

Big Business Wonderful Opportunities

by

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2/11/2013

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1 EXT. GROCERY STORE, PARKING LOT - DAY

Wide Shot: An empty, gray parking lot fills the frame. Very slowly, one might say majestically, a SHOPPING CART rolls into frame. Alternatively pushing and riding on the rear axle is DYLAN, our hero.

He is 25-ish, slightly overweight, face covered in stubble, wearing a over-sized sweatshirt underneath his standard issue reflective vest. He continues to "bowl" the empty carts into their pens.

CUT TO:

2 INT. GROCERY STORE, BACKROOM

In a series of quick cuts, DYLAN punches out his time sheet, opens his locker, grabs a faded burgundy BIKE HELMET out of his locker, tightens the straps around his head, and walks out the door.

CUT TO:

3 EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Wide Shot: Dylan's apartment is dead center in the frame. It's not expensive, but not broken down either. The trash cans are still in the street from pickup day. DYLAN rides in on his BIKE from the right, brakes, and carries it up the stairs to the front door.

CUT TO:

4 INT. APARTMENT, STAIRWAY

The stairwell is claustrophobic. A CARDBOARD BOX full of JUNK MAIL and GROCERY CATALOGS is positioned underneath the mail slot, contents over flowing onto the floor.

The front door opens and DYLAN tries to cram his BIKE through the door frame. He leans it against the wall and kicks the door closed behind him. Halfway up the stairs, he realizes his KEYS are still in the lock of the front door. He goes back for them, and SLAMS the door.

CUT TO:

5 INT. APARTMENT, ETHAN'S ROOM

ETHAN sits at a relatively tidy desk, tapping away at a KEYBOARD while balancing a PHONE on his shoulder. A 3D model of a car engine rotates on his LAPTOP screen. DYLAN knocks twice on the door, pushing it open as he does so.

DYLAN

Hey-

Ethan interrupts him with a raised hand, indicating he's on the phone.

DYLAN (cont'd)

(Mouthing)

Sorry!

He eases the door closed.

CUT TO:

6 INT. APARTMENT, KITCHEN

DYLAN removes a CAN OF BEER from the fridge, and a packet of RAMEN NOODLES from a cabinet. There is a stack of DIRTY POTS and PANS in the sink; Dylan grabs one of pots and gives it a quick scrub down. Satisfied, he fills it with water and dumps in the noodles, placing it on the stove top to cook.

As it cooks, Dylan paces around the kitchen on his PHONE.

DYLAN

Yeah- he said his daughter knows someone that can build it. I know. The market's just a little tough for web design and stuff. I'm trying! Mom. It's a market thing, y'know?

CUT TO:

7 INT. APARTMENT, DYLAN'S ROOM

A large MONITOR rests on Dylan's desk, flanked by small SPEAKERS. DYLAN slides into frame on a rolling DESK CHAIR, moving CRUSTY DISHES out of the way to make room for his RAMEN and BEER.

He opens his Gmail. His inbox is absolutely empty.

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN

Nope.

He opens Facebook. No notifications or messages.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Nope.

He opens LinkedIn. One new message.

DYLAN (cont'd)

And nope.

He closes the tab.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Oh!

Then reopens it and clicks the message.

DYLAN (cont'd)

(With rising excitement)

Mr. Carter, I'm a partner for a local business in the Ilium area. A senior partner of mine is actively seeking young minded, ambitious students and alumni, who are open to new opportunities and your profile caught my attention. Shoot me a phone call and I can give you some details about what we are looking for. Sincerely, Joe

Dylan immediately grabs his phone and starts to punch in the phone number. It rings.

CUT TO:

8 EXT. APARTMENT, STREET - DAY

JOE is sitting in his car, removing a BAGEL from a PAPER BAG. He is young, 30-ish, nicely dressed in a sports jacket, facial hair neatly trimmed and dark hair slicked back. He takes a big bite of his bagel just as his phone begins to vibrate on the dashboard. He attempts to swallow the bagel, but cannot, and instead opens the door and spits it on the sidewalk. He regains his composure, and answers the phone.

