

New Media

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. VENTURE CAPITAL OFFICE - DAY

JESSICA, 29, intelligent, charming, and seemingly mild mannered, walks out of the building with DYLAN, 26, a skinny and overconfident "big picture" tech bro.

Dylan seems over the moon while walking with a check in his hand. Jessica has a very uneasy, almost regretful, look on her face.

JESSICA

I don't feel good about what we just did.

DYLAN

This is how things work, Jessica.

JESSICA

It's not, though.

DYLAN

It's called a pre-seed funding round. Don't act like this is news to you.

JESSICA

It's called we just got handed \$10 million in exchange for a bunch of PowerPoint slides.

There's a tense silence between Dylan and Jessica. They get to their car. Dylan gets in the driver's seat, Jessica rides shotgun and they start driving away.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jessica still seems haunted by something. She lowers the music to talk to Dylan.

JESSICA

Nothing about this feels wrong to you?

DYLAN

No.

JESSICA

Are you serious?

DYLAN

This is the strangest "thank you"
I've ever gotten.

(beat)

Wow, Dylan. Thank you so much for
reaching out to your network to help
our business --

JESSICA

We don't have a business...

DYLAN

It's so amazing how your business
acumen was able to get us an
incredible valuation for our pre-seed
round. I can't believe you would do
all this for us. You're the best,
Dylan.

(beat)

That's how this conversation should
have gone.

Dylan turns up the music and keeps driving with a soured
look on his face.

JESSICA

(speaking over the
music)

Do you even know what we're gonna do
with this \$10 million?

Dylan turns down the music.

DYLAN

That's not my job.

JESSICA

What do you mean?

DYLAN

You're the CFO, you're the one who
has to figure that out.

(beat)

I'm the CEO. I'm big picture. Vision.
Strategy. I'm not asking you to do my
job, so why would I do yours?

JESSICA

So you're gonna tell me -- with a
straight face -- that we BOTH walk
out of that office with that
offensively large amount of money,
but it's just me who has to deal with
this \$10 million problem?

Dylan aggressively pulls the car over. He's clearly lost his temper.

DYLAN
\$10 million problem? \$10 million
problem!? Literally shut the fuck up.

JESSICA
Sure, man. I'll shut the fuck up.

DYLAN
Why do you need to ruin this for me,
huh? Why do you need to harsh the
vibes like this, Jessica? What the
fuck is wrong with you? This is
literally the best news you've ever
gotten in your entire life.

JESSICA
It's not, though.

DYLAN
Shut up! We have a business now. I'm
your boss, and I'm telling you to
shut the fuck up and figure out what
we're gonna do next with our pre-seed
funding that, I, the CEO of this
company, ever so kindly got for us.

JESSICA
Okay...

DYLAN
This is fucking normal! It's standard
VC procedure! \$10 million is
peanuts! --

JESSICA
It's not, though.

DYLAN
Whatever. Now you got me thinking
about a bunch of shit I don't need to
be thinking about. You did it,
Jessica. You successfully killed the
best moment of our lives. Good job.

Dylan is clearly rattled and overly stressed. He turns up the music. Jessica backs off and starts scrolling through her phone. They drive the rest of the way to the hotel in silence.

INT. JESSICA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jessica is working on her laptop with a hyper focused look on her face.

She's quickly tapping on her keyboard and clicking around. You can see the cogs turning in her head.

Hours pass by and Jessica doesn't even notice.

While Jessica is working on a spreadsheet on her laptop, she glances at the clock on the computer screen. It reads 3:12 AM.

JESSICA

What the fuck...

Jessica closes her laptop and walks over to the bathroom.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Jessica washes her face in the bathroom. Once she's done, she stares at herself in the mirror for some time. She looks very concerned and overwhelmed.

JESSICA

What the fuck did you get yourself into, you fucking idiot... What the fuck did you get yourself into...

INT. DYLAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dylan is sitting on the couch in his living room watching TV. Dylan's apartment is a little too big and luxurious for a guy his age. The coffee table in his living room is dirty and messy with weed paraphernalia scattered all over it.

Jessica is sitting in a separate seat focused on work as she scrolls through a tablet.

