

LIFE LIST

A New Play

by

Scott Cohen

LIFE *Arts*

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Cast of Characters

Steven: CEO of Blue Sky dot com, 50 years old.

Jim: Attorney and Steven's right hand man, age 50's/early 60's

Gabrielle: Technology reporter, age late 40's/mid 50's

Frank: Vice President of Sales, age late 20's to early 30's

Rosa: Executive Assistant and Office Manager, age 40's

Dan Boatman: Venture Capitalist (VC)/investor, age 30's

Additional Voice Mail Messages: Played by members of the cast on stage and/or recorded in advance.

Setting

Blue Sky dot-com company offices in midtown New York City, except Act 1, Scene 2 is at the Palm Restaurant.

Act 1, Scene 1-4 takes place in June

Act 1, Scene 5 takes place in July

Act 1, Scene 6 takes place in September

Note on Dialogue

A slash / indicates the beginning of overlapping text. The next line of dialogue should begin at this point and actors speak simultaneously.

Synopsis

LIFE LIST provides a behind the scenes look into the daily dramas of the dot-com boom. Alliances are forged as broken promises threaten fragile relationships between executives, board members, and employees. The characters struggle for ascendancy, economic security, and a moral high ground, creating a humorous byplay of dynamic action with unexpected twists and turns. One Act. Run time: 80 minutes

Playwright Note

Despite the historical predominance of white males in the real-world tech universe of Life List, ethnicity of the characters is not relevant to the story. Diversity is welcome and encouraged in the casting of this play.

ACT I - Scene 1: Peaks and Valleys

SETTING: The Blue Sky Media offices in New York City on the Friday before Memorial weekend. There are windows overlooking the skyline of Manhattan, two large white boards, a small table with a coffee pot, water cooler, and two desks, each with a computer monitor and telephone. A conference table and five chairs are SL. Also prominently displayed in the office are a large Chinese gong, with a mallet on a string, and a motivational poster on a wall that reads: "Determination! Progress always involves risk. You can't steal second base and keep your foot on first."

Steven's desk is a mess with stacks of papers and folders everywhere; behind it is a Jaws movie poster. The other desk is Jim's; it is tidy with folders neatly organized.

AT RISE: Desk phone is ringing. STEVEN enters SR.

STEVEN runs to his desk, picks up the phone, but the caller has hung up. He slams down phone and curses under his breath. He turns on desk lamp, drops his briefcase on the floor and pulls a laptop out of his bag. He types a few keys, and "Grateful Dead" music begins to blast.

STEVEN gets up, goes to window, and raises the blinds. It's still dark outside, and you see the glimmering lights of New York's early morning skyline.

STEVEN goes to coffee station, swirls the pot of coffee from the night before, gives it a quick smell and then pours it into his cup. Over the coffee pot is a big sign: 1 pot = 7 scoops. He goes over to the water cooler and refills the pot, adds coffee by spooning in 5 scoops of coffee but he loses count. He looks at the coffee in the filter and shrugs.

STEVEN

Oh, what the hell.

(STEVEN adds another 4 scoops, and turns on the coffee maker. He goes back to his desk and dials his voice mail

with the speaker phone on, turning down the music.)

VOICE MAIL - AUTOMATED VOICE
Meridian Voice Mail, enter your pass code.

(STEVEN punches in four numbers.)

VOICEMAIL - MARGARET DUNHAM
(Older woman's voice) Steven, this is Margaret Dunham. I received the investor notice regarding the sale of Blue Sky to Yahoo. Please call me in the morning. *(Beep)*

(STEVEN goes to the coffee pot, which has not finished brewing, and fills his cup while continuing to play voice mail.)

VOICE MAIL - JACKIE
(NY/Queens accent) Hi Steven, this is Jackie in accounting. We haven't received payment from Grey Advertising yet. I know you were counting on that payment. You need to call 'em.

VOICE MAIL - AUTOMATED VOICE
End of messages.

(STEVEN turns up music and works at desk.) (BOATMAN enters SR after pause.)

STEVEN
(Startled) Dan? *(Turns off music)* Did we have an appointment?

BOATMAN
No. Thought I'd stop by on my way to the gym.

(STEVEN gets up and shakes BOATMAN's hand. During this scene phone rings a few times, but STEVEN punches phone to send to voice mail.)

STEVEN
How'd you know I'd be here?

BOATMAN
If you're in town, you're in early.

STEVEN
Nobody around to bother me. Just plowing through.

BOATMAN

Legendary work ethic. One of the big reasons we invested in Blue Sky.

STEVEN

(Drinks coffee) Coffee?

(STEVEN walks to the coffee pot, tops off his cup, and fills a cup for BOATMAN.)

BOATMAN

Thanks. *(Takes cup from STEVEN)* Steven, I know last night's meeting didn't go the way you wanted, but / I have to tell you --

STEVEN

Dan, a good day is when you only get kicked in the balls once. A bad day is...I don't wanna even talk about a bad day.

Boatman

Steven, this might be a bad day.

STEVEN

That meeting was a disaster. You keep pushing for layoffs like it's a miracle cure.

BOATMAN

You didn't adjust. When the market's soft, you've got to cut back. That's responsible leadership. You don't sell a company in a bad market.

STEVEN

Aw, c'mon. Yahoo's offering enough for the investors to get a decent return. And employee stock options would be in the money. It's a good deal.

BOATMAN

We're not even in the ballpark.

STEVEN

We have an arrangement. You fund the company, and I run it.

BOATMAN

Well, we've kept our side of the bargain, but you've been shitting the bed.

STEVEN

Dan, maybe we can get Yahoo to bump up their offer. There's gotta be a number that'll make you happy.

BOATMAN

If we wait / for the right time --

STEVEN

For the economy to rebound? It could take fuckin' forever.

(STEVEN gets up from the table, starts to pace.)

BOATMAN

Meanwhile the company is tanking, and you haven't made the tough choices.

STEVEN

We made cuts. Even consolidated our offices.

BOATMAN

You're still missing your numbers. The burn rate's intolerable. And you're almost out of cash.

STEVEN

That's why we need to sell *now*. It's a decent exit.

BOATMAN

When the market comes back in a year or two, we'll make a killing.

STEVEN

(Shakes his head) You don't get it.

BOATMAN

No, you don't get it. The Board thinks / that if we --

STEVEN

The Board has always supported management. We'll fix the deal.

BOATMAN

Get your act together, Steven. You've got to downsize.

STEVEN

I'll do anything to make this work. But no layoffs.

BOATMAN

Should've done it already. No other option.

STEVEN

You're wrong, Dan.

BOATMAN

Look, we'll consider any reasonable offer. But this (*Takes folder from bag, holds it up, and tosses it on desk*) ... this is a shitty deal.

(BOATMAN exits SR.)

STEVEN

(After BOATMAN exits) Asshole. *(Works on his computer)*

(The lights shift to BOATMAN outside the office DSR.)

BOATMAN

(Talking into cell phone) Hey. It's Dan. Just left Steven's office. *(Listening)* He refuses to even talk about layoffs. *(Listening)* I did my best, but I don't see another way. *(Listening)* I'll be there in an hour.

(BOATMAN exits SR. The lights shift back to the office. STEVEN tops off coffee cup and continues listening to his voice mail at his desk.)

VOICE MAIL - AUTOMATED VOICE

Meridian Voice Mail, enter your pass code.

(STEVEN punches in four numbers.)

VOICE MAIL - STEVEN'S MOTHER

(Older, woman's voice) Stevie, sweetheart, we had dinner with Les and Judy Goldman last night and their granddaughter Emily is looking for a summer job. I said you'd find her something. *(STEVEN shakes his head)* Love you, Stevie. Oh, in case I didn't say, this is your mother. *(Beep)*

VOICE MAIL - STEVEN'S MOTHER

Oy! It's me again. I forgot to say "Happy Birthday". I can't believe my baby is fifty years old. Call me, or are you too busy to talk to your mother? *(Beep)*

VOICE MAIL - GABRIELLE

Hi Steven. Gabrielle Adams from Forbes. I'm in New York working on an article. Word on the Street is that Blue Sky is in play, but your investors are pushing back. Can you carve out a face to face so I can get your angle on things? *(Beep)*

STEVEN

Damn it!

VOICE MAIL - AUTOMATED VOICE

End of messages.

(STEVEN clicks off speaker phone and turns on music. He goes to coffee pot, looks in his cup but realizes it's full. He returns to his desk to work. FRANK enters SR carrying a briefcase.)

FRANK

(Shouting over the music) Good mornin', boss.

STEVEN

(Looks up briefly while still working on his computer) Hey closer. Didn't expect to see you this early.

FRANK

Today's a big day. *(Beat)* Hey, why don't you turn on the freakin' lights?

STEVEN

(Typing on computer) I work better in the dark. Helps me focus, and fosters my creative thinking.

FRANK

You're telling me a well lit room blocks your creativity?

STEVEN

Yes Frank, that's exactly what I'm saying.

FRANK

Well, I'm turning on the lights.

(FRANK turns on the lights, puts briefcase on conference table, and walks to coffee pot, pours a cup.)

FRANK (CONT'D)

And if you turn down the music, I'll fill you in.

(STEVEN turns off music, and continues typing. FRANK waits for him to look up. STEVEN stops typing, looks at Frank.)

STEVEN

OK. Shoot.

FRANK

(Explosively. The longer he speaks, the faster he talks) This is gonna be an awesome fuckin' day. Weather's perfect. Subway came just as I got to the station. No line at the bagel stand, elevator opened as I walked into the lobby, and went express to the 17th floor. Bill upgraded the software last night without incident. And the Pets dot com folks agreed to renew their deal, plus increase the spend by 15 grand a month! They're even gonna send us a couple of those stupid sock puppets.

STEVEN

15K a month? Nice!

FRANK

Wanna know what else?

STEVEN

You know I love good news, Frank.

FRANK

Last night I spoke to my guys on the West Coast, and they signed the eBay campaign. It'll run over the next four weeks. That's \$175K in new money. Rock and roll baby!

STEVEN

(Points at FRANK) Bang the gong, buddy.

(FRANK struts over and picks up the mallet. STEVEN raises his arms over his head as FRANK bangs the gong.)

FRANK

(Shouting) Pets dot com! *(Bangs the gong)* And this one's for EBAY! *(Bangs the gong again)*

STEVEN

Love that sound.

(FRANK walks to the conference table.)

FRANK

And another thing, I got a call from a start-up called IWON dot com. They're ready to spend a shitload if they raise a Series A. I'm on fire.

STEVEN

That's why we pay you the big bucks. You really know how to sell, Frank.

FRANK

I don't sell. I just help people buy.

STEVEN

It's banner and buttons. This isn't rocket science.

FRANK

I got it Boss.

STEVEN

You need to step it up to make your numbers. Last quarter was a disaster.

FRANK

I'm on it, boss. I've got four proposals out. Big ones too!

STEVEN

Better file those contracts A.S.A.P. *(Steven points to the white boards)*

FRANK

Hey, any news on the sale to Yahoo?

