

CREDENTIALS

by

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BLACK

Distant FOOTSTEPS approach. Leather shoes, resonant in a linoleum corridor. Closer to the foreground, someone is playing COOKIE CHAOS QUEST on an iPhone.

FADE IN:

INT. DAY - Waiting Room

A brass number 6 has been nailed just slightly below eye level in the middle of a door. The door is open to the adjacent hallway. Preston, the footsteps' owner, stops, compares a note on his phone to the numbered door. He tucks the phone in the pocket of his suit's dress pants.

Preston enters a serviceable waiting room. He looks around: featureless walls, occasionally interrupted by framed Successories posters; a Pharmora BioTech logo behind the receptionist's desk; a dozen or so chairs; only one is occupied.

Slouching in his drug rug, BODIE is lost in the game. A Sprinkle Storm POWER-UP clears chocolate chip and sugar cookies alike.

PRESTON

Is this the, uh...

BODIE

Welcome to Pharmora. "Healing Lives, One Breakthrough at a Time."

PRESTON

(overlapping)

"...One Breakthrough at a Time."  
Yeah. Cool. Okay. Just you and me, then, huh?

BODIE

Looks that way.

Preston takes a couple of steps toward Bodie. Tucks a leather, legal-sized portfolio under his left arm to offer his right hand for a shake.

PRESTON

I'm Preston.

Bodie keeps playing.

BODIE

Huh. Bet your mom's proud.

PRESTON

Oh. Okay. So you're Richard, I guess.

BODIE

Huh? No. Oh. I see what you did there. No, I'm not being a dick. We're just competing, right?

Preston surveys Bodie from uncombed hair to Birkenstocks. Preston sits. He smooths his power tie against a starched placket.

PRESTON

You think?

Bodie's thumbs work harder, faster for several seconds as the game enters CHAOS MODE.

BODIE

(mutters urgently)

Dammitdammitdammit

His BOSS BATTLE with Count Cupcake ends in a splash of milk.

BODIE (CONT'D)

Crap.

Preston chuckles. He crosses one knee over another and opens the portfolio.

Bodie crams his phone into the belly pouch of his Baja hoodie. He stands, stretches like a waking bonobo.

BODIE

I mean... third-round interviews, so... yeah. We're absolutely competing.

PRESTON

I thought there would be more.

BODIE

Yeah. Weird. Out of 118, you'd think -

PRESTON

118? 118 people applied... for a supply chain... thing?

Wandering, desultory among the empty chairs, Bodie scratches the stubble on his jaw.

BODIE

I mean, what do I know? That's, like, an average. But those are last year's BLS numbers. BioSpace, Pfizer, Vertex - they all say it's more like 250.

Boing! Boing! Boing! Bodie's RING TONE sounds like a cartoon spring. He looks at the screen and rolls his eyes. His whole body sags in a theatrical sigh. He answers despite not wanting to.

BODIE (CONT'D)

Hello, Carl. Nah, just waiting on this interview thing.

Bodie's meandering becomes more structured pacing.

BODIE (CONT'D)

*Mon frère.* You know I love you like... like creamed corn and pineapple. But I don't work there any more, Carl.

Attempting stealth, Preston's sleek mechanical pencil jots "BLS, BioSpace" in the margin of his portfolio's yellow legal pad.

Relenting, Bodie is sometimes interrupted, sometimes listening through his half of a phone conversation with Carl.

BODIE (CONT'D)

The demand forecast is fine. It's fine. But... the rest of the KPIs? They're pretty -

It's all the European stuff that -

Preston adds to the list: "Pfizer. Vertex."

BODIE (CONT'D)

You know, maybe Joey should have thought of all that EMA compliance crap when I was -

No, you don't just drop a new antineoplastic in my lap on the last day of Q3 and -

Well, of course I asked her for a raise. On the spot. And she said -

No, not "in so many words." In *those exact* words, she told me to..

The lead in Preston's pencil snaps 2/3 through his second attempt at spelling "antineoplastic."

BODIE (CONT'D)

Okay, you know what? Look. We're still on for that "Drink and Think" trivia thing, right? Okay. Friday. Right. See ya.

Bodie jams the phone in his pouch. He turns back to Preston and picks up the thread of their exchange without losing a beat.

BODIE (CONT'D)

I'm saying 120, 250 - whatever the number of applicants is, it's gonna be a whole 'nuther thing if they start messing with the H-1B. That's gonna screw *everything*.