JOE

Go for Joe!

INTERCUT WITH:

9

INT. APARTMENT, DYLAN'S ROOM

DYLAN

Hi! Um. Hello. This is Dylan  
Carter, you messaged me on LinkedIn  
about a business opportunity?

JOE

Oh yes! Dylan! It's great to  
finally hear from you, man.

DYLAN

Thanks, you too. Sorry for the  
delay, I've just been swamped.

JOE

Oh, I understand the feeling. Can  
we meet up and talk in person?

DYLAN

Yea- Sure! That'd uh, that'd be  
great! When were you thinking?

JOE

How about we get dinner tonight?

DYLAN awkwardly starts to laugh, and JOE joins in.

JOE (cont'd)

So when do you usually eat?

DYLAN

Oh! You're serious!

JOE

Of course I am. Unless you already  
have dinner plans?

Dylan glances down at his Ramen.

DYLAN

I would love to get dinner.

JOE

There's a new steakhouse on 15th  
that I've been dying to check out.  
How about it?

DYLAN

Sure!

CUT TO:

10 EXT. APARTMENT, STREET - DAY

JOE  
I'll put you down as a heck yes!  
See you in an hour!

Joe hangs up, and resumes eating his bagel. The camera pulls out of his car to reveal where he is parked: directly in front of Dylan's apartment.

CUT TO:

11 INT. APARTMENT, DYLAN'S ROOM

DYLAN leafs through the clothing in his closet for a nice shirt. Two SHIRTS that show his gut are eliminated, as is a shirt with a strange yellow stain on the lapel. Finally, a BLUE STRIPED SHIRT is selected, along with KHAKI PANTS.

CUT TO:

12 INT. APARTMENT, ETHAN'S ROOM

ETHAN is sitting in the same position as last we saw him, minus the phone. DYLAN walks by the door again.

ETHAN  
You look fancy.

Dylan stops, framed in the doorway.

DYLAN  
Got a dinner job interview!

ETHAN  
Good for you! Hey, order coffee.  
It'll make you look professional.

DYLAN  
Got it.

Ethan takes a closer look at him.

ETHAN  
Also, blue isn't a very powerful  
color.

Dylan stops, and looks down at his shirt. Silence. Ethan's phone begins to buzz and he picks it up.

CUT TO:

13

INT. STEAKHOUSE

DYLAN, now wearing a different shirt, walks though the restaurant. The soft murmur of conversation is punctuated by OOHS and AHHS and SIZZLES as the various chefs flip food through the air onto hot plates. JOE sits at a table in the back, sipping on a NUCLIUM ENERGY DRINK. Sitting with him is JILLIAN, a closeted flowerchild with her hair in a bun. She's wearing a pantsuit, but her ears and wrists are decorated with several BRACELETS and HOOP EARRINGS. She speaks with a heavy lisp.

JOE stands up and waves DYLAN over with both of his hands.

JOE

Dylan! Over here!

Dylan tugs on his shirt to straighten it out, and walks over.

JOE (cont'd)

Take a seat my man! How are you?

They both sit.

DYLAN

I'm good. How a-

JOE

Good? Great! This is Jillian.

JILLIAN

Please, call me Jilli.

Dylan stands up to shake hands with Jillian, then sits back down. Joe stands up.

JOE

And I'm Joe.

Dylan stands back up and shakes hands with Joe. They both sit. A WAITRESS comes over.

WAITRESS

Can I get anyone a drink?

JOE

I'm good. Bidoodly Bear?

JILLIAN

Nothing for me please and thank you.

All eyes turn to Dylan.

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN  
Coffee.

WAITRESS  
Cream and sugar?

DYLAN  
(Slowly)  
Uh... no.

The Waitress exits.

JOE  
So you had work today? (Dylan nods)  
Where do you work?

DYLAN  
Uh.. well I'm an independent web  
designer.

