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SF PERUSALS

King Liz

Fernanda Coppel

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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KING LIZ was first produced by Second Stage Theatre in New York City at the McGinn/Cazale Theatre on July 27, 2015. The performance was directed by Lisa Peterson, with sets by Dane Laffrey, costumes by Jessica Pabst, lights by Tyler Micoleau, sound by Darron L. West, and fight direction by Corey Pierno. The Production Stage Manager was Lori Ann Zepp and the Stage Manager was Alisa Zeljeznjak. The cast was as follows:

LIZ RICO . . . . . .Karen Pittman
GABBY FUENTES . . . . . Irene Sofia Lucio
MR. CANDY . . . . . Michael Cullen
FREDDIE LUNA . . . . . Jeremie Harris
COACH JONES . . . . . Russell G. Jones
BARBARA FLOWERS . . . . . Caroline Lagerfelt

CHARACTERS

LIZ RICO – 40s, Black or Latina, a powerful sports agent, scares men.

GABBY FUENTES – 30s, Latina, Liz's assistant, a disgruntled overachiever.

MR. CANDY – 60s, the CEO of a top sports agency, self-starter, liberal when it's convenient.

FREDDIE LUNA – 19 years old, Afro-Latino, star basketball player, naıve, defensive, a diamond in the rough.

COACH JONES – 50s, Black, coach of The New York Knicks, terrified of getting fired.

BARBARA FLOWERS – 50s, a world-renowned journalist with a prime time investigative TV show.

SETTING

New York City

TIME

2015

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Liz Rico's entrance at the top of the play is published differently than how I initially wrote and envisioned it. Originally, Liz lip-synced Notorious B.I.G.'s song, "Juicy" and Gabby assisted her in this morning ritual. Sadly, the rights to this song were not attainable for publication, but I hope that the essence of this moment can still live on in future productions. Liz connects to the classic Hip-Hop song "Juicy" because she, like Notorious B.I.G., is a truly self made person, who came from nothing and is now a success story. She starts her day by rapping the beginning lyrics Notorious B.I.G. wrote about making it despite all the people who told him he couldn't do it, he even dedicates the song to these naysayers. In this published version of King Liz, Liz is dancing confidently, with a bold swagger that she exhibits throughout the play, to a Hip-Hop beat. She should embody this same toughness and scrappy energy while she's moving around her office. She's energizing herself for a new day of business by thinking of all the times people said "no" to her. You could even say that she's doing a victory dance in the face of adversity, in the face of the naysayers. This shouldn't be a long beat of dancing nor should it be dance number by any means. This is a beat of Liz in a private moment at work and the audience's introduction to a bold and fierce woman.

ACT ONE

There's Always A List

(Early morning in a large corner office. The walls are covered with pictures of NBA players in fancy frames. A snazzy couch, a mini-bar, and a mahogany desk. The place looks peaceful until…)

*(***GABBY FUENTES***, thirties, Latina, sprints into the room. She's dressed in business professional attire. She carries high heels in one hand and a large coffee in a paper cup in the other.)*

(The phone rings, **GABBY** *doesn't answer, she runs around the room turning on all the lights and pouring the coffee into a coffee mug on the desk. The phone stops ringing, silence.* **GABBY** *freezes.)*

GABBY. SHIT!

(The phone rings again. **GABBY** *lets out a sigh of relief, she fiddles with the computer on the desk as she answers the phone.)*

Good morn/ …Yes, yup, boss. Affirmative. Operation morning pump-up in effect.

(She hangs up the phone and puts on her high heels. She fixes her hair and applies lip gloss, quickly. **GABBY** *pulls an iPad from her purse and clicks something on the computer. She puts on sunglasses.* **GABBY** *sprints to the door. A Hip-Hop beat plays loudly from the computer.)*

*(***LIZ RICO,** *40s, African-American, dressed in a suit, heels, and a gorgeous/elegant coat, enters.* **LIZ** *confidently dances around the office as she removes her coat and sips her coffee.)*

*(***GABBY** *acts as her DJ/hype man, as she controls the music from her iPad [***GABBY** *uses the DJ app to scratch the record, it sounds like music you would hear at a club]. This is routine for them, a choreographed ritual to get* **LIZ** *pumped for another day of business.)*

(The music stops abruptly.)

*(***LIZ** *sits at her desk.* **GABBY** *quickly removes her sunglasses, puts away the iPad and heads to her desk. She hands* **LIZ** *a stack of folders and a newspaper. It's business as usual. It's as if their morning pump up routine never happened.)*

*(***LIZ** *checks her email as she speaks.)*

LIZ. What is this? Oh, no. No, cancel this meeting with Sullivan. I don't have time for that.

GABBY. Sullivan wanted some advice about a client. We've rescheduled him five times within the past month.

LIZ. Sullivan was begging me for a promotion now Sullivan's just going to have to put on his big boy pants and figure it the fuck out.

GABBY. Okay. Random House called, they want to know how your book is coming along.

LIZ. Tell them it's fan-fucking-tastic.

GABBY. Got it.

LIZ. And don't forget to mention that if they keep hounding me about it I will call Simon & Schuster up. I will, I'll sell them the fucking rights to my future best-selling fucking book. Got it?

GABBY. Yes, Liz.

LIZ. People get out of my way. I feel like making some fucking money today.

(A beat.)

(Both work quietly at their desks. **GABBY** *hesitates to speak, then finally musters up enough courage.)*

GABBY. Liz?

LIZ. Gabby?