JESSICA

So I think we have our whole C-suite just about ready... Here, have a look.

Jessica hands the tablet to Dylan.

JESSICA (cont'd)

You can see resumes and the corresponding headshot if you scroll to the right.

Dylan quickly swipes through all three resumes and headshots without paying any attention to them. He puts the tablet aside and picks up a joint from the coffee table.

Jessica takes a deep breath and lets out a long sigh. She sits there in silence waiting to see what might happen next.

Dylan lights the joint and takes a big puff. He offers Jessica the joint. She slowly shakes her head with a resigned look on her face.

DYLAN

Enough of this corporate stuff. Anyone can write a resume. I wanna know what you think about these people, Jessica. Let's talk. We need to have open communication in this team. I wanna know what you think. In your own words.

JESSICA

Silly me... I thought you were gonna actually read about the people we are about to pay an arm and a leg to work for us *before* we started talking about it.

DYLAN

I don't need to read any resumes. This is a people business. --

JESSICA

Sure, man.

DYLAN

I trust you on that paperwork stuff. You always do a great job. Let's just talk... Person to person.

Dylan takes a huge puff of the joint, he lets it out and leans back on the couch as if he owns the whole world.

Jessica closes her eyes and breathes deeply. Dylan is completely oblivious to Jessica's obvious frustration.

JESSICA

Okay, whatever. We're in this now.

Jessica stands up and grabs the tablet.

JESSICA (cont'd)

First off, we have Kenneth Marks. Goes by Kenneth. He's a savant of sorts.

(MORE)

JESSICA (cont'd)
 Statistics, data science, computer
 science, programming,
 cybersecurity... He knows it all
 inside and out.

(beat)
 He's lacking quite a bit on the
 social skills, but for our purposes
 now, he'd make a great CTO.

(beat)
 If you approve, he's ready to accept
 a job offer and start immediately.

Dylan keeps smoking his joint. He's zoning out almost
 completely. Dylan tries to make it seem like he's paying
 attention by constantly nodding, so Jessica just powers
 through.

JESSICA (cont'd)
 Next we got Nathan Rushmore. Goes by
 Nate. He's an MBA, a straight up
 people person. He's all about
 leadership and execution. He knows
 how to achieve objectives and
 deliver. This is who I think should
 be our COO.

(beat)
 For now he'll basically be in charge
 of content creation. What we make,
 why we make it, and how much we make
 of it.

Dylan takes another puff and starts coughing loudly.

DYLAN
 (coughing)
 I'm the one who says what we make.

JESSICA
 Sure, Dylan.
 (beat)
 And last, but hopefully not least,
 your college buddy Jaden Florence.
 Who goes by Jay probably because
 saying Jaden takes too long.

(beat)
 That's our CMO -- He'll be figuring
 out how to grow our user base and
 paying close attention to our KPIs.
 That should round out the team.

Dylan grabs the tablet and starts swiping through the
 resumes and headshots.

DYLAN
No minorities?

JESSICA
Are you serious right now?

DYLAN
I mean... That's like a big thing
right now, isn't it? Having
minorities on the team?

JESSICA
Look, man. There's nothing I can do
for you there. I know and I trust
Nate and Kenneth. And I know they'll
deliver the results we need right
now. You insisted on your college
buddy as CMO. If your diversity quota
is so important, find someone
yourself to put there.

DYLAN
Nah... It's no biggie. You did a
great job, Jessica. I'm really proud
of you. You can go ahead and get all
these guys on board. I trust your
judgment.

JESSICA
I trust my judgment, too.

Jessica packs up her stuff and walks out of the apartment.
Dylan continues to get stoned while working very hard at
looking like he has it all under control.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jessica sits at the conference room table alongside KENNETH,
30s, a socially awkward and particularly serious techie,
NATE, 30s, a clean cut business guy with a winning smile,
and JAY, 26, a rather unremarkable stereotype of a rich kid.

There's documents scattered all over the table and everyone
has a laptop in front of them.

Dylan is standing in front of the screen wrapping up his
presentation for the group.

DYLAN
In conclusion, this company will be
so much more than a news outlet.
(MORE)

DYLAN (cont'd)

(beat)

We will be a -- nay, *the* New. Media.
Movement. Thank you.