JOE  
Very cool!

DYLAN  
But I work at a grocery store  
during the day.

JOE  
Again, very cool!

A pause as the Waitress returns with a COFFEE. Dylan takes a sip; it's strong. He coughs, then regains his composure.

DYLAN  
So.. *Jilli!* What do you do for a  
living?

JILLIAN  
I teach English as a second  
language.

DYLAN  
Oh. That's great!

JILLIAN  
So rewarding.

The CHEF arrives begins scraping his KNIVES on one another.

JOE  
Do you like Teppenyaki cooking,  
Dylan?

(CONTINUED)



DYLAN  
I'm sorry, what?

JOE  
Teppenyaki! Social eating around a  
hotplate. The holy trinity, a  
wondrous integration of art,  
culture and cuisine.

DYLAN  
(Gesturing to the restaurant)  
You mean like a Hibachi steakhouse?

JOE  
(Fuming)  
It's TEPPENYAKI!

The tables nearby halt their conversations. The Chef continues to scrape his knives together during the silence. Jillian places a hand on Joe's.

JILLIAN  
You'll have to excuse Joe, he's  
very passionate.

JOE  
My apologies. You know, I once  
studied to be a Teppenyaki chef.

DYLAN  
Oh.. Why didn't you?

JOE  
I felt my calling elsewhere.

DYLAN  
Where was that?

JOE  
Chili's. But that's just my side  
job. I specialize in Online  
Personal Relationship Development.

DYLAN  
Oh?

Joe pulls out a PEN and starts scribbling on a NAPKIN as they talk, maintaining perfect eye contact with Dylan as he does.

JOE  
Let me ask you a question Dylan. Do  
you like movies?

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN

...Yes.

JOE

Could you recommend a movie to me Dylan?

DYLAN

Uh, well, what kind-

JOE

What's your favorite movie?

DYLAN

Shawshank Redemption. Hands down.

JOE

Now is anyone paying you to tell me you like Shawshank Redemption?

DYLAN

Well- no?

JOE

Morgan Freeman didn't put you up to this?

DYLAN

(Laughing)

No.

JOE

Exactly! Here, look at this napkin.

Joe rotates the napkin to face Dylan. On it he has drawn a pyramid shaped diagram, with the word "Nuclium" at the top, and "Customers" at the bottom. The sides are decorated with dollar signs.

JOE (cont'd)

When you tell other people to buy something shouldn't you get paid?

DYLAN

(Nodding)

I guess.. yeah.

JOE

Athletes do it all the time. So here's how we fix that. We run a website, where you can buy products from our parent company, Nuclium, like this delicious energy drink. Isn't it delicious darling?

(CONTINUED)

JILLIAN

Oh, yes dear.

JOE

And in return we get a discount.  
And when we sign other people up to  
buy from Nuclium, they pay us  
money! You see?

Joe and Jillian look expectantly at Dylan while he tries to process this new information.

DYLAN

Yes.. so people join through a  
website?

JOE

Exactly. Now, I'm getting a good  
vibe from you. You seem like a very  
driven young man. Are you getting a  
vibe, Vanilla Puddin'?

JILLIAN

The vibes are popping!

JOE

Now you've been nodding like crazy  
since we started, so I want you to  
nod one more time. Would you like  
to attend one of our business  
meetings next weekend, so we can go  
over some final details?

DYLAN

Yeah, sure, that sounds great!

JOE

Great! That's great.

JILLIAN

So great Dylan, so great.

The Chef does a knife trick, and Joe and Jillian both CHEER.

CUT TO:

14 INT. APARTMENT, STAIRWAY

DYLAN, dressed in his WORK CLOTHES, enters through the front door with his BIKE, whistling. He remembers to take the KEY out before he closes the door behind him.

CUT TO:

15 INT. APARTMENT, DYLAN'S ROOM

DYLAN is again rifling through the closet.

DYLAN  
(Yelling out of the room)  
What's business formal?

ETHAN  
(Off screen)  
Like, a suit?

