

(Conflict of Interest)

by
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(Based on, If Any)

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FADE IN:

INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

BILL, 58, sits in a swivel chair in an office cubicle that is just beginning to look cluttered and definitely not homey. There is a computer monitor in the middle, pointing diagonally, and a black Dell tower next to it. Bill looks around nervously, and sips on a cup of coffee, still steaming hot. He brings up a site that reads "Handyman Systems: Personal Citizenship Evaluatior." He keys in some numbers and the system returns

INSERT: BILL Ldzett SCORE 458 MEDIAN 502

He clicks on Real Player and brings up a video of his original job interview with TOM, 26. The movie scene focuses for a moment on the video.

INT. SUBURBAN OFFICE BUILDING PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

TOM, 26 and handsome, dressed casually even including shorts, looking good at his age, walks from behind his desk as Bill, dressed in an old blue suit, prepares to leave.

TOM

There's just one more question before you leave. I mean, you'll get a shot at the job.

BILL

I'll be an apprentice.

TOM

You'll get to compete. Do you have a family to support?

BILL

Franky, no.

TOM

I did. That's OK for now. You can at least get started.

RETURN TO SCENE

He looks again and then brings up a website that reads DOASDOTELL.COM. Suddenly, a warning box appears from Netware on his monitor, and it reads "YOUR ACCOUNT IS DISABLED. PLEASE SIGN OFF."

Bill logs off, and tries to log back on. He gets a message in a box, "ACCESS DENIED." He picks up a large phone and dials a number. The HELP DESK CLERK answers.

HELP DESK CLERK
Help line for Axiom.

BILL
This is Bill Idzett, contractoer
Z23411. I found my account to be
disabled. I have a deadline today
for the Cool gen report.

HELP DESK CLERK
Let me see, yup, your account is
coming up disabled. I can have
security call you.

BILL
I have a deadline.

HELP DESK CLERK
Between you and me, sir, it usually
means they've decided they don't
need you here.

Bill swallows hard and coughs, almost as if to vomit.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bill inventories his books and papers.

MONTAGE

Slides of Bill's "fundamental rights" presentation

Still pictures from 9/11.

Still pictures from William and Mary.

Still pictures of a Navy base.

Still pictures from the Tennessee town of "Inherit the Wind."

Show a portion of Bill's Hamline speech, where he discusses
getting kicked out of William and Mary and then involving
himself with gays in the military.

EXT. SUBURBAN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

Bill drives a relatively dirty Ford Escort into a large parking lot and parks in a Visitor's space.

INT. SUBURBAN OFFICE BUILDING TOM'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Bill sits in front of Tom, in a knit shirt this time, with trousers. The camera shows more detail of his face, and he still looks really good at 26. There is a sign in front that reads TOM BEASLEY, HUMAN RESOURCES.

TOM

Well, Bill, you do look spiffy.
Well, spiffier.

BILL

The dress code. You call it
business casual.

TOM

I promised to make you look
younger. As a condition of
employment. Highly illegal.

BILL

No wigs. No shorts. At least for a
sixty year old. I have a right to
my own shame about my body. But now
you really must help me.

TOM

Yeah, Bill, something about you
isn't cool with them. It ain't your
looks, man. Your website.

BILL

I guess it doesn't add to their
citizenship score for me.

TOM

In fact you fell below the median.
(Tom approaches him)
And you know how it is in the
contracting business. The client is
always right. Well, most of the
time.

BILL

I never looked at it on the machine until today, and immediately it told me to get off the machine.

TOM

I think one of the VP's google hacked and found you. I'm not sure I agree or get it, like they're afraid you could compromise their customers' privacy or something like that.

Tom stands up, and flexes his shoulders a bit. Bill looks around the room at the baseball trophies.

TOM

Boy, I wish the Marlins had signed me. It's times like this that I remember I could have been a top baseball player.

BILL

Not a pitcher.

TOM

Too risky to the bod? No, an outfielder. I could pummel the Green Monster.

BILL

Look, you didn't say anything about my publicity in the interview. You didn't ask if job applicants had their own domains. You should have asked.

TOM

Maybe. That's a good one for the lawyer, isn't it. Look, I'm gonna have you talk to Greg, our geek on this kind of thing, and get another opinion. That's OK, isn't it.

BILL

Sure.

TOM

You make money at this? I guess if you did you wouldn't need a job.

BILL
It doesn't cost anything. I'm the discount carrier of self-publishing.

TOM
I get it. But you don't like to wear shorts at company parties.

BILL
You can, I can't. It'd be obscene.