There's an awkward silence in the room after Dylan finishes his presentation.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Any questions?

Kenneth raises his hand.

DYLAN (cont'd)

No need to raise your hand.

KENNETH

Okay.

(beat)

So you need me to build a news
website?

Dylan is visibly frustrated with Kenneth's question.

DYLAN

No, dude. Weren't you listening? This
isn't gonna be just a news website.
This whole thing is so much more than
that. We are a new media movement.

KENNETH

Right. I'm still confused. I don't
know how to code a new media
movement.

DYLAN

We're not just gonna do what everyone
has already done. We are different.
We need to disrupt news and media.

KENNETH

Ummm...

JESSICA

May, I? Kenneth, for now we just need
you to put together a news website.
The "so much more" can come later,
we'll cross that bridge when we get
there, and we'll build it on top of a
strong foundation.

(beat)

Does that sound good to you, Dylan?

DYLAN

Yeah, what she said. Do that.

NATE

I think we're pretty good on my end. I can just hire a small team and we'll give you some proposals for content strategy based on what you said today.

DYLAN

(visibly relieved)

Thank you! That's more like what I wanna hear.

NATE

No problem. I'll get working on this right away, and I'll get back to you soon.

There's an awkward silence in the room. Jessica, Kenneth, and Nate are all staring at Jay. Jay is looking around trying his best to avoid eye contact.

JESSICA

What about you, Jaden?

JAY

I'm good.

JESSICA

You're good?

JAY

Yeah, I'm good.

JESSICA

Anything you wanna say or add?

JAY

Nah, that's okay.

JESSICA

Really, man? Thoughts? Comments? Concerns?

JAY

Nah, I'm good.

DYLAN

He already told you he's fine. What's the problem?

Jessica takes a deep breath and looks around the room to get a gauge for everyone's reaction.

JESSICA

Nothing. Just wanted to make sure we covered everything.

DYLAN

Okay, that's good. I gotta head out. Are you okay to stay here and wrap things up?

JESSICA

Sure, man. Who am I to get in the way of your prior engagements.

DYLAN

Thanks, Jessica. I really appreciate your dedication.

Dylan walks out of the room.

Kenneth and Nate awkwardly look at Jessica with some mild concern on their faces. Jay is still doing his best to seem invisible.

INT. JESSICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Jessica is sitting at her desk working on a spreadsheet. She has a confused and frustrated look on her face.

There's a knock on the door.

JESSICA

Come in.

Nate and Kenneth walk into Jessica's office. Nate is carrying an open laptop with a smile on his face.

NATE

Got some news for you.

JESSICA

Please tell me they're good.

NATE

I think so.

Nate and Kenneth take a seat at Jessica's desk. Nate hands Jessica the laptop.

NATE (cont'd)

Here. I figured you'd want to take a look. This is the final version of the site. It's all ready for launch.

JESSICA

Really?

Jessica eagerly takes the laptop and starts looking through the website.

KENNETH

Yeah. It's on a timer ready to go live.

Jessica gets increasingly more amazed and excited at the site the more she clicks around.

JESSICA

This is beautiful. You guys are amazing.

NATE

Thanks. It wasn't easy.

JESSICA

I love the color scheme, too. Did Jaden actually do that?

NATE

Officially, yes. Jay took care of all the branding.

JESSICA

And unofficially?

NATE

Unofficially...

(beat)

Well, unofficially I told him what we should do, he agreed with everything, and I got it done.

JESSICA

I'm really sorry, Nate. I really am.

NATE

It's not a big deal.

JESSICA

It is, though. It's a huge deal.

(beat)

I don't know what to do about Dylan and Jaden. I just... I... I don't know. I'm at a loss for words, and I have no idea where to go from here.

There's a long pause. Jessica has a regretful look on her face. Nate changes his demeanor and gets serious all of a sudden.

NATE

Do you see the vision?

JESSICA

What?

NATE

Do you see the vision, Jessica? You know what I'm asking.

JESSICA

I don't know.

NATE

Don't fuck around with me.

JESSICA

I thought I did. But now... I'm not so sure.

