

A frantic ringing interrupted George and Martha Lang's Saturday night routine of watching game shows.

*"Yes
Hello?"*

"Speaking."

*"And what does
this concern?"*

"I see."

*"Yes very well.
You have a good
night too."*

George let out an exasperated sigh as the handset hit the receiver.

***"What was that
all about?"***

***"For God's sake George,
you're going to bail him
out again?"***

***"He's a
drug addict!"***

*"It's Jackney, he's in
trouble again."*

*"He's my brother Marth,
what the hell am I
supposed to do?"*

***"He, is my
Brother."***

The television resumed playing but George wasn't paying attention.

George grunted as he placed the last ice block into the cooler. He closed the lid and turned towards Jackney.

“It’s a pretty simple job, you load up the coolers, then drive the ice to our warehouse. You can manage this right?”

Jackney shivered from the cold. He fished a blue lighter out of his pocket and lit up a cigarette.

“I got this Georgie.”

“I told you, I just need something to do with my hands and I’m good.”

“I’m putting a lot of trust in you Jackney...”

“I know I appreciate it.”

“You’ve let me down before.”

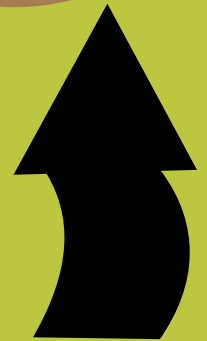
“I won’t this time. I swear little brother.”

Jackney screws up
at his job

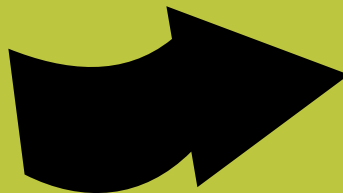


George stops
watching Jackney
so closely.

Months pass...



George says
Jackney needs to
do better if he
wants to keep his
job.



Jackney is a
perfect employee
for a few days.

“What do you mean there is a discrepancy?”

George admired the view from his accountant’s office as the two spoke. He usually wouldn’t be meeting him here, but something urgent had come up.

“I CHECKED AND DOUBLE CHECKED GEORGE, YOU’VE BEEN BLEEDING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS EVERY MONTH.”

“Where are we losing this money?”

“IT’S ALL FROM THIS OPERATING ACCOUNT HERE. IT’S EARMARKED FOR SUPPLIES. GAS, FOOD, THINGS OF THAT NATURE.”

“Ice?”

“ICE? YA I MEAN SURE-”

“I think I know what’s going on. Can you keep this quite for a while?”

“I CAN TRY, BUT SOMEONE’S BOUND TO NOTICE THESE LOSSES EVENTUALLY.”

“I’ll take care of it.”

“It doesn’t make a lick of sense Martha.”

“The truck is weighed before it leaves the distribution center...”

“It always has the correct weight...”

“But when it arrives at the warehouse, it’s suddenly missing dozens of pounds...”

“What is Jackney doing with the ice?”

“Why don’t you just ask him?”

George stared at the glass of scotch he had poured himself.

Jackney was stealing from him. He could feel it in his gut. After all the second chances, all the bail-outs, all the late night emergency room visits. After all that, George had fallen for his brother's old tricks again. He was probably using right now. If he called right now he could probably catch him in the act...

Ring-Ring

...

Ring-Ring

...

Ring-Rin-

“Georgie? Why you calling so late?”

“What are you doing with the ice?”

“What? What are you talking about?”

“Stop playing dumb. I know you’re stealing from me. Thousands of dollars of ice missing.”

“Are you drunk? How could I even steal ice?”

“Just answer the question.”

“I haven’t stolen shit, George.”

“It wouldn’t be the first time you’ve stolen to support your habit.”

“Why are you trying to hurt me?”

“Hurt you? You have no idea how much I’ve gone through to support you. I’ve given you millions of chances Jackney. I’m tired of it. You’re fired.

I don’t ever want to see you again you goddamn junkie!”

“Ok-Okay. Georgie, I’m sor-”

Click

It snowed on the day of
the funeral.

George
thought that
was ironic.

He left a
blue lighter
on
Jackney's
tombstone.

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night too."*

George placed the handset down, and stared off into the distance.

*"Who was calling
at this hour
George?"*

"Ooh sounds important."

*"Sounds like you've
solved your missing ice
problem."*

*"It was just my
mechanic, he found a
fault in a few of the ice
coolers."*

*"No one noticed because
the excess water slowly
drained out the back."*

*"Yeah... I guess
I have."*

The television resumed playing, but George wasn't paying attention.