. Marcom's grip loosens. Blood drains onto one of Tommy's shoes. Tommy looks down at it, grimaces.

He withdraws the knife. Marcom falls to his knees.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

The DMV? Are you a moron?

Marcom looks at Tommy with pained confusion. Tommy is livid.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Just pay the fucking bills! Keep the building occupied, stay off the radar, and pay the fucking bills! You invite the DMV in here? You have parties? You think we don't see this? You think we don't have an accountant?

Marcom falls onto his face. Dead.

Tommy turns to Paulie, holds the knife up in his gloved hand. He chuckles.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

He handed me the knife.

Paulie looks at him, mouth agape.

PAULIE

Yeah.

Tommy pulls out a baggie, slips the knife in, ZIPS it shut.

TOMMY

Don't ever give up the knife,
Paulie. Ever.

(beat)

I guess you'd like to buy the
knife now, wouldn't you?

Paulie looks at the knife in the baggie, at his own
fingertips, at Tommy's gloved hand, back to the knife.

PAULIE

And... Um. What, Um...

TOMMY

You're not stupid, Paulie. You
are... sharp like a fox. I'll keep
the knife for you. You can buy
it... over time.

Tommy slips out of his blood spattered white loafers, leaves
them on the plastic. He steps away in his fine socks.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Wrap that mess up, Paulie. I'll
have Chick send someone for it.
Then have checks cut for the DSL
and the heat. We pay our debts
around here.

Paulie, standing on the plastic, stares at Marcom.

PAULIE

Yeah. Okay, Tommy. Mr. Bacon. Sir.

Tommy crosses to Marcom's desk, lifts his briefcase from the
floor to the desktop. He answers the ringing phone.

TOMMY

W.I.T. Tommy Bacon, CEO.

(pause)

Oh, yeah, I'm glad you called. You
were next on my list. Listen, tell
me what our total is. I'm having
AP cut some checks...

He snaps open the briefcase, removes an identical pair of
fine white loafers.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Absolutely. You betcha. Whatever
it takes.

FADE OUT