NATE

So you're gonna tell me Dylan came up with the name "Icebreaker Media Group".

JESSICA

Officially, yes.

NATE

I need to know you see the vision, Jessica. 'Cause if you don't, I'm out.

Jessica takes a moment to think.

JESSICA

I do. I see the vision. I just don't know what happened. And I feel like it's all my fault.

NATE

Nothing's happened. Six months from now, a year from now, this will be a completely different business. As long as you see the vision and believe in what you got us all into, everything will be fine.

JESSICA

You really believe that?

NATE
(chuckling)
I kinda have to.

JESSICA
What about you, Kenneth?

KENNETH
I like this place. I like the idea. I think we can do something. That's all I have.

Nate gets up and takes his laptop from Jessica.

NATE
Are you gonna be okay?

JESSICA
Are there other choices?

INT. ICEBREAKER MEDIA GROUP LOBBY - NIGHT

The office lobby is an open concept resembling a typical co-working space. The office has a very trendy atmosphere and about a dozen desks with computers.

There are about 15 EMPLOYEES gathered in a celebratory mood. The entire C-suite is also present.

Dylan and Jay are pouring glasses of champagne for everyone. They are both ready to party all night long.

Jessica is sitting at a desk trying to stay away from the action. She looks slightly out of place and bored with the gathering already.

Kenneth approaches Jessica and sits next to her. He is carrying a six pack of craft beer.

KENNETH
Hi.

JESSICA
Hi.

KENNETH
Do you want one?

JESSICA
What is it?

KENNETH
Very average craft beer.

JESSICA
Sure. I'll take one.

Kenneth opens a can of beer and hands it to Jessica.

Jessica just sits there quietly in a pensive mood. Kenneth does not mind the silence.

JESSICA (cont'd)
You know that champagne is \$135 a bottle?

(mocking Dylan)
"But if you buy the case of 12 it comes out to \$120 a bottle so it's basically free".

KENNETH
I did not know that.

Nate gets his glass of champagne from Dylan and Jay, and walks over to Jessica.

NATE
Is this some sort of symbolic protest?

JESSICA
That champagne costs \$135 a bottle.

NATE
I know. It's fucking great.

JESSICA
This isn't okay.

NATE
You're gonna let wine with bubbles ruin your night?

JESSICA
I don't know. Maybe.

NATE
We're launching something pretty special tonight. And this is the company that you founded.
(beat)
Is this celebration-slash-launch tacky and in bad taste? Yes. So what. It's a big night. Because this is a big milestone. Try to enjoy it and trust that the invisible hand of the market will take care of the children.

Jessica sighs and rolls her eyes.

JESSICA
Whatever.

NATE
That's the spirit!

Dylan starts gathering everyone and getting their attention to address the floor.

JESSICA
Oh, look. Dylan of Nazareth is about to speak.

Kenneth chuckles.

DYLAN
(addressing everyone)
Could I please have everyone's attention for just a moment? I want to thank everyone here for all your hard work.
(beat)
Tonight is the night. We finally made it to the finish line. Icebreaker Media Group -- our company -- is finally launching tonight.
(beat)
This is so much more than a news outlet. It is the New. Media. Movement.
(beat)
Thank you! And let's fucking party!

The employees give Dylan a tepid applause, except for Jay who is overly enthusiastic about the brief speech. Everyone gets back to their business.

JESSICA
(to Nate)
Nothing about this worries you?

NATE
Have some faith. Have. Some. Faith.

Jessica and Kenneth both laugh at Nate's joke.

JESSICA
(smiling)
Okay... I guess it's not all bad.

INT. DYLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Dylan's office is fairly empty. There's not much going on other than his computer.

Dylan has all the blinds closed and he's set up on his desk several lines of a white powder he's diligently snorting.

We hear three quick knocks on the door, and immediately after Jessica opens the office door only to find Dylan halfway through a line. Jessica quickly enters the office and slams the door shut behind her.

JESSICA

What the fuck, Dylan!

Dylan is stunned. He looks around confused trying to come up with something to say.

DYLAN

It's not what it looks like! I promise!

JESSICA

It looks like you're getting coked out right before our investor update.