STEVEN

Nothing yet.

FRANK

I know my future as a beach bum is a lock. Pretty soon, you'll find me smokin' a cigar and drinkin' scotch on the sand with an island beauty.

(JIM enters SR as FRANK is talking.)

JIM

Scotch on the beach is just wrong, Frank. Go for margaritas. I prefer mine with Patron Silver and extra salt.

FRANK

Morning, Maestro. Anything I can get for you today?

JIM

It's easy to make me happy, Frank. Make your numbers.

FRANK

Yessir. Not sure if you heard -- I banged the gong (*Holding up two fingers*) twice today.

JIM

I'm proud of you, Frank. But yesterday's home runs don't win today's game.

FRANK

When the game's on the line, I'm your man.

(FRANK's cell phone rings, he answers.)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hey Eric. Glad ya called, buddy -- (*Thumbs up as FRANK exits SR*)

(STEVEN walks to coffee pot, and fills his cup. He holds up the pot to see if JIM wants a cup and fills JIM's cup.)

STEVEN

If we miss another quarter, we're fucked.

JIM

Down two mill. Boatman's not going to let up.

STEVEN

He came by this morning.

JIM

What did he say?

STEVEN

Fuckin' asshole.

JIM

Is he still pushing for layoffs?

STEVEN

What are we up to? 200 employees?

JIM

Between New York, San Fran, and London, about that.

STEVEN

First time I let someone go, she cried. It's like firing your family.

JIM

I know, but Boatman and his partners own over 50% of the stock. They have control.

STEVEN

Not if we find a better way.

JIM

Raise more money from investors?

STEVEN

They'd screw us six ways from Sunday.

JIM

Steven, we're in dire straits, and the company's running out of cash.

STEVEN

We gotta get Yahoo to up the ante.

JIM

That will take time. You need to be patient.

STEVEN

I didn't get where I am by being fuckin' patient. *(Sigh)* I thought when we started Blue Sky, we'd be masters of our destiny.

JIM

"Master of my fate, captain of my soul." If the VCs have their way, we'll be masters of none.

STEVEN

Venture Capitalists don't care about anything but return on investment.

JIM

Employees are a line item.

STEVEN

I'm counting on you to get us out of this.

JIM

Pull the proverbial rabbit out of the hat?

STEVEN

Really, that's all you got? A god-damn bunny and a fuckin' hat?

JIM

I'm running out of ideas.

STEVEN

Margaret Dunham called this morning.

JIM

Do you think there's anything she can do?

STEVEN

Maybe. She's strategic. Ya know, if she didn't invest that 200 grand at the beginning, Blue Sky never would've gotten off the ground.

JIM

That's why we call them "angel investors". But since Boatman and his pals funded that last round, she's just a minority stockholder.

STEVEN

And that's the problem. Boatman can veto the sale.

JIM

I'd love to be the hero of this story, Steven, but I just don't--

STEVEN

Come on. You're tougher than he is. Didn't you say Boatman was born on third base and thinks he hit a triple?

JIM

(Spins chair) You know, if we don't sell Blue Sky, you're going to have to back burner your dreams of retirement.

STEVEN

Wouldn't matter to you if I did. I don't think you'll ever retire.

JIM

Probably not.

STEVEN

You'd be late for your own funeral, doing just one more deal.

JIM

(Looks up at the ceiling) Keats said "I shall soon be laid in the quiet grave, and the daisies growing over me."

STEVEN

What the fuck does that mean?

JIM

Life is short. In the end, we all end up in the same place, taking a long nap and pushing up the daisies.

STEVEN

I don't wanna die doin' my last deal. It's time for us to cash in. Do something besides business.

JIM

If you actually retire, you'll drive Liz stark raving looney.

STEVEN

No way. She's looking forward to it.

JIM

No one believes you'll stop working.

STEVEN

I can. And I will.

JIM

Steven, it's a fool's errand, and in this tale, you're the fool.

STEVEN

I'm getting too old for this shit.

JIM

We're not old. We're just from a different era.

STEVEN

A lot of the guys we worked with already retired and moved to Florida.

JIM

Florida? That geriatric state notorious for hanging chads and the early-bird special?

STEVEN

I'm NOT eating at 5:30, and I'm definitely not moving to fuckin' Florida.

JIM

Well, that's a relief.

STEVEN

Florida's where you go to die. Though lately I've been checking the obituaries, just to make sure I'm not listed.

JIM

Ever since Liz got sick, you've been obsessed with death.

STEVEN

Liz dealt with it by herself. I wasn't there.

JIM

You feel guilty for not being there.

STEVEN

She made it through.

JIM

Don't pretend it didn't change things.

STEVEN

(Slams the desk) Don't go there.

JIM

Listen to yourself.

STEVEN

(Raised voice) It has nothing to do with my wanting to retire.

(FRANK enters SR overhearing last lines.)

FRANK

(Breaking the tension) Hey, you guys aren't old enough to retire.

JIM

I'm not, but Steven's in the "winter of his discontent". His life's journey has gone from whiz kid, to CEO, to old guy at death's door.

FRANK

Hey Steven, I researched retirement homes for my parents last year. How 'bout I forward you my notes on assisted living?
(Slight chuckle)

STEVEN

Frank, you're bugging me. Please go sell something, and let's hope your "perfect day" stays perfect.

FRANK

Already on it. I just had a dynamite call with Eric.

JIM

You can't make the numbers by yourself. What about the rest of the team?

FRANK

They're always worried about somethin'. I'll go wipe their tears and kick 'em in the ass.

(FRANK exits SR.)

STEVEN

What are you gonna do if we manage to sell this puppy? You gonna miss me?

JIM

Not at all. You'll head off into the sunset chasing your dreams. I'll stay with Yahoo for a bit, then join another startup. I love doing deals.

STEVEN

(Hitting his arm like an addict getting ready for a shot of heroin) You're a deal junkie, looking for your next fix.

JIM

Damn straight. It keeps me young. Nothing gets the juices flowing like another deal.

(ROSA enters SR with a bunch of flowers.)

ROSA

Good morning, gentlemen.

JIM

How was your evening, Rosa?

ROSA

It was lovely, Jim. And yours?

(ROSA arranges flowers around the office.)

JIM

Just splendid. Worked late, then grabbed a bite with the bankers. After dinner, I went out with Lenny Morgan at AOL.

STEVEN

Let's-make-a-deal-Lenny!

JIM

We closed down an old speakeasy in the Village. Shared a few drinks and a fine cigar.

STEVEN

I love that guy.

JIM

A couple of whiskies in, he's telling me how AOL's looking to make acquisitions. He even hinted that AOL might be interested in Blue Sky. If that happens, we could find ourselves like a pretty girl with two suitors on prom night.

STEVEN

They're bottom feeding. AOL isn't gonna buy Blue Sky.

JIM

It would put Yahoo's feet to the fire. I've got a follow-up with him this afternoon.

(ROSA continues to arrange flowers.)

STEVEN

I thought we cut the budget for shit like that.

ROSA

It's ten dollars, Steven, and it brightens up the office. *(Holds up vase)* Have you thought of taking some time to stop and smell the roses?

STEVEN

(Scowl) I don't believe it. We've gone from rabbits and hats to talking about flowers.

ROSA

Maybe I should schedule some down time in your calendars.

STEVEN

I don't have time to relax.

JIM

I really don't like it when people tell me to relax. Ex-wife #2 used to try to get me to slow down. *(Mocking tone)* "Take more

vacations, don't work so hard." (*Emphatically*) As far as I'm concerned, there's plenty of time to sleep when I'm dead.

STEVEN

I'll smell the roses when I can buy the god-damn garden.

JIM

Maybe we can find a "smell the roses" app for your phone.

(*STEVEN walks to coffee pot to fill cup and motions with cup toward the white board.*)

STEVEN

Add smell the fucking flowers to the list.

JIM

(*ROSA gives folders to JIM*) Rosa, what's this?

STEVEN

More dead trees.

JIM

What ever happened to the paperless office?

STEVEN

Never gonna happen.

ROSA

(*Handing STEVEN papers*) Well, here's more paper to add to the pile. I couldn't find Frank's commission agreements. He's still looking / for them and --

STEVEN

Damn it. You tell Frank we've gotta have it today. Any excuses and I'll hold his fuckin' expense check.

ROSA

I'll take care of it.

(*ROSA exits SR.*)

STEVEN

If Frank closes Verizon, and his team lands a few big ones, we might just make it.

JIM

Make it, yes. But we're still pretty far off target.

STEVEN

He's a sales guy. Over promise, under deliver. Always spending more than he makes.

JIM

Frank thinks selling the company is going to solve his money problems, but he's in debt up to his eyeballs.

STEVEN

We'll have to push for a better offer just to take care of Frank.

JIM

I'll put it on the list.

STEVEN

Hey Jim? Gal from Forbes called this morning. She's writing about how management and investors aren't on the same page.

JIM

They're not.

STEVEN

Think Boatman talked to her?

JIM

I'm surprised he waited this long to "rock the boat". *(Laughs)*

STEVEN

Seriously?

JIM

He wants more. VCs hit line drives and home runs. Boatman and his partners are not going to be happy with a slap single.

STEVEN

Usually it's the entrepreneur who's delusional, not the investor.

JIM

We're all delusional. Start-ups are a free-for-all.

STEVEN

It's a race to market. The most successful strategy is: Ready... Fire... Aim!

JIM

There's no life balance when you're building a new company.

STEVEN

Friends. Family. Business. Pick two.

JIM

Two's a stretch. I'm the poster child for trading friends and family for success. I don't live with regrets, / but the way --

STEVEN

Don't be so hard on yourself. I like that you put business first.

JIM

I'm closer to you than any of my ex-wives. *(Beat)* Can I say something without you flying off the handle? *(Hands papers to STEVEN)* I prepared a plan.

(STEVEN glances at the documents and throws them back at JIM.)

STEVEN

No fuckin' way! *(Slamming desk, raised voice)* Layoffs are management's way of saying we screwed up, and the workers pay the consequences.

JIM

Steven, we don't have a choice.

STEVEN

Is everyone against me?

JIM

Boatman's killing us. We have to do something.

STEVEN

So we go to the mattresses. I'll be damned if I let him screw up this deal.

JIM

Let's get him an offer he can't refuse.

STEVEN

He won't know what hit him.

JIM

Steven, this isn't really The Godfather. More like a chess game.

STEVEN

So, tell me the right move. Do I talk to that Forbes reporter?

JIM

Yes. And you play it like we're the ones who aren't sure about selling.

STEVEN

Management's leading. We're the ones with the vision.

JIM

Perfect.

STEVEN

I like it. *(Calls out)* Rosa.

(ROSA enters SR as he's calling her.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I need to set a meeting.

ROSA

You're booked till three o'clock.

STEVEN

Move the meeting with tech to later, and book lunch at the Palm with Gabrielle Adams.

(ROSA starts to exit, but stops as JIM speaks.)

JIM

Gaby Adams?

STEVEN

Yeah, the reporter from Forbes.