INT. SUBURBAN OFFICE BUILDING GREG'S COMPUTER LAB - DAY

GREG, 24, boyish and geeky, dressed in shorts, sits on a stool in front of a bank of servers and routers, entering commands. There is even an open box server under his desk, and there are beach balls and lionel trains that make his cubicle look like a Google play pen. He swivels around to look at Bill.

GREG
So Thomas thinks I can help you out of a jam. Huh. You run your own server, champ.

BILL
No, shared hosting.

GREG
So you entrust your family jewels to an outside company. They call it outsourcing if we use fancy words.

BILL
Yes, Tolkien is my ISP, and does shared hosting. So Tolkien runs the actual connection. And security. I just upload to it.

GREG
So you leave all the virus and firewall to them. But you still have one on your own machine.

BILL
Yes. It gets automatically updated.

GREG
And for email.

BILL
It's forwarded to my AOL account.

GREG
People spoof your name a lot, I
bet.

BILL
Right, I can't do anything about
it.

GREG
So you have email addresses that
you never look at and that someone
could hijack and use to mail kiddie
porn to ten million people. I mean
it. If you get popular enough it
could happen.

BILL
I can't do anything about it.

GREG
Right on. Look, you keep track of
your changes.

BILL
Yes.

GREG
But manually. Hard coded

BILL
So you expect me to use Changeman.
Or maybe Harvest.

GREG
Well some kind of automated change
control.

BILL
But that takes money.

GREG
And skill. I mean, I'm cool with
what you do. You're you and all. We
can't all be tinkers like me.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bill plays the tape of the university speech about his book,
and recognizes a younger Tom in the audience, taking notes.

A copy of the black-and-white cover of the book "DO ASK DO TELL" shows in the video.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Bill sits in a conference room next to REGINA, 39, African-American, well-dressed. The room is full of law textbooks.

REGINA

What bothers us is that you use such an unregulated medium to draw attention to yourself. And that poses a risk. The lack of supervision and accountability. You do understand, I'm sure.

BILL

Well, but I have no costs this way.

REGINA

But if you could make money at it you could afford to protect yourself. People will wonder why you need a job with us.

BILL

So I can say what I want. Nobody pays me for what I say. That makes it legit.

REGINA

But, the looseness of all this is the downside. So, Bill, did you ever try to get media perils insurance?

BILL

You would ask.

REGINA

Well, now that we got there.

BILL

Yes, through the National Writers Union. I had it for six months, but the second time they had a second underwriter and I was turned down.

REGINA

Because.

BILL

Of the 'controversial nature' of my writing. Pretty bald-faced. I mean, why write if you aren't creating a stir.

REGINA

Unless somebody else pays you.

BILL

But then, honor. When nobody pays me, it has objectivity. Or, perhaps, objectivity is the province of the dilettante.

REGINA

Somebody supervising you gives you legitimacy. See now we have a problem. Because nobody watches you, there's no way to prove to a client you can't do something wrong.

BILL

You can't prove a negative.

REGINA

Bill, you have kids. Or at least a family.

BILL

Not really. Only in fantasy.

Bill visualizes Tom in fantasy.

BILL

Like that makes a difference?

REGINA

As a practical matter, it would get you more sympathy. Well, I've got what I need.

INT. COLLEGE LECTURE HALL - EVENING - FLASHBACK

Bill is straddling video wires with his crutches as he lectures, with a copy of his book "DO ASK DO TELL" projected on the whiteboard.

BILL

People will say, if I don't value my own "blood" enough that I would want to perpetuate it with a family the way "normal people" do, then what do I really want (beyond an adolescent narcissistic fantasy of upward affiliation), and why should anyone listen to me? What I see as motivational diversity they see as adolescent immaturity and evasion. It would seem that I got away with something for thirty years, evading family responsibility while I pursued my own needs and agendas. In practice, family socialization implies that one will go to bat for one's own blood, and, indirectly, one's own community, and gain personal recognition promoting agendas defined by others for the benefit of others. One gives up some intellectual freedom and even intellectual honesty; it sounds like a necessary trade-off. Or, look at it this way. Blood loyalty and family responsibility subsume a way to give everyone value. If I am a person of moderate ability, then I am only given credibility when I first advance the interests of other family members and participate in giving family value. Family loyalty may seem to make some competitive or "self-promoting" behaviors more acceptable; how often do we here the eulogy that a man left behind a wife and kids, as if he would have had less importance just on his own. Of course, this form of "morality" is easy for demagogues and politicians to exploit, but it does seem to reinforce the intrinsic value of human life for its own sake.

INT. LAW OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bill starts to rise, then crosses his legs in a bit of an gawky but feminine fashion.

REGINA

You're excused.

BILL

How do you make the distinction. I mean, if this was just a blog you wouldn't care would you.

REGINA

You know the answer. Come on. You could have gone to law school. You'd pass the bar now.