DYLAN

It's okay. It's just Adderall. I have a prescription. It's not a big deal.

Jessica walks up to the desk and uses her pinky to taste some of the powder on the table.

JESSICA

This is cocaine.

Dylan looks like he just saw a ghost. He tries to speak, but he can't come up with anything.

JESSICA (cont'd)

And what the fuck?! How is snorting Adderall in these circumstances any better?! You're a fucking child!

(beat)

Fuck! Get your shit together, man!
It's not that fucking hard!

Jessica is fuming. It takes some time for Jessica to calm down and be coherent again.

Dylan's strategy is to just stay as still and quiet as possible during this.

DYLAN

I just... It helps me focus, you know? It helps me be clear headed.

JESSICA

Being under the influence of mind altering drugs helps you be clear headed?

DYLAN

When you say it like that... I promise it's okay. I have it all under control.

Jessica looks down at the ground thinking for a moment. She paces around the room slowly thinking of what to say next.

JESSICA

Okay... Okay. Alright...

(beat)

This is what we're gonna do. You're coming with me right now. And you're not leaving my sight until after the conference call is done. If you need to so much as take a piss, you best believe I will be there staring at you making sure that is the case.

(beat)

This is your drug problem. It's not my problem. And I'm not gonna let you make it my problem. You're the CEO, you like to do all the talking, so we're going to make that call. The entire C-suite will say hello as a courtesy. And you'll do the rest of the investor update.

(beat)

After that, you can do whatever the fuck you want. I'm not your mother. As long as your bullshit doesn't become my problem, you can do whatever you want.

(beat)

Is that clear?

DYLAN

(looking down at the ground in shame)

Yes, Ma'am.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The entire C-suite is gathered in the conference room ready for their call with investors.

Jessica looks livid. She's staring down Dylan to let him know mistakes will not be tolerated.

JESSICA

Ready?

Dylan nods his head looking a little scared. Jessica unmutes the conference call.

DYLAN

Hey, guys! How's are my favorite VCs doing today? I hope you guys are ready 'cause we got nothing but good news for you!

INT. JESSICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Jessica sits at her desk working through a spreadsheet and jotting some things down on a piece of paper. She seems frustrated and confused, almost as if she's trying to solve a puzzle.

Jessica's phone vibrates. She picks up her phone to see a text from Dylan. The text reads "We're selling the company. 60 mil".

JESSICA

Fuck you, too.

Jessica immediately gets up and storms out of her office with a purpose.

INT. DYLAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Dylan and Jay are sitting in Dylan's office just chilling without a care in the world.

Jessica storms through the door to confront Dylan. She is rather upset.

JESSICA

What the fuck did you just text me?

DYLAN

Umm... Come in?

JESSICA

What the fuck did you just text me.

DYLAN

We're selling the company. 60 million.

(beat)

This seems like an odd reaction to such great news.

JESSICA

And I take it Jaden knew of this rather material development before I did?

DYLAN

Umm, yeah. He was there when we got the offer. Hamilton Media Group offered to buyout the company. You've probably never heard of them.

JESSICA

Of course I've fucking heard of them. They're basically real life super villains.

(beat)

You're gonna have to elaborate a little more.

Dylan starts getting defensive.

DYLAN

Relax. It's a friend of my dad's. Offered to buy us out for \$60 million cash.

JESSICA

WHY.

DYLAN

You seriously asking?

JESSICA

Need me to ask again?

DYLAN

Oh my God. Chill. All our KPIs are amazing. Who wouldn't wanna buy us?

(beat)

Our DAUs, WAUs, and MAUs are all great. We have no churn. And our growth rate and projected growth is literally unbelievable.

JESSICA
Are you fucking with me right now?

DYLAN
I understand if this is an emotional moment for you. But it's a done deal, Jessica.

JESSICA
We're not fucking selling.

DYLAN
It's not up to you.

JESSICA
Enlighten me, dipshit.

DYLAN
Whoa, I really don't appreciate the hostility -- I just made you \$24 million richer.

(beat)
Anyhow, the VCs and I both wanna sell. That's a 60 percent vote. Your opinion doesn't matter. I'm sorry if this upsets you, but I just made you really fucking rich.