JIM

Mind if I join? I can reschedule my conference call.

STEVEN

Don't trust I can handle this? Sure, come.

ROSA

I'm on it. Reschedule tech meeting, make reservation, and email Ms. Adams.

STEVEN

Thanks Rosa.

*(JIM checks items off white board.
FRANK enters SR.)*

FRANK

Terrific call with my guys. They're psyched! *(Beat)* Hey Steven, I was wondering. When we sell to Yahoo, what's my title gonna be?

STEVEN

Your title? How 'bout "Prince of Deals"? Speaking of which, don't you have deals to close?

(STEVEN goes to coffee pot, pours another cup.)

FRANK

I'm working on it. *(Beat)* You'd sleep more if you cut back on the coffee.

STEVEN

(Sigh) Sleep is so over-rated.

JIM

(Looking through a file) Something's missing. I need to go back and look at the original... Rosa, would you pull the angel investor documents for me?

ROSA

They'll be on your desk when you get back. *(Points at her watch)*

STEVEN

We need to leave now if you want to stop at the lawyers before lunch.

JIM

Rosa, we should be back by 2:30.

(Lights down.)

ACT I - Scene 2: The Spin

SETTING: The conference table is transformed into a table at The Palm restaurant, where Jim and Steven are seated. It is covered with a white table cloth, set for three, with a bottle of wine, and a small vase with flowers. "The Palm" sign replaces the gong.

(Spotlight on table SL. SR is dark.)

STEVEN

(Pours wine, and looks at his watch) She's late.

JIM

She'll be here.

STEVEN

This a bad idea.

JIM

Steven, Gaby's a pro. She'll be fair.

STEVEN

Gaby?

(STEVEN's cell phone rings.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

This is Steven. *(Listening)* Great, see you in a few. *(Hangs up cell phone)* She's stuck in traffic. So, you know this woman?

JIM

Uh huh. *(Drinks wine)* Steven, are you really going to call it quits after Blue Sky?

STEVEN

Can't wait. It's like an anchor around my neck.

JIM

(Sarcastic) But we're having so much fun.

STEVEN

Not now we're not. *(Beat)* I invested too much in this god-damn company.

JIM

You've got a great track record. We could do something else.

STEVEN

Maybe that works for you. But I'm in deep with Blue Sky, and this Yahoo deal / would get me out --

JIM

How deep?

STEVEN

All of our savings deep. And I never told Liz.

JIM

You didn't tell Liz how much you invested? Are you insane? You have to tell her.

STEVEN

I know. If we get diluted, we could lose it all. *(Beat)* Why are you giving me so much shit about retirement?

JIM

Entrepreneurs are like sharks: if we stop moving, we die. From my perspective, retirement equals death.

STEVEN

Some days I wonder if I'm a shark or a tiny fish.

JIM

You know what Malcolm Forbes said about retirement?

STEVEN

No, Jim, what did he say?

JIM

"Retirement kills more people than hard work ever did."

STEVEN

Oh, c'mon, Forbes was born rich. I just want to get my money back.

JIM

That's easier said than done. Besides, what would you do instead?

STEVEN

NYU approached me about teaching a class at Stern.

JIM

Academia. Y'know, the business school would be lucky to have you as a professor. You could talk about your years at IBM, start-ups, and the sale of the business to Yahoo.

STEVEN

What's wrong with that?

JIM

Things are bound to change. It'll be like talking to your dad about corporate America.

STEVEN

What do you mean?

JIM

In the 60's, companies hired people to grow with the firm. They recruited out of college: mentored, groomed, promoted.

STEVEN

Not any more. No time to hire potential. We want terrific now.

JIM

Darn right. These days we hire 'been there, done that'. We even give them stock options, and let them bring their dogs to work. How would your father feel about that one?

STEVEN

Oy. Dad wanted me to stay at IBM. Never believed in the whole "Internet thing".

JIM

At the pace of change these days, pretty soon, you'll be obsolete.

STEVEN

So instead of teaching business, I'll teach history.

JIM

And B-school students couldn't care less. They want to learn how to start a company and become gazillionaires.

STEVEN

I'm just burned out.

JIM

Then take a fucking vacation. You quit, and you'll be old before your time.

STEVEN

That's a load of crap. I spent 200 days on the road last year. God knows the hell Liz went through.

JIM

Steven, it's not your fault.

STEVEN

I was wrong. And I was crazy to risk our savings in Blue Sky. One bad decision after another.

JIM

Come on. Don't beat yourself up.

STEVEN

I'm fifty years old. Most of the time, I fly into a city, meet clients in an office, schmooze at some restaurant, and then get back on the plane and do it all over again. I don't want to live the rest of my life in airport lounges.

JIM

(Raised voice) Steven, you need the challenge. You / need the --

STEVEN

(Raised voice) Aggravation? The pain, the heartache, the frustration --

JIM

(Raised voice, talking faster) The thrill of victory. The adrenalin rush of closing a deal. The love of building, / and creating --

STEVEN

(Raised voice, talking faster) The agony of lawsuits and whiny Board members who lose faith in your vision the moment things get tough.

JIM

Business is your life. If you leave the game, you'll become archaic and passé.

STEVEN

This is your bullshit fear of retirement.

JIM

It's the naked truth. And as your friend, / I'd recommend --

STEVEN

As my friend, I'll take your two cents and give you a dollar to shut the fuck up. *(Drinks wine, puts down glass)* Gabrielle should be here any minute.

JIM

Keep it to sound bites.

STEVEN

"Management is evaluating offers and options."

JIM

Control the narrative.

STEVEN

And if she brings up Boatman?

JIM

"We're not against Boatman, but we have to consider all the stakeholders."

STEVEN

I shouldn't have agreed to this.

JIM

Just keep your cool. Be careful not to over-react --

(STEVEN's phone beeps for text and he looks at phone.)

STEVEN

Speak of the devil. It's Boatman. Now he's texting.

JIM

What does he want?

STEVEN

(Looks at phone) Says it's urgent, and he's coming to the office. I got maybe ten minutes.

JIM

What about Gaby?

STEVEN

Good thing you came. You can handle it.

JIM

You don't want me to go with you? We could cancel.

STEVEN

Nah, this is personal. I got this. With Boatman, it's all about ego.

JIM

Ego!? *(Sarcastic)*

STEVEN

Whose dick is bigger. That and the prep school pedigree. It's a prerequisite to being a VC.

JIM

Just don't push him too far.

STEVEN

Fuck that. It's time to gear up and do battle!

JIM

"The clever combatant imposes his will on the enemy, but does not allow the enemy's will to be imposed on him."

STEVEN

Sun Tzu?

JIM

"The Art of War".

STEVEN

"The best revenge is massive success."

JIM

I never heard that one. Did Sun Tzu say that too?

STEVEN

Nope. Sinatra. *(Beat)* I really gotta go.

JIM

(Handing STEVEN a file out of briefcase) You'll need this. It's what each investor will make on the Yahoo deal.

STEVEN

Thanks. *(Puts file in briefcase)* I'm outta here. Wish me luck.

JIM

Good luck.

*(STEVEN exits SL. Jim waits anxiously.
After pause, GABRIELLE enters SL.)*

JIM

(Stands to greet her) Gaby. It has been a long time.

GABRIELLE

Jim?! Sorry I'm so late. Where's Steven?

JIM

Unfortunately, he had a critical situation back at the office. I hope you'll settle for me.

(GABRIELLE and JIM sit at table.)

GABRIELLE

I thought I'd be meeting with Steven. God, this is awkward.
(Sips water)

JIM

Come on. We can do this. *(Fills wine glasses)*

GABRIELLE

Fine.

JIM

Wonderful.

(GABRIELLE takes out notebook.)

JIM (CONT'D)

So what do you want to know?

GABRIELLE

There's a lot of chatter about an offer to buy Blue Sky.

JIM

There's always a dog or two sniffing around the table.

GABRIELLE

So what are you going to do?

JIM

If the right offer presents itself, selling would be the right way to go.

GABRIELLE

But your board is dead set against it.

JIM

Investors live in another world. We're the ones who build things.

GABRIELLE

And then you walk away.

JIM

Are we still talking about Blue Sky?

GABRIELLE

You really want to go there? *(Beat)* OK, let's start again. Hi Jim, it's been a long time since you broke my heart and walked out of my life. What's new in your world? I hear you guys might be selling Blue Sky.

JIM

That's not fair.

GABRIELLE

Fair?

JIM

I've missed you, Gaby. How long are you going to be in town?

GABRIELLE

Just a short in and out. It hasn't been announced yet, but I'm moving to London as Forbes' Tech Reporter for Europe.

JIM

A toast to your success. (*Pours wine*) Europe, eh? I think Updike said it best: "The true New Yorker secretly believes that people living anywhere else have to be kidding."

GABRIELLE

Your world is shrinking in your old age. (*Beat*) What are you going to do if Blue Sky gets sold?

JIM

Steven's talking retirement. He'd like to spend more time with his family. He buys into the theory that "entrepreneurship is living a few years of your life like most people won't, so you can spend the rest of your life like most people can't."

GABRIELLE

(*Laughing*) I'm using that in my article. Speaking of family, how are your kids?

JIM

Bobby's in LA. We hardly speak since the divorce. (*Grimaces*) Annie's in Boston. I send her a check every month, but we don't see each other often. C'est la vie. (*Pronounced say-la-vee*) How are things going for you?

GABRIELLE

Kids good, job's great. Life is a carnival. Let's talk about your circus, not mine.

(*GABRIELLE reaches for her glass, and brushes JIM's arm. They both pull back as if there's a spark.*)

JIM

What started as a three-year plan to build and sell a company has stretched itself to seven. We thought we'd be out by now, and on to the next new thing.

GABRIELLE

Realistically, what are Blue Sky's options in a down market? The window for going public has closed and --

JIM

People are always investing in tech stocks. Going public is still a possibility.

GABRIELLE

That's gilding the lily, Jim. *(References her note pad, flips pages)* How are your board members responding?

JIM

It's a love-hate relationship. We've got our sleeves rolled up, while those bastards run from one meeting to another in their Brooks Brothers blazers and button-down shirts.

GABRIELLE

You don't want me printing that. This isn't a fluff piece, Jim. I know that Yahoo made an offer, and that AOL might be interested.

JIM

(Startled) AOL?

GABRIELLE

There's talk.

JIM

Not everyone plays well in the sandbox. What have you heard?

GABRIELLE

(Prevaricating) I hear all kinds of things.

JIM

You never get everyone to agree on a strategy. With five people in a room, you get six opinions. Some want to wait, others want to cash out and move on.

GABRIELLE

So you're confirming there's a deal on the table!?! *(Flips page and writes in her notebook)*

JIM

We're committed to doing what's best for all the shareholders.

GABRIELLE

Jim, you're giving me nothing to work with.

JIM

It's all I can give you for now, Gaby. *(Picks up the wine bottle, but GABRIELLE puts her hand over her glass, and looks at menu)*

GABRIELLE

Trust me. You don't want me writing this just from the investors' point of view.

