

Side #1

Context:

Preston is a young executive at LoopFinance who has risen to a position of power through family connections rather than experience. Confident, entitled, and completely insulated from the consequences of his decisions, he views the company's workers as numbers on a spreadsheet rather than people. When he meets with Jim to discuss the office's declining performance, he has little interest in hearing excuses or practical solutions.

Throughout the conversation, Preston positions himself as a mentor and leadership expert, dispensing management advice with absolute confidence despite his lack of real-world experience. He genuinely believes that fear, pressure, and punishment are the keys to productivity. By the end of the call, Preston has successfully convinced Jim to embrace a more authoritarian approach, leaving him feeling motivated and eager to prove himself.

Preston is funniest if he doesn't know he's ridiculous. He should sound like someone who's listened to a thousand business podcasts, read half of a self-help book, and now thinks he's discovered the secret to leadership. The confidence is what makes the character work.

INT. THE OFFICE - JIM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jim is on a Zoom call with PRESTON, a smug 23-year-old wearing a shit-eating grin, a plain white cap and a polo shirt. He holds an upper-management position at LoopFinance – not because of merit, but because his father is the CEO.

Jim's demeanour has shifted from superiority to reluctant submission.

INTERCUT - JIM'S OFFICE / ZOOM CALL

PRESTON

I've had my guys check the data. The market for loan refinancing has never been stronger, but our numbers at your office have been declining for the last three quarters.

JIM

Well, respectfully Preston, of course my numbers have declined. You cut my office in half and removed the marketing department.

PRESTON

You left me no choice, your office was bleeding money. Anyway, that's just a symptom of the problem. Let's get to the source. What's really going on?

Jim takes a deep breath and sighs.

JIM

It's the zombies. I've been trying to motivate them, but they just can't see the opportunities that are right in front of them.

PRESTON

I'm going to stop you right there, Jimmy.

The sound of a nepo baby 15 years younger than Jim calling him 'Jimmy' bothers him. He winces.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

You're not going about this the right way, and it sounds like you're being too soft on the plebs. Fear is the ultimate motivator.

(MORE)

PRESTON (CONT'D)

Let me ask you a question - would you run faster towards a million dollars or to get away from a bloodthirsty tiger?

A beat. Jim's not appreciating the lecture and hopes that question was rhetorical. An awkward amount of time passes, so he answers anyway.

JIM

Away from the tiger.

PRESTON

Correct! You need to be that bloodthirsty tiger and establish yourself as the alpha of the pack. You can't let these peasants walk over you.

JIM

I am hard on them, but I really think we should invest in more train-

PRESTON

Let me tell you about a guy who runs one of our interstate offices. He's half-Russian and he's so hard on his guys, we call him Mussolini.

Jim rolls his eyes, but that error goes uncorrected. The idiocy is so common it's not even worth it.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

I'm talking public humiliation, unpaid overtime-

JIM

(under his breath)

I do that.

PRESTON

Reduced lunch breaks, and... I've even heard rumours of waterboarding. His numbers are through the roof, and the board loves him.

JIM

Well I could start filling up the sinks...

PRESTON

Whatever gets the job done, just don't be nice to them, they want to be punished. It's the only way these braindead idiots can be productive.

JIM

I'll get it done.

PRESTON

Make sure you do. You know, not long ago you were in line for a promotion...

Jim's eyes widen.

JIM

A promotion?

PRESTON

That's right. I know you haven't seen the career progression of some of your peers, and that probably disheartens you. But, steer the ship straight, knuckle down, and *perhaps* we can revisit it.

JIM

Yes, sir. I'll get right on it!
(awkwardly joining in on
the metaphor)
...I'll batten the hatches, and set sail!

PRESTON

That's the spirit, captain. Well, I've gotta get to a lunch, and then a game of golf. But good luck with everything, Jimmy boy. Remember, your team is only as strong as its weakest link, so let *no one* undermine you.

Preston leaves the call. Jim stares at himself in the video feed of his computer screen with determination in his eyes.

Side #2

Context:

This scene takes place at a turning point where multiple power structures in the office briefly collide. Preston is celebrating what he believes is a successful outcome of a strategy he helped push forward, and is finally receiving approval and validation from his father, Charles. For Preston, this moment is about status, recognition, and finally feeling seen as competent and "in control," even though that control is largely superficial and dependent on his father's approval.

However, Preston's confidence is carefully layered over insecurity. Around Charles, he shifts into a more submissive, approval-seeking version of himself, desperate to maintain favour and avoid humiliation. At the same time, he retains his habitual arrogance toward Jim, whom he still views as beneath him and safe to dismiss. This creates a dynamic where Preston is constantly recalibrating his behaviour based on who holds power in the room.

That fragile balance collapses when Adam and Zed violently interrupt the moment. Preston's composure breaks under real threat, and we see him immediately shift into fear and compliance, stripped of his performative authority. The scene should play as a rapid dismantling of hierarchy: Preston moves from dominance (with Jim), to submission (with Charles), to panic (under threat from Adam and Zed), revealing how contingent his confidence really is.

INT. THE OFFICE - THE PIT - CONTINUOUS

Charles, Preston and Jim are in the pit, mid-celebration. Charles pours champagne into flutes and they toast.

CHARLES

A company-owned union. They'll put this one in the Henry Ford history books.

They clink their glasses and take a sip.

PRESTON

I can't believe those idiots bought it.

Charles rests a firm hand on Preston's shoulder.

CHARLES

I'm proud of how you handled this situation, my son.

Preston begins to well up.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

...Are you fucking crying?

PRESTON

No.

(turning to Jim)

When was the air conditioner last serviced? There's mold spores blowing in my eyes, you fucking idiot.

CHARLES

Despite my first impressions... this here is no idiot.

He extends his hand.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

As promised, Jim. Congratulations on the promotion.

They shake hands.

JIM

(choked up, emotional)

Thank you, sir.

Jim takes a sip of champagne. He's euphoric, triumphant. He feels like he's made it. When suddenly -

ZED (O.S.)
Get on your fucking knees!

Adam and Zed have burst into the room. Zed points his gun at the group.

Preston and Jim follow Zed's orders. Charles stays standing.

CHARLES
What the hell?

ADAM
You heard him, get on your knees!

CHARLES
No.

ADAM
What do you mean no?

CHARLES
Why do you want me on my knees? I'm
not going to suck your dick.

Zed shoots Charles in the knee, sending him to the floor. He screams in pain.

PRESTON
Why did you do that, he's got a bad
knee!

Charles momentarily stops screaming.

CHARLES
(to Preston)
No shit I've got a bad fucking
knee!

He resumes his agonising screams.