Dylan grabs an OLD SUIT from the back of the closet, and dusts it off. He puts it on, but bursts one of the buttons as he exhales.

DYLAN  
Crap. Ethan!

ETHAN  
(Off screen)  
What?

Dylan picks the BUTTON up off the floor.

DYLAN  
Do you know how to sew a button?

ETHAN  
(Off screen)  
My girlfriend does. But she's in Calgary.

DYLAN  
Thanks, that's really helpful.

DYLAN grabs a novelty STAR WARS PIN off his desk, and uses it to pin his suit together.

CUT TO:

16 INT. HOTEL, LOBBY

The entryway of a modestly budgeted hotel. JOE leans against the wall near the doorway. He smells his breath, pops a MINT, and then checks his hair in a POCKET MIRROR. He slams the mirror shut as Dylan comes through the door.

JOE  
My man Dylan! How you been?

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN  
Well, you know, work is work.

JOE  
Right on man, right on.

JOE walks up to the front desk, DYLAN trailing behind him.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hello, welcome to the Hilton. How  
can I help you?

JOE  
Hi, we are with the Big Business  
Wonderful Opportunities  
Organization.

RECEPTIONIST  
You're in the banquet hall, third  
room on the left just down that  
hallway.

JOE  
Thank you, and have a wonderful  
weekend!

Joe turns back to Dylan.

JOE (cont'd)  
Why don't you wait right here, and  
I'll just check in on the group.

DYLAN  
Sure

DYLAN paces awkwardly in the lobby. He is tapped on the  
shoulder by a middle aged looking man, BRIAN. He is wearing  
JEAN OVERALLS.

BRIAN  
Hi. I'm Bryan.

DYLAN  
Uh hey.

BRIAN  
Are you here for the business  
meeting?

DYLAN  
Yup.

BRIAN  
Me too. Is this your first one?

DYLAN  
Yeah, it is.

BRIAN  
Ooo a virgin. How fun.

An uncomfortable silence. A 30ish, well dressed man, CHARLES, approaches them. Joe is walking with him, they are talking and joking together.

JOE  
Charles, this is Dylan.

Charles sticks out his hand, a practiced gesture.

CHARLES  
Dylan! Pleasure to meet you.

DYLAN  
Thanks, you too.

CHARLES  
Joe tells me you went to college here?

DYLAN  
Yep! Go Red right?

CHARLES  
Uh oh! Union man myself!

He punches Dylan in the shoulder good naturedly.

CHARLES (cont'd)  
So Joe, where did you two meet?

JOE  
We met online!

DYLAN  
On LinkedIn. Not like *online* like OKCupid or-

BRIAN  
And what made Dylan stand out?

JOE  
Oh we just connected really well.  
We're both very fast paced.

CHARLES

Oh?

DYLAN

(beat)

...uh- yeah! Yeah we are.

CUT TO:

17 INT. HOTEL, MEETING ROOM

A large open room, filled with chairs. There is a slightly raised stage up front. A TABLE full of NUCLIUM HEALTH CARE PRODUCTS decorates the stage, flanked by a blank WHITEBOARD and a FICUS. There is a COOLER underneath the table.

DYLAN and JOE are walking among well dressed BUSINESS PEOPLE. Joe brings him to an older looking man, MIKE, and his wife, BARBARA.

JOE

Mike!

MIKE

Great to see you Joe.

They hug.

JOE

Barb!

BARBARA

Joe!

They hug as well.

JOE

This is the guy I was telling you about, Dylan!

Dylan straightens his suit, and reaches his hand out to Mike.

DYLAN

It's very nice to meet you sir.

Mike clasps his hand firmly and makes very uncomfortable eye contact.

MIKE

Dylan, it is a pleasure to meet you Dylan.

(CONTINUED)

Dylan manages to free his hand, and turns to Barbara.

DYLAN

And, Barbara? Nice to meet you.

BARBARA

Oh you too, come here.

She hugs him.