JIM

Write what you want. *(Beat)* Should we order?

GABRIELLE

If that's all you've got, there's no point in my staying.

JIM

Wait. *(Beat)* How about we meet for drinks tonight?

GABRIELLE

(Shakes her head 'no') Some things never change.

JIM

Gaby, please give me / a chance to --

GABRIELLE

(Exasperated) I've got to get out of here. *(Closes her notebook, gathers her things)* By the way, rumor has it things aren't going well for Steven.

JIM

Don't believe everything you hear.

GABRIELLE

That Blue Sky's running out of cash, and running out of time.

JIM

Come on, you know what it's like these days.

GABRIELLE

And that certain investors are advocating for a major shakeup.

JIM

No way! This is his baby.

GABRIELLE

It's just what I've heard. *(Looks at her watch and stands, extending her hand to JIM)* Good luck, Jim.

(JIM rises, but Gaby is already walking away. He looks after her and sits, lost in thought. Lights dim SL. Lights go to black.)

ACT I - Scene 3: Life List

SETTING: Office at Blue Sky Media. Table SL is converted back to conference table at Blue Sky's Office. Rosa is organizing files on Jim's desk.

(STEVEN enters SR.) (Lights up SR, SL is dark)

ROSA

Steven, what happened to your lunch?

STEVEN

I left Jim at the Palm. Boatman called. He's been on my ass all day.

ROSA

Dan Boatman is here already. He's been waiting in the conference room.

STEVEN

Let him cool his heels for a minute. What else is goin' on?

ROSA

The phone's been ringing off the hook. *(Hands STEVEN messages)*

STEVEN

Thanks Rosa. *(Walks to conference table reading messages)*

(ROSA exits SR) (Lights up SL)

STEVEN

(Extending his hand for a firm shake) Twice in one day. What's so urgent, Dan?

(BOATMAN shakes STEVEN's hand, then they sit.)

BOATMAN

We have to discuss Blue Sky's future, mano a mano.

STEVEN

My thoughts exactly. Jim's working on a possible offer from AOL. And with the Yahoo deal in the works, we might have a scrum.

BOATMAN

Steven, we're just not interested. Not in Yahoo. Not in AOL.

STEVEN

You said if the right offer came along...

BOATMAN

Steven, I don't know how to be more clear. We're not selling Blue Sky. Not now.

STEVEN

I sunk a good part of my savings in this company, Dan. I'd like to get out whole.

BOATMAN

I told you to think twice about investing your own money.

STEVEN

If this blows up, it will be a freakin' disaster for me / and the other employees --

BOATMAN

That's not my problem.

STEVEN

Damn it. My investment was proof of my commitment.

BOATMAN

Steven, don't bullshit a bullshitter.

STEVEN

What do you mean?

BOATMAN

You invested because you wanted to make money. Just like everybody else.

STEVEN

I believed in what we were doing. Still do.

BOATMAN

Steven --

STEVEN

Let's not be greedy, Dan. There isn't always gonna be a next time.

BOATMAN

In a year or two, this Yahoo deal will look like small potatoes, and Blue Sky's tech will be poised to succeed in a better market.

STEVEN

You know what? Some whiz kid developer is in his garage right now creating a better, faster, and cheaper technology. In two years, Blue Sky could be on the other side of that disruption.

BOATMAN

Steven --

STEVEN

This shit is changing so fast. In just a few years, I've gone from being an early adopter to Luddite.

BOATMAN

You've got a point there.

STEVEN

Dan, how much is enough? Just look at the Yahoo numbers. *(Gives folder to BOATMAN)*

BOATMAN

(Tossing folder aside) I've seen the numbers. It doesn't work. Steven, *(Beat)* the Board thinks it's time for a change.

STEVEN

What are you talking about?

BOATMAN

Your experience is in growing a company. In this market, we need someone who can make the hard choices.

STEVEN

What the fuck?! I'm doing everything I can.

BOATMAN

We told you over a year ago to reduce the burn.

STEVEN

Layoffs are not the answer.

BOATMAN

If you're going to lead, then you have / to take responsibly --

STEVEN

Don't give me that leadership crap. We're a team here.

BOATMAN

Look at the big picture.

STEVEN

Money isn't everything. You know / damn well that we --

BOATMAN

Money is how we keep score. I've got to tell you we've been talking to someone who can come in and captain this ship. She's got the experience to navigate rough waters 'til the market turns around.

STEVEN

Are you fuckin' kidding me?! Who is it?

BOATMAN

Who it is doesn't matter.

STEVEN

(Glaring) A new CEO won't change a thing.

BOATMAN

Steven, it's not just me. The other investors agree - it's time for a change.

STEVEN

I deserve the right to control our future.

BOATMAN

We're cleaning house. You, Jim, and anyone else not essential is out! Your attitude at the Board meeting made it clear: you don't get it, and you're not a team player.

STEVEN

(Shouting, angry) Give me a chance/ to work on a strategy --

BOATMAN

You had your chance.

STEVEN

After all I've done? Seven years?!

BOATMAN

We're writing an offer for another round of funding, contingent on bringing in a new CEO.

STEVEN

At crappy terms that'll crush current stakeholders.

BOATMAN

I know you're worried about the money you invested.

STEVEN

I'm worried about the people who work here. They've got a stake in this too.

BOATMAN

Look, I can't solve everyone's problems, but I can help you. If you and Jim put together a plan to downsize and execute the layoffs / we'll offer to --

STEVEN

We are not/ going to --

BOATMAN

Steven, you lost. If you transition out, our firm will buy back half your stock at current value. *(Beat)* Sit down and listen to me. *(Gestures to a seat, both sit)*

STEVEN

(Desperate) 50%? That's not enough.

BOATMAN

Truthfully, it's more than some of us think you deserve. Don't let your emotions get in the way of doing what's best for you and your family.

STEVEN

This is my company.

BOATMAN

(Softer, trying to show compassion) I'm offering you a way out.

STEVEN

And you want me to do the dirty work.

BOATMAN

If you fight, you lose. This way you'll get money back, and keep a stake in Blue Sky.

STEVEN

But no control.

BOATMAN

You're a smart guy. You'll find another gig.

STEVEN

I'm not interested in another gig. Blue Sky is my last one --

BOATMAN

(Looks at watch) I've got to go.

(BOATMAN and STEVEN stand, confronting each other.)

STEVEN

You greedy bastard. You can't do this.

BOATMAN

Oh yes I can. It's not personal, it's business. Remember the golden rule, Steven. Whoever has the gold makes the rules. *(Looks at his watch again, moves toward the door)* I'm late. Tell Yahoo the deal is toast. We're not moving forward.

(BOATMAN exits SR. STEVEN is left on stage alone for a moment. He stands by the conference table, looking troubled and confused. He walks to his desk, sits down with head in his hands. ROSA enters SR with red folder.)

ROSA

Steven, is everything OK?

STEVEN

Everything's just peachy. Whatcha got there?

ROSA

The financial report. *(Hands red folder to STEVEN)* Do you think the Yahoo deal will go through?

STEVEN

Some way, some how. Don't worry about it, Rosa.

ROSA

Don't worry?! I read that report. We've got less than three months' cash on hand!

STEVEN

Jim and I are trying every way we can.

(STEVEN goes to coffee pot, fills his cup, and sits at desk.)

ROSA

People are afraid of losing their jobs. They're coming to me to find out what's going on.

STEVEN

Even if the Yahoo deal falls through, we'll raise the money.

ROSA

It makes me nervous. I took a pay cut to work here because of the stock options.

STEVEN

We all did.

ROSA

We're counting on that payout.

STEVEN

It'll work out.

ROSA

Steven, you don't get it. With the divorce last year, and the twins looking at colleges --

STEVEN

Rosa, I promise / it'll be fine --

ROSA

(Vehemently) If Blue Sky doesn't sell, you might not be able to retire, but you'll be okay. It's not the same for me.

STEVEN

You think I don't know that?

ROSA

Steven, you're not listening. I'm over forty, and the job market is dismal.

STEVEN

Rosa, I understand.

ROSA

I need this job! You know as well as I do that companies are looking for young and sexy, not some old lady.

STEVEN

You're not old. And you still got the sexy. And when Blue Sky sells, your slice of the pie will make this all go away. Trust me, we'll figure it out.

ROSA

Are you trying to convince me or yourself?

STEVEN

Rosa, this is not just about making money. I wanna prove that we really built something of value.

(JIM and FRANK enter SR. FRANK is carrying a birthday cake covered with roses and a candle.)

JIM, FRANK, ROSA

Happy birthday, Steven!

FRANK

Happy Birthday, Boss!

(ROSA puts on a smile, gets matches, and lights candle.)

STEVEN

Frank, you shouldn't have --

FRANK

Actually, it was Rosa.

ROSA

It's from all of us, Steven. Make a wish and blow out the candle.

(Steven blows out the candle.)

(ROSA cuts the cake and passes a piece to everybody. STEVEN goes to coffee pot and fills his cup. All eat cake throughout the scene.)

JIM

Half a century.

FRANK

How does it feel to be fifty years old?

STEVEN

Same as 49.

ROSA

You're still young.

STEVEN

I'm 15 pounds overweight, don't have time to exercise, and Liz says I can't keep beating up my body with all the travel.

FRANK

Seriously? I love being a road warrior.

STEVEN

I love my wife and kids. It's time to start banging away at my Life List instead of that god-damn gong.

(STEVEN throws out cake plate, tops off coffee cup, and his cell phone rings.)

STEVEN

(Looks at phone and smiles) *(Answers phone)* Hi sweetheart. *(Listening)* The team got me a birthday cake. *(Listening)* I'll try. *(Listening)* Should be before eight. If I beat you home, I'll be the naked guy in your bed.

ROSA

Hi Liz.

STEVEN

Rosa says hi. Gotta go sweetheart. *(Listening)* Love you too.

FRANK

Steven, your 'Life List' thing? Is that like a bucket list?

ROSA

(To STEVEN) Do you see yourself as Morgan Freeman or Jack Nicholson?

STEVEN

Jack for sure.

FRANK

(Laughing, impersonating Jack Nicholson in the scene from the movie "A Few Good Men") "You can't handle the truth!"

JIM

Wrong movie, Frank.

FRANK

Come on, guys. What's a Life List?

STEVEN

I write down what I want to accomplish in life. My goals and dreams. Been doin' it since I was a kid.

(STEVEN cellphone rings and he answers.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Hi Mom. Oh, Dad it's you. *(Listening)* Yeah, the big 5-0. *(Listening)* Still working on it. *(Listening)* Well, bankers and attorneys gotta make a living too. *(Listening)* OK... we'll get together then, Dad. Open that bottle of champagne I've been saving. *(Listening)* Me too. *(Hangs up phone)*

JIM

Is that the same bottle of bubbly I gave you when we started this company?

Yuppers.

STEVEN

ROSA

You never opened it?

STEVEN

Wanted to wait for the right moment.

JIM

You know that starting Blue Sky was a pretty special occasion, right?