JESSICA
We're not fucking selling.

DYLAN
I don't know what to tell you. It's a done deal. They're about to start due diligence. This is good news, Jessica. We flipped this company in less than a year. That's really great by any standard.

Jessica walks up to Dylan's desk. She puts her hands on Dylan's desk and gets up in his face.

JESSICA
You don't fucking fool me. I see you, Dylan. One plus one does not equal 60 million. We are not selling. I decided. Period. Don't believe me? Just give it a second.

Jessica glances at Jay, who looks absolutely terrified of her.

JESSICA (cont'd)
This whole thing smells rotten. And
your KPIs can kiss my ass.

(beat)
Go ahead. Tell me -- with a straight
face -- that Jaden Florence is
directly responsible for having the
best KPIs in the start up community.

Dylan and Jay are both dead silent. Jessica takes one last
look at both of them and walks out of the office.

JESSICA (O.S.)
FUCK!

INT. JESSICA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Jessica is sitting at her computer manically scrolling
through spreadsheets and computer files in the dark. She's
clearly been going at it for a long time.

After investigating a little longer, she seems to stumble
upon something useful.

JESSICA
(shaking her head)
Motherfuckers...

Jessica prints out some documents and walks out of her
office.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jessica's car is parked outside of the Icebreaker Media
Group office. She seems to be on a stake out.

A car pulls into a nearby parking spot. Jay steps out of the
car.

Jessica quickly gets out of her car to confront Jay.

EXT. ICEBREAKER MEDIA GROUP PARKING LOT - DAY

JESSICA
(yelling)
Hey!

Jay is startled. He drops his keys as he was trying to lock
his car. Jay tries to quickly pick up his keys to get out of
there as quick as possible. With hands shaking Jay picks up
his keys and tries to lock his car once again.

JESSICA (cont'd)
(yelling louder)

Hey!

Jay drops his keys once again. He's terrified. Jessica starts running towards him. Jay can't seem to move anymore. Jessica catches up to Jay by his car.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Were you trying to run away from me?

JAY
Ummm...

JESSICA
Why do you look so guilty, Jaden?

JAY
I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just trying to get to work.

Jessica grabs Jay by his jacket and pins him up against his car.

JESSICA
What the fuck is J.W. Consulting, Jaden?

Jay is frightened. He's stuttering and fumbling his words.

JAY
I -- I -- I don't know. -- Never heard those words in my life before.

JESSICA
What the fuck is J.W. Consulting, Jaden Florence.

JAY
I don't know! A consulting company? How the fuck am I supposed to know?! I've never heard that fucking name before!

JESSICA
I see...

Jessica lets go of Jay's jacket and takes a step back. She's much more calm now.

JESSICA (cont'd)
Did you know that fraud is a federal crime?

JAY

What?

JESSICA

Two million dollars is a lot of money, Jaden.

JAY

Okay, sure. I guess.

JESSICA

You think this is a joke, don't you?

JAY

I don't know what you're talking about.

JESSICA

You should go on the FBI website and look up the definition of fraud. I think you'll find it rather illuminating.

Jay is quiet. He's unofficially pleading the fifth with Jessica. His eyes look as guilty as can be.

JESSICA (cont'd)

So. Is J.W. Consulting exactly what I think it is?

(beat)

Yes or no.

JAY

I don't know. I have no idea what's going on.

JESSICA

You're a terrible liar. And an even worse white collar criminal.

(beat)

I suggest you take the day off. There's two million dollars missing from what I can only deduce is your budget, and it was allocated to a firm that as far as I can tell, does not exist.

(beat)

So it's either fraud or negligence. Should've paid more attention in Business Law.

Jessica stares down Jay. She gives him a look to get back in his car. Jay acquiesces, starts the car, and drives away.

INT. JESSICA'S OFFICE - DAY

Jessica sits at her desk looking pensive and conflicted. She's staring at her phone debating whether or not to make the call. She's looking at the number for an Adrian in her phone book.

After enough thought and hesitation, she builds up the courage to make the call. Jessica puts the phone up to her ear and waits for what feels like forever.

JESSICA

Hi. Adrian?

(beat)

Yes. I, ummm... I... So -- I hate to -- I'm sorry I don't even know what I'm saying.