MIKE

I think we're about ready to get started. You're in a for a real treat tonight Dylan, Sharma is one of our best speakers.

JOE

Oh it's Sharma tonight? Wonderful! Have you seen Jilli Banilli?

Mike points to the front of the room, and Joe starts walking over there, Dylan following closely behind. They sit in the front row with JILLIAN and KAT, an attractive woman in her twenties. Dylan is sitting next to Kat, Joe on his left and Jillian on Kat's right. Somewhat awkwardly, Dylan turns to Kat and holds out his hand.

DYLAN

Hi.. I'm Dylan.

KAT

Kat. Like the animal! Rawr.  
(Giggles)

Dylan laughs nervously as Kat turns to Jillian. Joe nudges Dylan with his elbow.

JOE

Cute girl, am I right?

DYLAN

Real cute.

He turns and faces forward. The lights dim, and Mike walks onto the stage.

MIKE

Hello ladies and gentlemen, and thank you for coming to the Ilium Big Business Wonderful Opportunities Organization biweekly invitational get together. First, I'd like to welcome our new guests, could you please stand up?

(CONTINUED)



Dylan stands up, and looks around nervously. He's the only one. Mike reaches into the cooler, and removes an ENERGY DRINK CAN.

MIKE (cont'd)

Welcome, welcome, here please take  
a complimentary Nuclium Organic  
Energy Drink.

He tosses it to Dylan, who opens and tastes it.

DYLAN

Ugh...

JOE

(Leaning over to Dylan)

Did you get cola flavored? Oh man,  
that is my favorite kind.

DYLAN

(Wincing slightly)

Yeah, it's uh, good. Tastes sorta  
grapey.

MIKE

Now I'm not going to hog the stage  
any longer, please welcome, all the  
way from our Minnesota branch,  
Nuclium Sales Manager and my good  
friend, Peter Sharma!

PETER SHARMA bounds onto the stage. A 40-ish year old Indian man with male pattern baldness. But what he lacks in hair he makes up in energy.

PETER

(Indian accent)

Hello ladies. Oh and gentlemen too  
I suppose.

Everyone laughs. Joe slaps his knee appreciatively.

PETER (cont'd)

Now I am here to tell you all about  
a wonderful business opportunity.  
While many of you have jobs  
already, what I am offering is an  
alternative way to make income.  
Excuse me young lady, what is your  
name?

(CONTINUED)

KAT

Kat! Like the animal, mrow!  
(laughs)

PETER

(Laughs)  
Oh my! Tell me Kat what is your  
dream car?

KAT

Mustang Cobra!

PETER

I had a cobra in my driveway once,  
but it was not the car; it was the  
snake!

Everyone laughs, Joe once again slaps his knee loudly. As the conversation continues, Dylan sips on his energy drink. His vision starts to blur. Peter's speaking is replaced with a BUZZING TONE.

FADE TO WHITE

Dylan's eyes lazily open. He is now sitting in a wooden chair on the stage, wearing a white robe. Another white robed figure sits in a chair across from him, tied up. Around a dozen people are standing in a semicircle around him, dressed in dark red hooded robes. Every flat surface has a lit CANDLE on it.

On the table, nestled among Nuclium health care products, is a shrine, complete with a framed photograph of Dylan, wearing his grocery store uniform, obviously taken from behind a bush.

JILLIAN, also robed, enters the room carrying a crystal tray with ENERGY DRINK CANS on it. She begins handing them out to each person in the room. BARBARA walks up to the front of the room and inserts a CD into the sound system. HYPNOTIC, TRANCE LIKE MUSIC plays.

BARBARA

Greetings everyone, great to see  
you.

MIKE

Real great to see you too Barb.

JILLIAN

(Lisping)  
Refreshments?

(CONTINUED)

DYLAN

What is this?

MIKE

Initiation, Dylan. It's time to expand our circle of business responsibility to include you.

JILLIAN

Oh, how great!

CHARLES

Shall we discuss the bylaws?