STEVEN

Yeah. But then we were raising our first round.

JIM

And when we signed our first client?

STEVEN

Then I thought, better wait 'til we got some revenue in the door.

FRANK

I would've had a bottle, maybe two, for each of those moments.

JIM

(Reminiscing) You know, I remember writing something like a Life List on a napkin when I was at Harvard.

ROSA

Whatever happened to that list, Jim?

JIM

We were planning our future, smoking grass, and believe it or not, somehow it got lost.

(FRANK, ROSA, and JIM share soft chuckles.)

ROSA

Do you remember what you wrote?

JIM

I don't know. Kid stuff, like making a million bucks. Chucking it all and sailing around the world with my girlfriend. Wonder what I did with it?

STEVEN

I used to write mine by hand. Now it's on my phone. *(Looks at phone)*

FRANK

Is that your list? What have you crossed off already?

STEVEN

Hmm. *(Ponders)* Starting my own company was on the list. *(Scoffs)* Some days I wish that was not on the list. The open ocean sail that almost killed me. Sky diving with the girls last summer.

JIM

Adrenaline junkie. *(Hitting his arm like an addict getting ready for a shot of heroin)*

STEVEN

Cage diving with sharks.

FRANK

You're kidding.

STEVEN

1970 Mercedes convertible was on the list. *(Beat)* We had a baby instead.

FRANK

The 280SL?

JIM

That was a sexy car. No room for a car seat.

FRANK

Can I see your List?

STEVEN

No, Frank. *(Beat)* But I did share the list with the girls when we went camping last summer.

JIM

The whole list? Even your erotic fantasies?

STEVEN

Nope, my erotic fantasies are on a different list.

FRANK

(Laughing) Can I see that list?

STEVEN

Seriously, that camping trip was the only time I ever showed my Life List to anyone.

JIM

You give scary campfire stories a whole new meaning.

STEVEN

Jessie was inspired to start writing her own list on a piece of birch bark.

ROSA

And Sam?

STEVEN

You know Samantha. She proposed dividing the list into categories: life style, travel, business ideas.

FRANK

If you're gonna retire, how come you still have business ideas on the list?

JIM

Since you're going to retire, maybe we could use one of your ideas.

STEVEN

Nah. You guys aren't really interested.

FRANK
Yes we are.

JIM
Yes we are.

ROSA
Come on, tell us Steven.

STEVEN
OK, let's see. (*Types on the computer*) Here's one: The Grateful
Dead Nursing Home.

JIM
The what?

STEVEN
Scrap the boring uniforms. We'll have tie-dye nursing outfits,
and psychedelic scrubs.

JIM
You're not serious?

STEVEN
And instead of elevator music, there'll be jam bands playing
24/7. And laser light shows on Friday and Saturday nights.

*(ROSA grabs STEVEN's coffee cup and
gets him coffee.)*

FRANK
I love this idea.

STEVEN
And the walls will be covered in trippy murals and posters.
You'll need sunglasses just to roll your wheelchair down the
halls.

JIM
(Perplexed) Who would ever want to / live in -- ?

STEVEN
Look at the demographics. Baby boomers are gettin' older.

JIM
I'm a babyboomer, and I HATE the Grateful Dead!

FRANK
I'm not a Deadhead either, but the concept rocks! Years from
now, when I'm ready, I wanna go to the Metalmania Nursing Home.
Leather and studs, baby!

STEVEN

There needs to be something for everybody. The numbers start getting crazy big. By 2030, more than one in five Americans will be over 65.

JIM

You think Medicare is going to pay for a bunch of gray-haired hippies dancing around in tie-dye pajamas?

STEVEN

Look, my Life List has a lot of crazy stuff on it. Some practical, some not so much.

FRANK

Well, the nursing home idea is freakin' brilliant. You build it, and I'll sell it!

ROSA

It is creative.

FRANK

We could change the way people look at what happens when you get old.

STEVEN

Hold on, Lucy. We still have this business to run.

FRANK

(Cell phone rings) Frank here. *(Listening)* That's awesome! Email the info, and I'll call ya later. *(Hangs up phone)* That was Caroline. She's closing a sale with Omnicom.

STEVEN

Way to go! How can I help?

FRANK

We're all set. Maybe I'll bang the gong again today.

JIM

What else are you working on?

FRANK

Commission reports. *(Looks at ROSA)* They're being printed.

ROSA

Thank you, Frank.

FRANK

So Steven, what other business ideas are on your list?

STEVEN

We don't have time. I have calls to make. You have deals to close, gongs to bang, and lists of things to do. You guys get outta here. I gotta talk to Jim.

(ROSA and FRANK exit SR.)

STEVEN

This isn't the day to be throwing a party.

JIM

Wasn't me. Rosa planned it weeks ago. Shall I assume it did not go well with Boatman?

STEVEN

You could say that.

JIM

How bad?

STEVEN

It's not gonna be easy.

JIM

What did he say?

STEVEN

We're gonna talk again later. Any progress on your end?

JIM

Margaret cancelled our call.

STEVEN

That's odd.

JIM

She spoke to Boatman, and sent me an email.

STEVEN

(Worried) What'd she say?

JIM

(Looks at computer, reading email) "Get your shit together. You failed to make your numbers and failed to adapt to adverse market conditions." Her usual light touch.

STEVEN

What about the Yahoo offer?

JIM

(Still Reading) "Get assurances on employee retention, and don't sell unless they increase their offer." *(Beat)* She might consider investing more, if we can present a viable path forward. How'd it go with Boatman?

STEVEN

I've been thinking. *(Swivels his chair)* If we don't sell...we need to downsize.

JIM

Downsize?

STEVEN

Aggressive and severe. Close London. Keep most of tech. Rest of the staff, cut by 40%.

JIM

What happened to going to war?

STEVEN

Lose the battle, win the war.

JIM

Steven, I'm not saying you're wrong, but --

STEVEN

Keep working Yahoo to increase their offer. But we need a plan for the Board.

JIM

I'll print the old one. *(Clicks computer)* Not as drastic as you're talking about, but it's a start.

STEVEN

Thanks Jim. We'll get through this together.

JIM

What about AOL? Should I cancel --

STEVEN

Keep it. It's a chess game, remember? We've gotta think a couple moves ahead.

JIM

(Looks at watch) In that case, I've got to run and make that meeting. *(Stands)*

STEVEN

'Kay. *(Looking out window)* Looks like rain. Better take an umbrella.

(JIM grabs umbrella and briefcase. ROSA enters SR.)

ROSA

(Gives file to JIM as he is leaving) Here's the investor paperwork you asked for. I dug around the boxes from the attorney, and found some exhibits that weren't scanned. You need to see these.

JIM

I'll look at it later. *(Puts folder in his briefcase)*

(JIM exits SR.)

ROSA

(Calls out after him) But Jim! *(Hands STEVEN papers)* This was on the printer.

STEVE

(Looks up from computer and takes papers) Thanks.

ROSA

(Visibly upset) May I ask what the hell is going on? There are some good people on that list. / You told me that --

STEVE

Rosa, this isn't a good time.

ROSA

You said you'd raise the money. You said not to worry, / that you would --

STEVEN

Rosa, I can't have this discussion now.

ROSA

We made sacrifices because we believed in you.

STEVEN

I'm trying my best Rosa, but there's a limit.

ROSA

This isn't about retiring or knocking stuff off your Life List, it's about my life and my family.

STEVEN
Rosa please --

ROSA
Earlier / you said --

STEVEN
(Shouting) Damn it Rosa, I've been fired!

ROSA
(Beat) What? *(Long pause)*

STEVEN
Boatman.

ROSA
(Shocked) Oh my God. *(Beat)* What did Jim say?

STEVEN
I didn't tell him yet. Look, layoffs are coming whether I like it or not. You're not on the list, but it ain't gonna be pretty.

ROSA
Steven, you need to tell the team -- *(Looks up as JIM enters)*

(JIM enters SR.)

STEVEN
I thought you were headed to AOL.

JIM
Called just as I was getting in the cab. Said something came up and they'd get back to me.

(Desk phone rings. STEVEN answers phone.)

STEVEN
This is Steven. *(Listening)* What happened? *(Listening)* Damn it! I don't understand. You told me the terms were negotiated and -- *(Listening)* Why the fuck did this new guy get involved? *(Listening)* We need that deal for this quarter. *(Listening)* *(Exasperated)* Yeah, I get it. Bye.

JIM
Who was that?

STEVEN
Richard. The Verizon contract is blowing up.

JIM

That was a done deal. Just cross the T's and dot the I's.

STEVEN

Damn it. We know better than to count on a deal before it's signed.

(FRANK enters SR.)

FRANK

I just got done talkin' with tech. Client reports are all fucked up, and they're on my ass.

JIM

Not only that. The Verizon deal is going south.

FRANK

This can't be happening.

(STEVEN's desk phone rings. As he grabs it, he spills coffee all over his desk.)

STEVEN

Shit! *(Looks for napkins to mop up coffee spill)* Hello, this is Steven. *(Listening)* What?!? *(Listening)* Are you sure? *(Listening)* Can we? *(Beat)* I understand. Thanks for the heads up.

(Steven slams down phone and wipes up coffee.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

That was Jack. Yahoo's putting Blue Sky on the back burner.

JIM

What?!?

STEVEN

Too many loose ends. And not enough time.

JIM

We only have a few weeks. Come July 4th, the bankers head off to the Hamptons, and everything stops 'til Labor Day.

(It begins to rain.)

STEVEN

It's all going to hell in a hand basket. *(Sarcastic)* So Frank, what happened to your perfect fucking day?

FRANK

I'm trying every way I can. What do ya want me to do?

STEVEN

Nothin' Frank. It's Memorial Day weekend. Nobody's around anyway. Why don't you guys just call it a day?

FRANK

OK Boss. Don't have to ask me twice.

ROSA

Call if you need me.

(ROSA and FRANK exit SR.)

STEVEN

I'm outta here. Wanna get a drink?

JIM

Thanks, but I need to finish up here. *(Beat)* Steven, you never told me how the meeting with Boatman went.

STEVEN

We'll talk on Tuesday.

JIM

Highlights?

STEVEN

After the holiday. Look, it's my birthday. I wanna get home. Have a good weekend, Jimbo.

*(STEVEN reaches for umbrella and opens it to find it's broken. The sound of thunder can be heard in the distance.)
(STEVEN exit SR.) (Blackout.)*

ACT I - Scene 4: Serendipity

SETTING: Jim is working at his desk at Blue Sky later that evening. Gabrielle enters SR.

GABRIELLE
Jim? Can I come in?

JIM
What are you doing here?

GABRIELLE
I didn't like the way we ended things this afternoon.

JIM
Nor did I, Gaby.

GABRIELLE
It's Friday night. *(Looks around)* Everyone's gone. Whatever you're working on, it can wait.

JIM
I thought after what you said at lunch / that you --

GABRIELLE
You caught me off guard.

JIM
I wasn't really prepared / to deal with --

GABRIELLE
Let's try again.

