

FILE NO. 247

INTERVIEW WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL GREGOR LANGDEN, WARDEN, ARMY REGIONAL CONFINEMENT FACILITY, FORT CARSON

Location: Fort Carson, Colorado

- What are you doing here? You said we were square. You said I was done!
- Granted, it would not be completely out of character for me to renege on a promise under the right circumstances, though I honestly do my very best to avoid it as much as I can. I find that having a reputation as a man of my word makes encounters of this sort much more expedient. That said, I do not recall ever calling us "square" or any other shape, nor do I remember ever indicating to you that I would no longer require your services.
- The deal was: I keep my mouth shut. I take this dead-end job and I stay out of trouble. I've done that. Okay, I make a little money on the side from time to time. Who doesn't? They'll get their shit in one way or another. Might as well make a little something out of it, right? No one gets hurt. I've made a life for myself here. I don't want to lose it.
- Rest assured, your presence here is not in jepopardy. Your role in this facility, however, is a compromise, a valuation of your usefulness weighed against the severity of your past transgressions.
- What the hell are you talking about?
- I was merely reminding you that which side of the bars you find yourself on is a function of your utility. That said, I find your reaction somewhat exaggerated, as I have not, to the best of my knowledge, asked you for anything.
- Well, you're here.
- I am indeed. I came to congratulate you on a job well done. As much as the general staff doubted you could operate this facility within budget when you were first appointed, you have managed to reduce cost significantly without a notable increase in inmate complaints or violent incidents. You have, by all accounts, performed admirably these past couple years, despite the early criticism.

- Eh... Thank you. I appreciate.
- Which is why I find your decision to release a violent inmate very surprising. Are you not afraid of the backlash that is sure to follow? While I—
- I didn't—
- I was not finished. While I understand your desire to straighten the finances of this containment facility, there is a significant difference between releasing nonviolent prisoners unlikely to recidivate and letting a man who attempted to take the life of a fellow soldier loose on the streets. I am reasonably certain that I will not be the only person to make the distinc—
- This isn't happening. Tell me this isn't happening again. I almost got killed the last time I agreed to help you.
- That is another way of saying you did not. Why do people complain about events that did not occur? You were almost late. Yes. It is called being on time. I *almost* did not get the job. Congratulations!
- I can't! This ain't a bed-and-breakfast, you know. It's not like I just turn a key and let people in or out whenever I want to. There's paperwork. Is your guy even eligible for early release?
- I do not know. I certainly hope so, otherwise there will be hell to pay when you send him home. I was saying something before you interrupted me. Now I seem to have lost my train of thought. Oh, yes. I was going to say how much I admire your willingness to take on the storm that is no doubt coming your way and to stand by your principles in the face of adversity.
- I wanna help you. You know I wanna help you. I've helped you before. I've done things, right? I've done things I'm sure not many people would have done, but not this! You know I can't!

- ...

- I could cut you in? Ten percent? Like a retirement fund.

- ...

- No, you're not like that. Okay, I'll stop! How about that? Nothing goes in. You have my word. Not even weed. That'll be the cleanest jail you've ever seen. That's good, right?

- ...

- Say something.
- It was a pleasure seeing you again Gregor.
- Wait . . .
- What, precisely, do you wish me to wait for?
- That's it?
- I wished to congratulate you for doing something you are now telling me you did not and cannot do. I was obviously mistaken, and for that I apologize. Is there anything else you wish to discuss?
- Eh . . . No.
- Then yes, this is indeed it.
- So we're good?
- Why would we not be?
- I don't know, I—
- Do you believe I am an introvert?
- I'm sorry, what?
- We have not known each other for very long, but in what little time we have spent together, have I ever struck you as an introvert, a *reticent* person?
 Perhaps our interactions were too rare for you to form an opinion—
- No, I don't think you're an introvert.
- Then perhaps you find me hypocritical?
- What? No! Why?
- I may be misinterpreting your current demeanor, but you seem ill at ease . . . apprehensive, as if you fear retribution. If I were in any way annoyed, irritated, by your attitude and wished to respond with some form of chastisement, if I wanted to sit and watch as your life gets ruined in unique and entertaining ways, would I not tell you? I might keep those desires to myself if I were overly shy or someone who indulges in hypocrisy. Since

you believe I am neither, you can assume I would tell you if you were in any danger. I have long overstayed my welcome.

- Wait. Wait.
- Yes, Gregor?
- Can I get a car?
- I find people asking others to repeat something they have clearly heard most aggravating, but I am now beginning to understand the urge.
- I'd like a car. A good one. Maybe a Porsche?
- A Porsche.
- Yes.
- Any particular model or color?
- I don't know. I haven't really thought about it.
- Red might be a bit of an overstatement. Perhaps a metallic silver Carrera?
- Yeah! That'd be great.
- I must say, of all the unpalatable character traits exhibited by men of your ilk, predictability is, by far, my favorite.
- What?
- Goodbye, Gregor.
- Wait! Wait! Who am I releasing? What's your guy's name?