PETER

Indeed we should. As founder of the organization, Barbara, I believe you should pass them on.

BARBARA

Thank you Sharma. Back in my prison days, I was struck by a powerful thought, and started the "Small Cells Wonderful Opportunities" organization.

ALL ROBED FIGURES

(Monotonously)

There are no closed doors, only open opportunities.

BARBARA

I scratched a simple list of bylaws into my cell wall. Number One, all members must invite one other member to earn Business Credits. Each member they invite earns that member 1/10 of their business credits, and so on and so on.

ALL ROBED FIGURES

(Monotonously)

The pyramid of members gives us strength.

BARBARA

Number Two, each member must purchase only from Nuclium Organics and it's subsidiaries.

ALL ROBED FIGURES

(Monotonously)

Nuclium is more than a company, it is a community.

(CONTINUED)

BARBARA

Number Three, all votes must be made on paper ballots.

ALL ROBED FIGURES

(Monotonously)

Autonomy sponsors good decision making.

BARBARA

And finally, to prove your worth to the group, each member must commit one murder.

ALL ROBED FIGURES

(Monotonously)

The circle of life unites us all.

One by one each figure steps forward.

JOE

I killed my old manager at the Teppenyaki steakhouse.

JILLIAN

I killed my ex-boyfriend Thom.

CHARLES

I killed my ex-barber, Mr. Allen, and boy did he deserve it.

PETER

I killed my second cousin's good friend Dr. Samuel Parish.

BARBARA

I killed my first husband, Jack. My second one too, but that was for unrelated reasons.

MIKE

And I killed Barb's third husband, Karl.

DYLAN pulls back the hood of the other white robed figure. It's Ethan.

ETHAN

Dylan? What's... what's going on?

JOE

(Handing Dylan a steak knife)  
Just drink some Nuclium first, it makes everything easier.

(CONTINUED)

JILLIAN

Nuclium is my refreshment of choice  
when my chi is straight dipping.

BARBARA

Don't you want to do something with  
your life Dylan? We're offering you  
a place in a global conspiracy!

MIKE

An exciting opportunity for someone  
at your age.

CHARLES

There's no going back from here,  
Dylan. Just relax, and let the  
music envelope you...

PETER

And then, kill!

ROBED FIGURES

Kill! Kill! Kill! Kill!

The knife is in Dylan's hand. The chair is pulled out from underneath him as he stands. The camera spins around the circle faster and faster as the music gets louder and louder.

Dylan screams and stabs one of the robed figures in the chest. The music stops, as the figure collapses to his knees. His hood falls backwards, revealing Joe's face.

JILLIAN

(Lisping)

Heavy stuff. With his own Hibachi  
knife too.

JOE

(Coughing blood)

...Teppenyaki...

Everyone is silent as Joe falls to the ground with a THUD, dead. Then, they start to cheer and congratulate Dylan, who stands dumbfounded at what he just did. Barbara hugs him, Mike and Charles shake his hand, and Sharma pats him on the back. The music resumes, and the hoods are pulled back up. A trance like dance begins, and Dylan's white robes disappear into its midst.

CUT TO:

18 EXT. GROCERY STORE, PARKING LOT - DAY

SILENCE, and then WIND.

Wide Shot: A figure pushes carts through the gray parking lot.

The camera moves in closer; it's a new employee, CALEB.

CUT TO:

19 INT. GROCERY STORE, BACKROOM

CALEB is about to punch out, when he is stopped by DYLAN. He has ditched the baggy sweatshirt for a blue collared shirt and a BADGE that reads "Supervisor".

DYLAN

Hey Caleb, could you give us a hand with this last load?

CALEB

Yeah yeah, but I'm counting this as overtime.

They both laugh, and walk to the loading dock. A couple of OTHER WORKERS are carrying a PALLET. Dylan signs a CLIPBOARD.

DYLAN

Thanks guys, we'll take it from here.

The contents of the pallet is revealed; it's stacked full of Nuclium energy drinks.

SMASH TO BLACK