JIM
But --

GABRIELLE
Hi Jim, I'm in town for a few days working on a story. How would you like to take a girl to dinner?

JIM
Really?

GABRIELLE
Jim, we're not kids any more. Fate handed us another chance. It was...serendipity.

JIM
I love that word.

GABRIELLE
Me too. Let's go find a quiet place and talk.

JIM
(Beat) Gaby, I'm lost.

GABRIELLE
You're not lost. You're here, with me.

JIM
I'm nowhere except when I'm in this office.

GABRIELLE
That's sad.

JIM
It's true.

GABRIELLE
It's never too late to change, sweetheart.

JIM
I'm afraid it's too late for me.

GABRIELLE
Stand up, Jim.

What? JIM

I said, "stand up." GABRIELLE

(Stands) What now? JIM

Come here. GABRIELLE

(JIM moves closer to GABRIELLE. They embrace, and they start to dance.)

JIM
Gaby, I don't think / that this is going to --

GABRIELLE
Don't talk. *(They continue dancing)*

JIM
I'm not sure this is a good idea.

GABRIELLE
I said, "stop talking".

JIM
(Beat) I never should have left you.

GABRIELLE

No, you shouldn't have. But it's not too late.

JIM

(Pulling away) I think it is. I have a job to do. You're moving to Europe. This is a fantasy. The real world doesn't work this way.

GABRIELLE

Shhhh. *(Pulls him close)*

JIM

No. This is never going to work. *(They continue dancing)*

(Lights fade to black.)

ACT I - Scene 5: Great Expectations

SETTING: Outside Blue Sky offices, a few days before July 4th weekend. Steven and Jim are DSL in a pool of light.

(Spotlight on JIM holding a book and STEVEN holding cup of coffee.)

JIM

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

STEVEN

What the fuck are you talking about? *(Drinks a sip of coffee)*

JIM

It's one of the most famous opening lines in literature.

STEVEN

I'm not an idiot! Great Expectations, right?

JIM

No. Tale of Two Cities. You know that quote came from Dickens' godfather. An entrepreneur who started a shipping company.

STEVEN

Really?

JIM

Really. Boatman's no different than the factory owners of Dickens' time, or the robber barons of the 1920s.

STEVEN

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

JIM

Except these days, investors expect windfalls from mergers, acquisitions, and going public.

STEVEN

Everyone thinks they can become uber-rich. Some are making a killing, while others crash and burn. *(Takes another sip of coffee)*

JIM

I'd better get to the attorneys' office to make sure it's one and not the other.

(JIM exits SR. The lights shift and Steven walks to the conference table and sits. BOATMAN is already seated at the table. Lights only on conference table SL. Note: SR is dark.)

BOATMAN

Let's keep this short. My car's out front, and I want to get an early start on the weekend.

STEVEN

(Sarcastically) Time is money, right? Lemme guess, 4th of July on the Island?

BOATMAN

We're booked to the max. Killer reservations, concert tickets, and fireworks in Southampton.

STEVEN

Sounds fabulous. Just remember - fireworks look better when you're not checking your phone for email.

BOATMAN

Speaking of email, that downsize plan you sent over is exactly what we wanted.

STEVEN

Well, there are some tweaks we need to talk about.

BOATMAN

Don't worry about it. We can execute when I get back. Just wish you did it a year ago.

STEVEN

You know it decimates the company.

BOATMAN

Steven, don't beat a dead horse. Here's the term sheet for our firm to invest another \$5 million, with a separate agreement to buy back your stock. It's just as we discussed.

(BOATMAN hands STEVEN a large envelope.)

STEVEN

(Opens envelope, removes offer sheet) They're lousy terms that screw existing shareholders.

BOATMAN

It is what it is. Just do the layoffs and tender your resignation. At least your stake is secure.

STEVEN

Selling my soul.

BOATMAN

Steven, you saved the company. And I'll give you a stellar reference.

STEVEN

A reference?

BOATMAN

Hey don't forget, when we invested I was your biggest fan.

(STEVEN and BOATMAN stare at each other.)

STEVEN

Boatman, you're too young to be cynical, and too old to be stupid.

BOATMAN

I don't have time for this crap. You called and said we needed to talk. What's up?

STEVEN

You remember Margaret Dunham?

BOATMAN

Harvard professor? Invested in Blue Sky before we did.

STEVEN

That's her. You helped work out the terms for her angel investment while you were waiting for us to get off the ground.

BOATMAN

Angels invest in ideas, we invest in companies.

STEVEN

True. But there's a detail that may have escaped you, my Machiavellian friend.

BOATMAN

What's that?

STEVEN

As you suggested, when she invested, we gave her warrants to purchase another 100,000 shares to protect her position.

BOATMAN

I seem to remember... *(Beat)* *(Raised voice)* No! Are you saying / that she --

STEVEN

Yes, Dan. Margaret Dunham exercised her option to purchase additional stock.

BOATMAN

Wait. She's purchasing those shares?

STEVEN

Bought 'em. Past tense.

BOATMAN

(Quietly) Oh shit!

STEVEN

And there's more. When Yahoo heard AOL was in the mix, they came back and upped their offer, and well --

BOATMAN

Steven, don't move too fast.

STEVEN

As much as we appreciate your willingness to invest more in Blue Sky, we've decided to accept the Yahoo offer. And since your group now controls only 49.3% of the stock, this is a done deal.

(STEVEN rips up the offer sheet BOATMAN gave him.)

BOATMAN

Hang on a second. The rest of the Board will / need to evaluate--

STEVEN

Jim's been on the phone all morning. We have the green light from a majority to move ahead with the deal. We don't need your fucking approval.

BOATMAN

I'll want to go back and review the details, but if this is correct...*(Pause, stands up, squares his shoulders)* You win.

STEVEN

We both win, Dan.

(JIM enters SL.)

JIM

Sorry I'm late. Just came from the attorneys.

STEVEN

Did you get it?

JIM

Of course. *(Holding folder)*

BOATMAN

Dunham really purchased 100,000 shares?

JIM

Dan, when this deal closes, your firm will get a check for almost five times the amount you invested. Here's the paperwork. *(Hands BOATMAN folder)*

BOATMAN

So when do you think it's going to close?

JIM

Before Labor Day. We'll fast track it, and Yahoo's ready to go.

STEVEN

Now shake my hand, smile, and go back to your partners proud that you made a tidy profit. And learn this Dan, *(Beat)* business is personal. *(BOATMAN shakes STEVEN's hand)*

(Lights Fade.)

ACT I - Scene 6: Twist of the Tale

SETTING: Blue Sky Media office Tuesday after Labor Day weekend. The white boards have been flipped over. One has, "We did it!" and "Yeah, baby!" written on it, while the other says "Congratulations team!" with a giant "BlueSky.com" sales tag with the word "SOLD" drawn on it.

The Jaws movie poster is still on the wall, but one corner is hanging over. There's a bottle of champagne on Jim's desk.

JIM enters SR holding a cup of coffee as the phone rings. He ignores it. He is dressed casually, pulls a computer out of his bag, types, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 begins to play.

(Morning light shines through the blinds. JIM raises blinds, goes to desk, calls voice mail with the speaker phone on, and pulls out pad to write down calls as the music plays.)

VOICE MAIL (AUTOMATED VOICE)

Meridian Voice Mail enter your pass code. *(JIM punches in four numbers on the phone)* You have 53 new messages. *(JIM sighs)*

ROSA - VOICE MAIL

(Slight inebriated, joyous celebratory tone) We're at McSorley's, Jim. Come on over my love, everybody's here. *(Beep)*

STEVEN - VOICE MAIL

Jim, it's Steven. Missed you at McSorley's. So happy. Timing was perfect. Liz and I are heading to the Caymans. Good luck with the transition. *(Beep)*

STEVEN - VOICE MAIL

Jim, it's Steven. On the way to the airport. Thinking about the escrow and we might want to --

(JIM deletes message in the middle of playback.)

VOICE MAIL (AUTOMATED VOICE)

Message deleted.

STEVEN - VOICE MAIL

Jim, it's Steven. Liz is driving, and I wanted to check in with you about --

(JIM deletes the message in the middle of playback.)

Message deleted. VOICE MAIL (AUTOMATED VOICE)

Jim, it's Steven. -- STEVEN - VOICE MAIL

(JIM deletes message in the middle of playback.)

Message deleted. VOICE MAIL (AUTOMATED VOICE)

(JIM throws up hands and spins in his chair.)

ROSA - VOICE MAIL
Jim, it's Rosa. Steven called and wants to know why you're not answering your phone. I told him that he's retired now, and it shouldn't matter. That didn't go over well. Call when you get a chance. *(Beep)*

STEVEN - VOICE MAIL
Steven again. *(Shouting)* Where the fuck are you? Long story. Looks like we're going to cut the trip short and head back tomorrow --

(JIM deletes message in the middle of playback.)

Message deleted. VOICE MAIL (AUTOMATED VOICE)

(Jim hangs up phone as ROSA enters. He's about to say "good morning" when his cell phone rings. Rosa looks at JIM and does a double take. ROSA starts straightening STEVEN's desk. JIM looks for cell phone, fishing through briefcase, and finds the phone in his coat.)

JIM
(Answering phone) Good morning, Steven. *(Listening)* Yes, I just got in. *(Listening)* I saw that you called a few times. Weren't your last words "See you in a few days"? *(Listening)* Certainly. I'll be here.

(JIM hangs up phone and takes a sip of coffee.)

JIM

Steven's on his way in.

ROSA

He's coming to the office? What happened?

JIM

He missed me.

ROSA

Jim, where have you been? Everyone was asking for you. We partied 'til the wee hours of the morning.

JIM

It sounds like fun.

ROSA

You should have joined us. Frank was in rare form.

JIM

A well deserved celebration.

(JIM picks up the champagne bottle on his desk and moves it over.)

ROSA

I came in last week to try to pack things up. I've never seen piles like this on your desk before.

JIM

Don't worry about it. I'll label what goes to the attorneys, and which boxes to send to the new offices.

ROSA

Great. Then I'll get them out this afternoon. *(Looking at Jim's sweater)* By the way, that's a nice color on you.

(JIM is only half listening to ROSA.)

JIM

And check my voice mail. I tried to get through them, but there are over fifty messages -- half of them are from Steven. Retirement hasn't changed his phone habits one iota.

ROSA

Will do.

JIM

Thanks much.

ROSA

Jim, is everything OK? You seem a little off.

JIM

Sure, I'm fine.

ROSA

I'm not so sure. *(Handing JIM stack of papers)* These documents came for Steven.

JIM

I'll deal with them. *(Beat)* Oh hell, since he's back, give them to Steven.

ROSA

He went crazy trying to reach you.

JIM

I take a few days off, and suddenly everyone's freaking out.

ROSA

Well, it isn't like you not to check in.

JIM

(Looks at folder on desk) I can't believe we didn't remember those warrant agreements.

ROSA

They never got scanned.

JIM

We were running fast in those days. It was hard enough raising money to start the company. Documents were flying every which way. And then it was off to the races with Boatman.

