

Gentlemanly Advice About Murder. “The Thing about Money is that When you have It you Want More”

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Theme: [History](#)

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The two men met at a restaurant, a somewhat boisterous and raucous one, full of joviality and the noises of toasts – the clinked glasses and hurrahs and drunken encouragements. It was the perfect setting for their tête-à-tête. The younger – and far richer – of the duo dabbed his mouth with the corner of a thick cream-coloured napkin, and smiled. The older man, his gray hair receding though still robust beyond the high line of his forehead, chewed pensively. He had bulk and muscle, a thick neck, restless eyes. The youth was more relaxed, and smooth, and as he leaned back into his leather dining chair, his smile broadened.

“We need each other,” he began.

The elder nodded, washed his victuals with a glass of sparkling water, and began the wait. Every pitch was the same, basically – the slightly uncomfortable hesitation and then the request.

“I don’t have to go into everything, do I?” said the entrepreneur. “You’ve been around the block.”

“I guess you could say that,” said the older man. “You’ve got a ton of money and I’ve got a little talent. Tell me what you think you need.”

“I think we need to be on a first-name basis first thing!” chirruped the youth.

“Okay. You can call me Lennie.”

“Thanks, Lennie. I’m Paul, like the Apostle!” Paul laughed a bit too much for Lennie’s liking, but eventually he regained his composure.

“You see, Lennie,” said Paul, “there are some people who like to kill and maim, people who

derive pleasure from the suffering and death of others. I'm not one of them. I like things soft and out of sight, if you get my drift."

"Yeah, Mr. Paul, I think I do."

"Paul, please Lennie, no need for formalities!"

"Okay, Mr. Paul."

"You've got a sense of humor, I see! I like that in a man, it speaks well of him. Good, well, okay ... let me get on with it, *Mister Lennie*."

"Whatever you say," said Lennie.

"I say this to you. Listen closely," said Paul.

The restaurant din was reaching a crescendo, so Paul leaned across the table with a wry smirk. Lennie kept his distance.

"I've got a lot of money, Lennie, as I'm sure you know. I've got more than I can spend in a dozen lifetimes, I can get and do anything I want - that's what money does for a man. It gets him anything and everything. Except there's a problem."

"And what problem would that be, Mr. Paul?" said Lennie.

"Oh, you are too much ... but that's okay, I'll survive. I like it, I like *you* in fact, you're ... you're so genuine. But let's face it, you'll never be where I am, you won't even get close. What can a few million get you? Virtually nothing. But that's fine, that's okay."

"A few million wouldn't be bad, Mr. Paul."

"I know they wouldn't, Lennie, not for you," said Paul. "So let's get down to it, shall we?"

"We shall," said Lennie, slowly.

"The thing about money is that when you have it you want more, because money is power, pure and simple. And more is never enough. I've got money, Lennie, a lot more than enough, I can buy any pleasure I want. And what's more, I've got a conscience: I care about this little old world of ours."

"I'm not sure I follow," said Lennie.

"Sure you do. Look around. What do you see here, in this very restaurant? A bunch of privileged idiots who are eating and drinking themselves silly, and who couldn't care less about our world."

"Okay."

"Unlike me. Because I'm a person who *cares*, Lennie. That's why you're here. But judging by the look on your face I fear I must educate you. Oh, well, I suppose that was inevitable."

"I'm not opposed to education, Mr. Paul, as long as it's accompanied by money."

“As indeed it shall be, Lennie!” said Paul, sparkling. “I’m the kind of guy who wants clean water and fresh air and new horizons ... and the only way we can get there is to have a lot less people mucking up the works, a lot less of *those* kinds of people – the ones who don’t know anything beyond the next paycheck – and a few more of us. That’s what I mean.”

“If you say so,” said Lennie, leaning slightly back in his chair.

“I do say so!” chimed in Paul, laughing. “So here’s the deal. We’re doing our part – believe me – and it was easy enough. We played on their fears and they literally *begged* us for our remedy – the vaccination. And now, one by one, they drop. If I had a cynical bone in my body I would revel in the irony of their clamour for the very instrument of their destruction. But in truth, Lennie, I’m an optimist.

I want a better world, a less messy world, a *good* world – just like you.”

“I worry more about *me* than the world, Mr. Paul.”

“Yes, that’s your charm, that’s why I like you, Lennie! You’re an honest servant.”

Far from bridling, Lennie merely settled even more comfortably in his chair.

“The only glitch – if you can call it a glitch, my friend – is that certain people can’t keep their mouths shut. Heaven knows they’ve been approached – subtly, and not so subtly – and they insist on their rants and raves. There aren’t many of them, but they’re enough – maybe too much, Lennie. Their lives would be so much easier if they merely went along with the rest of their colleagues. Surely they hold the same ideals as we! But all this talk about rights and choice ... it isn’t seemly, Lennie. And, you know, it only takes one or two, and before we know it the multitude will be asking questions. And then what?”

“What?” asked Lennie.

“Then they’ll make trouble and our entire plan will be compromised. Our plan for a cleaner, greener, newer world – a world of pleasure for the few. A paradise, in fact.”

“Will there be room for me, Mr. Paul?”

Lennie smiled again – he was an incessant smiler, and his smiles suited his linen blazer and open collar.

“There’s will always be room for you, Lennie,” said Paul.

“That’s good to hear,” said Lennie, now straightening his tie.

Paul gave him a list, a list of names. Lennie scanned it, took it all in, and pocketed the piece of paper. Doctors, nurses, a few formerly well-known mainstream broadcasters.

Paul smiled even more broadly.

“These ridiculous few – the can make our lives far too difficult if they continue.”

Lennie smiled in return, and accepted the black satchel with its wealth of Federal Reserve notes, as a quick peek of his confirmed.

"I knew I could count on you," said Paul.

The dinner went on for several further courses, and the two men spoke of this and that and then some, and when their evening ended Paul was in a sort of small ecstasy, having imbibed a great deal and, being unfit to drive as a result, having had to rely on Lennie for a ride home.

Paul invited Lennie into the mansion for the time of his life - one must admit he could be generous.

"They are Nature's gems, whose youth renders them sublime," whispered Paul, in an uncommon fit of eloquence. "Consider it an advance."

Lennie pondered the offer, and went round to the passenger's door, opened it, and helped Paul gain his footing. Paul, with some unsteadiness exited, threw his arms around Lennie, kissed him on the cheek, and teetered on the driveway, watching Lennie pull away.

To his drunken astonishment he also watched Lennie suddenly come to a halt and proceed to accelerate at top speed in reverse.

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