BILL

So I tried to use it to promote myself. A self-promoting queer. That's the difference.

REGINA

The commercial self-promotion? Yes it is.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE

Tom looks away, out the window. He is in his shorts. For a moment he glances down at his hairy legs. The calendar says Saturday. He turns around and Bill stops staring.

BILL

Tom?

TOM

Bill, can you find a buyer. Or somebody to take over for you?

BILL

Not really.

TOM

So do I understand. You do this for attention.

BILL

If I was a manager, that would be an issue. But then you could make that a company policy. Have a blogging policy on your website, lead job applicants to it.

TOM

You need a ride home?

BILL

I drove.

TOM

I look outside. Your lights are on.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Bill tries to start his car. Tom is bringing over jumper cables.

INT. TOM'S CAR - DAY

Tom is driving a new Buick. Bill sits on the right, and looks quizzical.

BILL

So you make a show of yourself.

TOM

If you were me, wouldn't you? Look, I did read your book. Even did a book report on it for sophomore English in college.

BILL

Well, what did you say?

TOM

Don't remember. I was a college student then, you know, immature.

BILL

Well, you still don't have an crows marks on your face.

TOM

Thank you. Seems like a stupid idea.

They drive past a softball field, and Tom parks.

TOM

You want to take batting practice, too?

EXT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Bill approaches from the street, with a cap covering his bald head.

There is a window sign that reads "DIRTY DANCING CHARITY NIGHTS: SEE WHO IS GOING TO GET IT". Bill shows the ID card to an obese bouncer who is blocking the entrance but then lets him in.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Bill stands near the bar, puts down a tip, and sips on a Budweiser. Tom spots him from the dance floor and skips over.

TOM

So, Bill, do you want to play now?

Bill steps up and unbuttons Tom's shirt, and Tom reciprocates.

BILL

Reveal!

INT. MIDWESTERN FRAME HOUSE PORCH - DAY

Bill, as a kid, with several playmates around, tugs at his GRANDFATHER's leg, who slowly pulls up his pants.

INT. GAY BAR - CONTINUOUS

TOM

I read you as ashamed of your body.
That's why we have dress codes, for
folks like you.

INT. TOM'S OFFICE - DAY

Tom is now dressed in a business suit, as is Bill. Now Bill stands behind Tom's desk, as if he were somehow an equal.

TOM

Okay, Bill, you win.

BILL

This wasn't competition.

TOM

All business is. Look, we'll give
you a contract to write our
blogging policy. That'll be a three
week job.

BILL

As long as I give in at the end.

TOM
You're looking forward to it.

BILL
It's what I've always wanted.

TOM
We gotta get you ready for swimming
now.

BILL
Let's play your game first!

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Now both Tom and Bill are dressed in gym clothes. The camera momentarily catches the contrast between their legs. Tom lobs some baseballs to Bill, who hits one of them medium deep to the outfield. One of his drives reaches the corner fence on one bounce.

TOM
Way to chuck, Bill!

They trade places. Bill pitches overhand, awkwardly, but Tom blasts one of the pitches for a homer.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Tom and Bill walk along the outfield fence.

TOM
I was married once. No kids, and I
guess that's lucky.

BILL
You didn't try.

TOM
My wife found out that she has a
hereditary tendency towards early
breast cancer. So, that was it.

BILL
Really. Having kids might have
helped.

TOM
I know. Some of your books say
that.

(MORE)

TOM(cont'd)

I think your website said that somewhere. Well, here I am. Not very faithful to my vows.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

Bill walks up onto a stage and sits in the barber chair. Tom approaches and unbuttons Bill's shirt.

TOM

So tell, me, Bill, in your own words, why do you do it?

BILL

I want you to get what people think.

TOM

Especially me.

Tom reaches for Bill's trousers, but Bill shakes his head.

TOM

I get it, no old guys' legs in public. So that explains your own dress code. If you're too ashamed to make some little Bill's, why should we believe you?

BILL

You don't get to speak up until you take care of family first?

TOM

Or pay your dues to somebody. Here goes.

BILL

It's not for the team anymore.

TOM

Nope. Just for charity.

Tom jumps down, picks up some accoutrements from the dark back area of the dance floor, jumps onto the stage before the barber chair, and smears goo on Bill's chest.

INT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

Bill, looking like a plucked chicken, is dogpaddling as Tom holds him up.

TOM
Arch your back.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT - DAY

Bill sits in front of his computer, turned off, as Tom stands behind him. Only Bill has his shirt off. He has been rendered.

TOM
You got what you always wanted.

Bill turns on his computer and his website comes up. Tom picks up a video cam.

BILL
Now I gotta make some money with this.

TOM
Well, you're a good citizen again.

FADE TO BLACK.