ROSA

Was he as difficult to deal with in those days?

JIM

It's ironic. Boatman was the one who suggested we give warrants to early investors as an incentive. They weren't material, so they didn't make it into the cap table. Unbelievable.

ROSA

It was seven years ago.

JIM

It was sloppy.

ROSA

It was brilliant. You even made the Wall Street Journal this morning.

JIM

Rosa, you found the warrant documents. Margaret put up the money, and executed her right to purchase the stock. And I'm getting all the credit.

ROSA

You were the wizard who figured out how... I know what it is. *(Gasp!)* You're not wearing a tie!

JIM

So?

ROSA

Jim, you always wear a tie. You never don't wear a tie.

JIM

Oh, that's not true.

ROSA

Yes it is. What's going on?

JIM

Nothing's going on. We were mentioned in the Journal? *(Takes the Journal out of his bag, and looks for article)*

ROSA

You haven't read the Journal? No tie and no Journal?

(JIM's cell phone rings. He looks at it and answers in a hushed tone.)

JIM

Good morning. *(Listening)* Not the best time to talk right now. *(Listening)* Lunch? How about noon? *(Listening)* OK, meet me there. *(Listening)* Perfect. *(Puts phone away)*

ROSA

A lunch date? Without a tie?

JIM

Let it go, Rosa.

ROSA

Jim, this isn't like you. Talk to me.

JIM

(Exasperated) Fine. But just to you. Where do I start?

ROSA

How about what happened after the deal was signed? You just disappeared.

JIM

(Melancholy voice) "Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get." You know who said that?

ROSA

Tell me.

JIM

W.P. Kinsella, in "Field of Dreams".

ROSA

Are you talking baseball or philosophy?

JIM

Both. We won. We beat Boatman. *(Holding up the Journal)*

ROSA

You're a genius.

JIM

It should have been one of the best moments in my life. I took a 3-2 count with two outs in the bottom of the ninth, and knocked the next pitch right out of the park. It was a walk-off home run. And I was the hero.

ROSA

So what's wrong?

JIM

I don't know. Something is missing in my life.

ROSA

Does this have anything to do with Steven retiring?

JIM

Steven not working. *(Scoff)* Now there's a joke. He won't make it 'til Thanksgiving before his mind, body, and soul crave another gig.

ROSA

You think?

JIM

Steven's in denial. He's addicted to deals just like I am.

ROSA

Is there anything I can do to help?

JIM

Thanks Rosa, but I have to figure this out for myself.

ROSA

You sure? What about --

(FRANK enters SR with a box of gifts.)

JIM

Good morning, Frank.

FRANK

Jim, you missed one hell of a party. Rosa, did you see my date? She was somethin', huh?

ROSA

Yes, she was gorgeous. How did you meet her?

FRANK

She's a friend of a friend. I think I'm in love.

ROSA

Of course you are, dear.

FRANK

She works at the Globe dot com. Smart cookie, too.

ROSA

Are you going to see her again, or is this a love 'em and leave 'em type of thing?

FRANK

Again, for sure. I can't wait to show her the new offices. That place is sweet. Hey Jim, are we gonna be on the same floor?

JIM

We'll see. I've got a meeting with the transition team later this week.

FRANK

I spoke with 'em about new hires. It's grow baby grow! This is gonna be awesome.

ROSA

They're also keeping everyone in San Francisco and London.

FRANK

Beginning of summer, the sky was falling. Now, if you stay, they give ya a bonus and stock options!

JIM

Slow down, tiger.

FRANK

Hey Jim. You're not wearing a tie!

(STEVEN enters SR. He has a cup of coffee in one hand, and a cell phone in the other. STEVEN puts down his briefcase and holds up a hand to people in the office as he continues to talk on the phone.)

STEVEN

(Into cell phone) Just got to the office. *(Listening)* Yeah, we should discuss that, too. *(Listening)* Absolutely. Sounds perfect. *(Listening)* Gotta run. Let's talk later. *(Puts phone in pocket)* Hi guys.

ROSA

Oh look. It's the poster child for the A-A-R-P! How's retirement so far?

STEVEN

Vacation was a bust. And family time was cut short, too. Both girls had to get back to school. It almost feels like "Cat's Cradle".

FRANK

Cat's cradle? What's that?

JIM

It's a song by Harry Chapin from the 70's. The quintessential nightmare of every dad. Google it, Frank.

ROSA

How's Liz dealing with your retirement?

STEVEN

Turns out Lizzie's not as excited as I thought she'd be.

ROSA

Who would have imagined?

STEVEN

Said something like she "married me for better or worse, but not for lunch".

JIM

Surprise, surprise.

STEVEN

We're working on it. She's a lot busier than I expected.

ROSA

You think while you were out on the road, she was home watching soap operas and eating bon-bons?

JIM

Did you at least have a few good days in the Caymans?

FRANK

Did ya go to that killer beach bar I told you about?

STEVEN

No chance. The rain hit as soon as we landed and never let up. I'm thinkin', "What do I need this for?" I couldn't relax. Emails were pouring in about the deal. Then Liz said she had a lot going on, too. So we cut it short.

FRANK

Were you there long enough to check the Caymans off your Life List?

(STEVEN, exasperated, throws a pencil at FRANK.)

JIM

So what's your plan?

STEVEN

Didn't you listen to your voice mail?

JIM

Umm, haven't had the chance to check my messages. I was in Connecticut with no cell service.

STEVEN

Where were you? In the woods?

JIM

It's a long story.

ROSA

Steven, why are you in the office? Aren't you retired?

STEVEN

I never got to see Jim after the closing.

ROSA

(Holds up Journal) As the Journal says, "Deal Makers Work Magic".

STEVEN

Oh yeah! Saw that on the way in. Did you get extra copies?

ROSA

Steven, you're retired. That means you get your own damn newspapers.

STEVEN

I'll take this one. *(Takes newspaper from ROSA)* And don't forget, there's that Forbes piece by Gabrielle Adams. Wonder what her angle will be, now that we sold the company.

JIM

(Quietly) I'm not sure she's still writing that article.

FRANK

Hey guys, I brought presents. A little something to celebrate. *(Handing JIM a box of cigars)* Cigars straight off the boat from Cuba. Got 'em from one of my guys in London.

JIM

Gracias, amigo.

FRANK

(Gives STEVEN a book and bottle of champagne) For you, a bottle of 1990 Dom, and --

STEVEN

(Holding up the book that FRANK gave him) 1001 Things To Do Before You Die. Thank you, Frank.

FRANK

I'm sure there's a bunch of stuff in there to add to your Life List.

JIM

'90 was a superb year for champagne. Well done, Frank.

FRANK

Just wanted to show my gratitude.

JIM

So Steven, are you going to drink that to celebrate the deal?

*(STEVEN finishes coffee, gets up and
tosses the empty cup in the trash.)*

STEVEN

That's the plan. Gonna find the perfect time to pop the cork.

JIM

Selling Blue Sky is worth putting it in the "drink now" box.

FRANK

And Rosa. What can I say?

*(FRANK hands ROSA two dozen roses and a
large book.)*

ROSA

(Taking gifts from FRANK) Oh Frank, you shouldn't have.

FRANK

That's the U.S. News Ultimate College Guide. Thought you might want to show the twins all the choices they have now.

ROSA

Frank, this is really sweet. It means more than you know. *(Beat)* By the way, Steven, good thing you're here. There are docs you need to sign.

STEVEN

Right, that's why I came straight from the airport. *(Takes papers from ROSA and pulls out his pen)* I've been thinking. *(Cough)* I might want to keep this office. Jim, can you check with the landlord and our attorney?

ROSA

Really? What do you need an office for?

STEVEN

Let's talk later. *(Walking over to the coffee pot)* Hey, where's the coffee?

ROSA

All packed up.

STEVEN

Could you unpack it, please?

(ROSA opens a box looking for coffee.)

FRANK

I'll get you some, Steven. I'm goin' downstairs anyway.

STEVEN

I'll go with you. I can't wait that long.

FRANK

OK, see you guys at the new office.

ROSA

I'll be over there later on. Steven, are you coming back?

STEVEN

Give me about twenty minutes. *(STEVEN and FRANK start to leave)*
So what's the transition plan for the sales team look like?

FRANK

What do you care? You're retired!

(STEVEN and FRANK exit SR. ROSA finds coffee and makes coffee.)

ROSA

You know, underneath all that bluster, Frank is really a class act.

JIM

Sometimes I think we give him too much grief. He pulled out all the stops, closing three big deals before the end of the quarter.

ROSA

Jim, do you want to finish our conversation?

JIM

Let's talk about it when I get back from lunch.

ROSA

Are you having lunch with her?

JIM

Yes.

(STEVEN enters SR while talking into phone and juggling a paper cup of coffee.)

STEVEN

That sounds great. Let me call you later.

ROSA

(To JIM) Aha! I knew it. It's about a woman. *(To STEVEN)* Steven, you're back already?

STEVEN

(Puts phone away, holds up paper coffee cup) I bought a quick cup from the vendor in the lobby. Not as good as Starbucks, but my phone's ringing off the hook, and I wanted to get back to the office. *(Beat)* What woman? *(Looks at JIM as if for the first time today)* Hey Jim, what's the deal? You're not wearing a tie!

ROSA

We're about to find out.

JIM

Ugh... OK look, Gaby and I have been seeing each other. Things have been going really well, and I don't want to jinx it. So, you each get one question. That's it. Go.

STEVEN

Wait, Gaby? As in Gabrielle Adams?

JIM

I knew her as Gaby Beekman at Harvard. That's one. Rosa?

STEVEN

Hang on a minute. Who? What? Where? When? How?

JIM

Nope, that's five questions. Rosa, your turn.

ROSA

OK. Wait. Is she single?

JIM

Yes, this is the first time since grad school that we're both single.

STEVEN

Gabrielle Adams from Forbes?

JIM

Yes, Steven. But we're not in the article. Conflict of interest.

STEVEN

You're kidding me.

ROSA

Did you date in college?

JIM

I was getting my MBA. She was undergrad. We had a relationship.

ROSA

Is she the one that got away?

JIM

You could say that. We wound up on different paths. She's widowed now. We both have grown kids. *(Beat)* She was my best friend.

STEVEN

So that lunch at the Palm?

JIM

She thought she could do the interview with you, and avoid seeing me altogether.

ROSA

And you messed up her plan.

JIM

I guess so. Before then, I just wasn't interested enough to try to look her up.

ROSA

You weren't interested? Jim, you've traded love for success through three marriages, and you're still miserable.

STEVEN

How long have you been seeing her?

JIM

The stars finally aligned. We picked up right where we left off. I can't stop thinking about her. *(Looking at ROSA)* I sound like a fucking Lifetime movie.

ROSA

I'm impressed.

JIM

We're done here. *(Pointing to STEVEN)* You, you're retired, so go off and do lazy-ass, old guy retirement things. *(To ROSA)* You get back to work, and get these boxes to the new offices. I'm going to lunch.