(beat)

So you know how you always said to call you if I needed anything? Like how you always emphasize that I can call you for anything no matter what? And you repeatedly tell me I can call you if I ever need help or anything like that? Like over and over again?

(hesitant)

I need your help. I need your help really bad.

(sobbing)

Everything's fucked. Everything is so fucking fucked and I have no idea what to do and I need help.

(crying)

It's really bad. It's really fucking bad. I don't know what to do. I need you, Adrian. Everything's fucked and you're the only person in the world who I can call for help. Please.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Jessica is sitting at a park bench looking around and patiently waiting.

ADRIAN, 30s, a charming, cunning, and kind entrepreneur, spots Jessica from far away. He waves at her as he continues to walk towards her.

Jessica sees Adrian and waves back. A huge smile takes over her face. As soon as Adrian gets close enough, she gives him a huge hug and holds on for a long time.

ADRIAN
I missed you, too.
(beat)
So... Everything's fucked?

Jessica nods. They both take a seat on the park bench.

JESSICA
Thanks for coming.

ADRIAN
For you, anything.

JESSICA
You say that...

ADRIAN
You don't believe me?

JESSICA
No. It's not that. I just... I don't
want you to think that I'll only ever
call you or see you if I need
something from you.

ADRIAN
(chuckling)
That's fine. But you need something
from me, don't you?

JESSICA
It's really bad.

ADRIAN
You need me to do something really
bad?

JESSICA
No. Obviously, no. I mean my life,
everything. It got so bad --

ADRIAN
It got so bad that seeing me again
was tolerable? -- In relative terms.

JESSICA
Please don't say that.

ADRIAN
I'm kidding... Maybe not... Who knows
anymore.
(beat)
I saw you're working on a startup.

JESSICA

That might be about to change.

ADRIAN

What can I do for you, Jessica?

JESSICA

I think I already have a plan. But there's something I don't have that I need. And I hate to ask. I really don't want you to think -- I don't know -- I, ummm -- Ugh!

(beat)

I need your help. And I need your money. And I'm sorry if it sounds like I only called you for your money, but I don't know how else to put this.

ADRIAN

I don't mind.

JESSICA

The whole company is fraud. The CEO is a fucking child and paid two million dollars to cook all the KPIs. And now there's a buyout offer on the table.

ADRIAN

But not really, you can't sell if it's all bullshit.

JESSICA

I know, but he doesn't. And if I say anything -- anything at all -- that's it for the company. And everything we all did would have been for nothing.

ADRIAN

You need me to buy him out is what you're saying?

JESSICA

Yes. But I also need you to CEO. -- By the way, would you be interested in a job as CEO of this hot new startup? I hear great things.

ADRIAN

The VCs should have right of first refusal on this guy's stock. And you got a story on why the buyout fell through?

JESSICA

They're not exactly VCs... It's a couple crypto fuckwads who wanted to "diversify" into Venture Capital. They don't know shit. Our contract is a joke. They have no right of first refusal. I checked. They're crypto guys, they think the law doesn't apply to them so they don't have much in the way of legal counsel.

ADRIAN

So you want me to pay top dollar to join a shitshow in the Titanic?

JESSICA

Kinda... I need you. We're building something. It's special. It's real. It can't die. Not like this. Not from fraud. Please, Adrian.

ADRIAN

You know I'd do anything for you. You really believe in this concept?

JESSICA

Yes. I do. I do. Not just the concept. The team is incredible. I just... I need help. I need *your* help.

ADRIAN

How does the CEO feel about all this?

JESSICA

Well... The situation is in flux at the moment.

ADRIAN

He doesn't fucking know. You're hilarious. That's gonna be a fun conversation...

Adrian gets up and lets out an exasperated sigh.

ADRIAN (cont'd)

Wanna go get some food?

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Adrian and Jessica are sitting in the conference room waiting for Dylan. Jessica is visibly anxious.

JESSICA
You know what you're gonna say?

ADRIAN
No.

JESSICA
That's reassuring.

ADRIAN
I don't know this guy. I gotta play
it by ear.

JESSICA
He's a piece of shit. That's all you
gotta know.

