

NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOD

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INT. BOARD ROOM

STEVEN, a tall gawky man in a gray suit and glasses enters the room. He walks stiffly around the large table in the center of the room and takes a seat next to LUCAS who's sitting at the head of the table.

Steven pushes his glasses up and speaks.

STEVEN

As you know, the big man couldn't be here, but I am authorized to negotiate on his behalf.

Lucas, a slightly older looking man in a black suit leans back in his chair. He puts his feet on the desk and lights a cigarette, uninterested in what Steven has to say.

LUCAS

You don't mind if I smoke do you?

Lucas takes another puff and blows the smoke towards Steven.

Steven winces, shuts his eyes and takes a breath.

Lucas reaches down, still with his feet on the desk and grabs a thick file. He tosses it on the desk towards Steven and takes another drag off his cigarette before flicking it away.

Steven picks up the file and scans it, flicking through pages.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

I wanted negotiations to be short and sweet this year. These are my demands. I didn't ask for anything too big, because I knew you guys wouldn't go for it. Like I said I just wanted things to be easy for once.

Steven continues flipping pages.

STEVEN

We... can't do this

Steven continues gawking at the pages.

LUCAS

Why not?

STEVEN

Well for starters you increased the death rate 20% from last year.

LUCAS

My death rate has taken a bump the last few years. I'm simply increasing it back to near where it should be.

STEVEN

What's this here? Eight thousand deaths from Erotic asphyxiation? C'mon that's absurd. We can't agree to this.

LUCAS

I might be able to bump that number down to six thousand.

Steven points to the page increasingly frustrated.

STEVEN

It says here you want a global pandemic.

LUCAS

A very small one. Only a couple months.

Steven stands up from the table and adjusts his tie. He shuts the file and slides it back towards Lucas.

STEVEN

I hope you have another proposal lined out because we are not agreeing to this.

Steven walks towards the exit.

Lucas's expression changes to a scowl. He takes his feet off the desk and leans forward. His words are slow and precise.

LUCAS

Fine. Very well. Tell the big man if he gets his old, lazy ASS, out of that chair, and comes down here to negotiate himself, I'll knock 20% off all my figures.

Steven stops walking and turns to look at Lucas.

STEVEN

You'd do that?

LUCAS

Only if he comes down here himself, which we both know he's not. All of you up there call me the evil one but he likes suffering the same as I do. He draws power from it.

STEVEN

You ARE the evil one.

LUCAS

Then how do I know he won't come down here himself even if it means reducing suffering by 20%.

A chill runs down Steven's spine and he stares at Lucas without response.

LUCAS (CONT'D)

Anyway, I've got places to be. Good seeing you again Steven.

Lucas snaps his fingers and fire engulfs him, and then quickly burns out leaving an empty chair where he sat a few seconds earlier.

Steven looks at the file still sitting on the table where he left it. He walks over, picks it up, and leaves.