PRESTON

Well... yeah. The H-1B. Obviously.

Preston checks the time on his phone.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

They said three, right?

Bodie sits on the receptionist's desk and swings his legs.

BODIE

Yup. Real tight schedule's what she told me.

PRESTON

Mm-hm.

BODIE

Dude, why are we even *here*? This whole thing oughta be remote. There's no public-facing part of this job. Vendors, obviously, but not *real* people. Most of it's just knowing your way around a... whaddya like? SAP? Oracle? I hear Merck is using Kinaxis.

PRESTON

Oh, I don't care. Learn on a stick shift, you can drive anything, right?

BODIE

They started me on RapidResponse. But I haven't touched it since that whole Maestro rebrand.

PRESTON

I know, right? Maestro...

Bodie slips off the desk. Crosses the room to face Preston. Blows out a hard breath

BODIE

Look. Preston. It's Preston, right?

PRESTON

Yeah.

BODIE

I'm Bodie.

PRESTON

Bodie?

BODIE

Bodie. You ever see *Point Break*?

PRESTON

No.

BODIE

Patrick Swayze. Keanu Reeves.

PRESTON

I feel like I should know them.  
Should I know them?

BODIE

Never mind.

Bodie sits in a chair facing Preston. Pulls it closer.  
Leans forward, elbows on thighs.

BODIE (CONT'D)

You can't keep this up, man.

PRESTON

What?

BODIE

They're gonna figure it out.  
Don't get me wrong. I'm impressed  
and all, but... the suit's not gonna  
fool anybody. I don't even know  
how you got this far.

PRESTON

I don't know what you're talking  
about.

Preston slyly eases the portfolio closed.

BODIE

Enterprise Resource Planning. You  
have no idea what ERP is, do you?

PRESTON

Why would you say that?

BODIE

People are gonna bitch about two things: the weather and computer programs. You can count on it. Common enemies *everybody* loves to hate. Everybody except Preston. Preston don't have a single opinion. About software or big pharma or immigration or unemployment or even Keanu Reeves. How is that even...?

As it dawns, Bodie coasts to a complete stop.

BODIE (CONT'D)

Oh. my. god. Preston. You're Preston fucking Lancaster. The third?

PRESTON

The fourth.

BODIE

(resigned)

Well fuck me with my pants on. Does the CEO know you're here?

PRESTON

My dad may have mentioned it to Human Resources.

BODIE

Uh-huh. Do you know... *anything* about supply chain management?

PRESTON

Mom says I'm a pretty quick study.

BODIE

I'll bet she does. Did you even bother submitting a résumé?

PRESTON

Sure I did. It's a list of every European prep school I was ever kicked out of.



BODIE

So what's the deal? You gotta do middle management grunt work before you inherit the family C-suite?

PRESTON

Gotta learn the business. Loading dock. Factory floor. Warehouse. Interviews. The whole nine yards.

Slowly, Bodie stands.

BODIE

Uh-huh. All nine of them.

Bodie Wanders. Thinks. Strategizes.

BODIE

I don't suppose there's any chance you're gonna need a personal assistant.

Relying more on eyebrows than hands, Preston indicates Bodie's appearance with a vague gesture.

PRESTON

I dunno. If I did... it'd be a pretty public-facing job.

In addition to his coveralls, MIKE's name tag identifies him clearly as a member of the Pharmora maintenance crew. He arrives and sets down a hefty tool box near the door.

BODIE

Right, right.

Mike takes out a hammer and a single bright brass escutcheon pin.

MIKE

This gonna bother you? I'll be done in a second.

BODIE

Nah, go ahead.

PRESTON  
(overlapping)

It's fine.

Preston and Bodie watch as Mike swivels the number 6 upright. He taps the pin into a tiny hole at the top of the brass numeral. It's a number 9. Always has been. Even when it was hanging upside down.

BODIE  
I'm in the wrong room. This whole time. Didn't even know it.

Mike packs up.

PRESTON  
That's one way to look at it, I guess.

Bodie shakes his head.

BODIE  
Okay. Well. See ya. I guess. Whatever.

In a haze of stoic disbelief, Bodie exits the waiting room past Mike, out the door and down the hall to the left.

MIKE  
Is he okay?

Preston stands.

PRESTON  
Sure. He'll get another job. How hard could it be?

In a haze of oblivious optimism, Preston exits the waiting room past Mike, out the door and down the hall to the right.

Mike closes the door.

FADE OUT:

CREDITS