ADRIAN
I don't doubt that.

JESSICA
You're too calm. It bothers me.

Dylan walks into the conference room with a big smile. He approaches Adrian to shake his hand.

DYLAN
Hey. I'm Dylan. It's really nice to
meet you.

ADRIAN
You too.

Dylan takes a seat while doing his best to seem super confident and in charge.

DYLAN
So what exactly is this about?
Jessica was pretty ambiguous, if I'm
being honest. She just said you're a
good friend of hers with a lot of
experience in startups.

ADRIAN
Yeah, that's pretty much it. Just
wanted to --

JESSICA
We know what you did, Dylan. -- Or at
least I know what you did. -- You're
fucking done. I told you your shit
wasn't gonna fly and I got you. But
it's okay.

(MORE)

JESSICA (cont'd)
Nobody is gonna have to go to jail.
There's not gonna be any need to get
the government involved.

Dylan is extremely indignant and outraged. He takes on an
overly defensive demeanor.

DYLAN
Excuse you?

Adrian gently puts his hand on Jessica's to get her
attention and looks her in the eyes.

ADRIAN
Please.
(beat)
Let's try this again. Please ignore
what Jessica just said. She's a
little agitated because there's a
fairly problematic situation in the
company.

DYLAN
Sure... But this is news to me, just
so you know.

ADRIAN
I don't doubt it.

Jessica is visibly fuming. She opens her mouth to speak, but
Adrian gives her a look that tells her to be quiet and deal
with it for now.

DYLAN
So what's the problem? And what have
you got to do with it?

ADRIAN
I don't have anything to do with the
problem. But I do have what I think
will be a solution that leaves
everyone happy.

DYLAN
Yeah, I'll be the judge of that.

Adrian takes on a frighteningly calm and matter of fact tone
of voice.

ADRIAN
The CFO of your corporation very
recently found out that \$2 million
are missing.

(MORE)

ADRIAN (cont'd)

In addition, there is a rather compelling pile of evidence that would lead a reasonable person to believe that all -- or at least *most* -- of your KPIs are being fraudulently misrepresented.

DYLAN

I had no idea about any of this.

ADRIAN

It's okay. I believe you. Nobody here is looking for culprits. Regardless of how this happened, or who is responsible, the problem is still present. And it's an existential problem for the corporation.

(beat)

Now that you know all of this, if you were to sell the corporation in its current state, you could be held liable in a civil suit. You could also potentially face some criminal liability. But this is only if you were to proceed with a sale of the company now that you are aware of this existential problem.

Dylan is doing his best to mask his rage and seem calm.

DYLAN

I understand. You're saying there's no way we can sell the company right now.

ADRIAN

You can do whatever you want, but there will most likely be consequences.

DYLAN

Whatever. I get it. What's your brilliant solution?

ADRIAN

For the fraud problem, I don't have a solution right now.

DYLAN

Get to the motherfucking point. I'm already over this conversation. We all know what's going on here. Say what you came here to say or get out of my fucking office.

ADRIAN

I'm here to offer you \$2 million for your stake in the company. \$2 million in exchange for you fucking off forever.

DYLAN

How about you fuck off?

ADRIAN

Don't like it?

DYLAN

My stake is worth way more than that.

ADRIAN

Think you can find a buyer? You have already been made aware of a problem, that if you do not disclose to a potential buyer... Well, you already know.

DYLAN

Fuck you, man. I already fucking hate you.

ADRIAN

You're going to tell the VCs the company is worth way more than what Hamilton offered. And you can't wait to see just how high it can go. You're gonna take \$2 million in exchange for your stake, and you're gonna sign a little piece of paper that says if you tell anyone how much you sold your stake for, you're gonna owe me \$2 million.

Dylan looks like he's about to cry. He's fighting with all he's got to hold the tears back.

ADRIAN (cont'd)

Jessica and I are gonna leave now. My lawyers are gonna get in touch soon.

(beat)

It's over, kid. You're free. Nothing happened. Nobody got blamed, nobody got hurt, and you got paid.

(beat)

Have a good life.

Jessica and Adrian walk out of the conference room. As soon as the door closes Dylan bursts into tears.