(JIM stands, just as GABRIELLE enters SR.)

GABRIELLE

Hello all.

JIM

(Surprised) I thought we were meeting at the restaurant.

STEVEN

Hello, Gabrielle.

ROSA

Can I get you some coffee, Ms. Adams?

GABRIELLE

No thank you. Jim and I are going to lunch.

JIM

Twelve o'clock reservation, but we can go earlier.

GABRIELLE

I saw the piece in the Journal, and thought I'd bring you a few extra copies.

STEVEN

(Takes newspapers from Gabrielle) Oh great. I tried to send Rosa out to get some, but since I'm retired, she says she doesn't work for me anymore.

ROSA

And I'm sticking to that story.

JIM

Thanks, Gaby.

STEVEN

Did you have a good summer?

GABRIELLE

I did. It's always nice to come back to my old stomping grounds.

STEVEN

How long will you be in town?

GABRIELLE

I'm leaving tomorrow. *(JIM flinches)*

ROSA

Tomorrow?

STEVEN

I'm sure you could find a reason to stay longer.

ROSA

Steven, let's go take a look at that lease. Nice to see you, Ms. Adams. Please excuse us. *(Takes STEVEN's arm and leads him to the door)*

(ROSA and STEVEN exit SR.)

JIM

That was subtle.

GABRIELLE

Yeah.

JIM

I still can't get over it. The last couple of months have been surreal.

GABRIELLE

I'm still spinning.

JIM

You can't leave. I thought we'd have more time.

GABRIELLE

Every time I try to talk about it, you change the subject. I've really got to get back, Jim.

JIM

We can figure something out.

GABRIELLE

I've got a dead stop here. I need to pack / and get ready to --

JIM

You could postpone your job / and we could --

GABRIELLE

Jim, I can't. I'll lose the gig.

JIM

But...

GABRIELLE

But what? You thought after a of couple months of mind-blowing sex, I'd just melt into your arms forever? That I'd forget about my life, my dreams?

JIM

Yes. I mean, no. Look Gaby, there's got to be a way we can both have / what we want --

GABRIELLE

Not if I stay. *(Beat)* Hey Jim, why don't you come to London?

JIM

I can't. I told Yahoo I'd run the transition.

GABRIELLE

This is what happened the last time. Remember? You were the responsible one then. No way you'd stray from your career. Now I'm the one with goals, and a job that's finally hitting its peak.

JIM

It's at least a year in NY with Yahoo before I could even / think about --

GABRIELLE

You're so full of shit. You could work out of their London office. You're staying here because it's what you know. It's where you're comfortable.

JIM

They'd never go for it. Besides, what's wrong with comfortable?

GABRIELLE

What's wrong with it? It makes you a spectator of your own life. *(Opens her purse and hands him a piece of paper)*

JIM

What's this? *(Looks at paper)* Where did you ever?

GABRIELLE

Don't you remember? That was the list you wrote the night before graduation.

JIM

My "Life List".

Your what?
GABRIELLE

Steven calls it a "Life List".
JIM

Read it.
GABRIELLE

JIM
(Reading) Find a soulmate, make a million dollars, travel the world, buy a Porsche, own a boat, have a family.

Have you done it all?
GABRIELLE

Well, I drive an Audi.
JIM

I'm not joking.
GABRIELLE

(Tentatively) Yes. I have.
JIM

Have you really?
GABRIELLE

JIM
I've made money, traveled the world, and I've got great kids, even if I don't see them very much. Why are you showing this to me?

GABRIELLE
The soulmate part. Have you found her?

JIM
I've been married three times.

GABRIELLE
That's not what I asked.

JIM
What do you want from me, Gaby?

GABRIELLE
I want you to live. I'm not questioning your success. I'm questioning your happiness. I love you, Jim.

JIM

I feel the same way about you, but Gaby, this is too much, too soon.

GABRIELLE

I'm not some starry eyed chick, blind to the fact that love is hard.

JIM

Gaby, it's just that now... it's not the right time.

GABRIELLE

Jim, there's never a right time. You just have to take the leap.

JIM

I don't want to rush this.

GABRIELLE

After this summer together, I'm ready. I don't want to spend the rest of my life watching time pass, or passing time with just anyone. I want it to be with you.

JIM

So stay with me.

GABRIELLE

No! I've got a chance to live and work in Europe. It'll be the capstone to my career.

JIM

After I work at Yahoo for a few months, we can try again. In the meantime, / we can --

GABRIELLE

Been there, done that. If we put it off, it will never happen. *(Beat)* We're good together. There's a big difference between seeing the world, and sharing it with your soulmate.

JIM

How do you know? Have you been that unhappy? Are you saying that life would have been better if you shared it with me?

GABRIELLE

Yes!

JIM

That if we'd stayed together --

GABRIELLE

Yes! God damn it, yes! That's what I'm telling you. You fall in love once, but if it's real, you stay in love forever. If you screw it up, you might not stay together, but you never lose the love. *(Stands ready to leave)*

JIM

You want me to give it up? I love my work. I like chasing the next deal. I'm not ready to stop.

GABRIELLE

Why not? Haven't you done enough? Honey, you've won. You reached the top.

JIM

I'm sorry. I just can't do a complete one-eighty like you're asking me to.

GABRIELLE

Years haven't changed you one bit. You're still the brilliant, passionate, frightened man I've loved all my life.

JIM

Gaby, listen --

GABRIELLE

It wouldn't have worked anyway.

JIM

But --

GABRIELLE

No Jim. You're right. It was probably just a distraction.

JIM

Gaby, that's not it at all.

GABRIELLE

I guess... I guess finding a soulmate doesn't mean you get to spend the rest of your life together.

JIM

I want you to stay.

GABRIELLE

I want you to come with me.

JIM

I can't.

GABRIELLE

(Soft voice) You mean you won't.

JIM

Gaby, please understand. *(Reaches for her hand, but she pulls away)*

(GABRIELLE gets up, gathers her purse.)

GABRIELLE

It's been fun, but I'm out of here. See you around, Jim.

(GABRIELLE exits SR. JIM is left alone and walks to the windows and stares out aimlessly, shaking his head. STEVEN and ROSA enter slowly SR.)

JIM

How much of that did you hear?

STEVEN

Nothing.

ROSA

Everything.

JIM

Right. Thoughts?

STEVEN

Well, you stuck to your guns.

ROSA

You're an idiot.

JIM

Why am I the idiot? I can't just pick up and go traipsing around Europe.

STEVEN

You know, you actually could.

JIM

Steven, Yahoo offered me the chance to run M&A. With their cash, and in this market, it would be like playing monopoly. This is what I do.

ROSA

Because you're an idiot. Gaby's right. You could do that from London.

STEVEN

No Jim, I get it. You've been burned before. No need to risk it all. I understand.

ROSA

Of course you do. You've got the full package. Family and a career. You married your soulmate. You don't know what it's like to miss out on that. You don't have to stop. You don't want to stop. You think you should stop, and we've all been entertained by the retirement discussions for months, while you're busy being dishonest with yourself. *(Pointing to JIM)* He's been married to his work and all three *(Holds up three fingers)* - count 'em - three of his marriages failed because he decided that success trumps love. Now he's doing it all over again. He just watched his soulmate walk out that door and he's standing here, paragon of industry that he is, with his tail between his legs. *(Raised voice)* Take the flowers *(Picks up flowers FRANK gave her)* and go get the girl. Don't blow this. No, don't you blow this again.

(Long pause.)

STEVEN

I am retired.

ROSA

Fuck you, Steven. *(Hands roses to JIM)*

JIM

Frank's flowers?

ROSA

He's got good taste.

JIM

I need to think. Not sure I'm meant to live happily ever after.

ROSA

Don't think, just follow your heart.

JIM

Lewis Carroll said, "I can't go back to yesterday because I was a different person then".

ROSA

Quote all you want, but isn't it time to start living?

(Beat.) (JIM takes flowers from ROSA and heads to the door SR.)

STEVEN
Where are you going?

JIM
I'm going to get the girl. Rosa, put my office in storage. I'll work out the details later.

STEVEN
Go! We got you covered.

ROSA
We?

JIM
I'm off.

STEVEN
Good luck, my friend.

ROSA
Go!

LIFE (JIM exits SR.)

STEVEN
Wow.

ROSA
Yeah, wow. Who saw that coming?

STEVEN
Not me. (*Looks in some of the boxes and baskets*)

ROSA
Steven, you seem restless. You should be sitting on top of the world.

STEVEN
Talk about "the best of times and the worst of times".

ROSA
What?

STEVEN
We almost failed.

ROSA
But we didn't. It all worked out perfectly.

STEVEN
You gotta hand it to Jim.

ROSA

The way he figured out how to prevent Boatman from blocking the sale. That was --

STEVEN

Brilliant. You know Margaret wouldn't approve the sale till we received assurances that Yahoo wouldn't cut employees?

ROSA

After all the talk about layoffs. You did it, Steven.

STEVEN

The best advice I ever got was, "Jump and a net will appear."

ROSA

Amen.

(ROSA opens a bottle of champagne and pours in paper cups, handing one to STEVEN.)

ROSA (CONT'D)

(Raising cups) To getting what you wish for.

STEVEN

I couldn't have asked for a better end game. We took care of our people. And the damn VCs made their money.

ROSA

We all made money.

STEVEN

Now that your family is secure, what are you gonna do?

ROSA

I'm staying with Yahoo. They offered me a promotion to Manager in Client Services.

STEVEN

You can thank Jim for that. He waxed poetic about how valuable you were to the transition team.

ROSA

Speaking of Jim, what do I tell the folks at Yahoo?

STEVEN

Give it a few days. If he doesn't find a way to work out of London, they'll probably hire someone half his age, at half his salary.

(ROSA sorts boxes. STEVEN's phone rings.)

ROSA

(Hands file to STEVEN) Just sign where it's highlighted.

STEVEN

(Phone rings. Annoyed by the interruption) Hi, Dad.

(As STEVEN talks, ROSA picks up basket and exits SR.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

(Listening) Yeah, spoke with Mom on the way into the office. *(Listening)* It's still unbelievable how fast everything fell into place. *(Listening)* I'd love to Dad, if I could find the time. *(Listening)* Hey Dad, let me get back to work, and I'll buzz you tonight. *(Listening)* Love you too.

(STEVEN hangs up the phone, looks at the Jaws poster, and pins the loose corner back on the wall. He goes to the coffee machine and pours a cup. He picks up the bottle of Dom that FRANK gave him, looks at it, and puts it in bottom drawer of his desk. Long pause. He goes to his computer and types, turns on something like Grateful Dead - "Touch of Grey". Dials phone.)

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Hey Sam, it's Steven. *(Listening)* Yeah, we closed last week. *(Listening)* You know that opportunity you mentioned? How about we get together and talk it over? *(Listening)* Retired? Me? Come on, that's ridiculous. Haven't you heard? Retirement equals death.

(STEVEN hangs up phone and turns up the music - something like Grateful Dead's "Touch of Grey" - as the lights go to black.)

End of Play.