GABBY. Can we, perhaps, talk about my…

*(***LIZ** *knows what she's referring to but she plays dumb.)*

Last week you said we'd talk about it. Remember?

LIZ. Next week.

GABBY. My landlord raised my rent and I'm the only person I know with an MBA who's about to be homeless.

LIZ. Pencil it in. Too busy today, hun.

GABBY. I…

LIZ. The sooner you schedule the talk, the sooner we can get to it.

*(***LIZ** *goes back to reading her emails.)*

Can you get me floor seats for the Nets playoff game? I want to sit next to Deron William's wife. In fact, sit me in the wife section. It's poaching season.

GABBY. Yes. I'm on it Liz.

*(***GABBY** *sits at her desk. Defeated.)*

LIZ. Is my lunch set with Phil Jackson?

GABBY. Yes. 12:30, car's coming at noon.

LIZ. Where's the Buddhist turd taking me this time?

GABBY. Jean Georges, do you want me to come and take notes?

LIZ. Nope. He's going to be begging for some trade intel. He's desperate, it won't be pretty.

GABBY. Okay. Well, do you mind if I take an extra ten minutes for lunch today? I have to run to the post office.

LIZ. Absolutely not. Gabby you're very whiny today. Stop it.

*(**GABBY** quietly types away at her computer. A beat.)*

LIZ. *(reading her computer screen)* I hate this picture of myself, schedule another round of head shots for next week and a facial before that. Charge it to the company card.

GABBY. Got it, Liz.

LIZ. What about Coach Donovan's OKC contract?

GABBY. I took the liberty of reviewing it myself, it looks pretty good.

*(**LIZ** looks up at **GABBY** for the first time since she's been in the office.)*

LIZ. The liberty…

GABBY. I've been here for five years. I've seen thousands of contracts glide over my desk. I figured it was time.

LIZ. Do you know how long I was Mr. Candy's assistant, Gabby? Seven years. Do you know what that's like?

GABBY. I will know in two years.

LIZ. DO NOT touch the contracts unless your name is Liz Rico. Got it?

GABBY. Yes, Liz.

LIZ. Everyone has to pay their dues. How many times do I have to tell you?

GABBY. Five times a day for the past five years.

LIZ. I'll say it another five million times until you get it through that stubborn head.

GABBY. But why? I feel ready.

LIZ. Because "It's good to be king."

GABBY. King? Why? Can't I just ask/ you…

LIZ. Now, now. You'll know when you're king. Many, many years from now. And don't you dare forget about my facial.

*(**GABBY**'s fuming. She sits at her desk and angrily types away at her computer. We hear a computer alert sound.* **GABBY** *jumps up.)*

GABBY. Five Oh. Five Oh.

*(**LIZ** fixes her hair.)*

LIZ. What's his ETA?

GABBY. Less than one minute.

*(**GABBY** scrambles to clean up her desk, she spritzes* **LIZ** *with perfume then runs to the door with a note pad, ready for…)*

(Enter **MR. CANDY**, *60s, dressed in an expensive suit, hair slicked back. He enters with purpose, ignores* **GABBY**.*)*

GABBY. Good morning Mr. Candy. Nice suit, Sir. Did you have a good weekend?

MR. CANDY. Liz? You read the news this morning? There's some good stuff on the web.

LIZ. Maybe I did and maybe I didn't.

MR. CANDY. My top agent doesn't the surf the net?

LIZ. I'm very busy Candy, why don't you give me the Cliff Notes?

MR. CANDY. Well, Bleacher Report and ESPN.com had some exquisite top ten lists. In fact, I popped a woody reading them and I usually require assistance in that department.

LIZ. I'll have Gabby look into it. Mr. Candy, now if you'll please excuse me. Gabby can schedule a lunch for us this week to catch up.

MR. CANDY. Not acceptable. I need to speak with you now.

LIZ. You don't pop in on any of the other agents here.

MR. CANDY. Oh, am I inconveniencing you? I'm here to give you a big tip.

LIZ. It's the playoffs and the draft is just around the corner. I've got a lot on my plate here so…

MR. CANDY. I'll have to keep all this in mind the next time you need a favor.

LIZ. Listen, I've been getting calls all month from CAA. They want me and they want me bad. What are you going to do about it?

MR. CANDY. You don't want to go over there. CAA's like fucking purgatory, the underworld, and you're a star, babe.

LIZ. They're offering me a great package, Candy.

MR. CANDY. You can't leave me, we've got history here. Tweny-five years and counting, that doesn't mean anything to you?

GABBY. Twenty-two years, Sir.

*(***MR. CANDY** *and* **LIZ** *ignore* **GABBY**.*)*

MR. CANDY. Twenty-five years is a long fucking time, Lizzy. I named my first daughter after you.

LIZ. Her name's Cynthia.

MR. CANDY. Her middle name is Elizabeth.

GABBY. It's Cynthia Jane Candy, Sir.

MR. CANDY. Well, I wish her name was Liz. In fact, I'll make some calls and change her name to Liz if that's what it takes.

LIZ. Ya, sure you will. What's the tip?

MR. CANDY. High school guard out of Brooklyn. Athletic freak. He's got a jump shot as pure as the Holy Grail. He's got the flashy passing of Chris Paul and is as quick as Derrick Rose off the dribble. A dynamic dunker. Ball handling capabilities of old school Isaiah Thomas. AND THEN, on top of all that, he's got a nice little step-back three that's un-guardable. We gotta sign him. We gotta sign him now.

LIZ. High school kid? Please. I've got better things to do.

MR. CANDY. Well, that's the thing, he goes to a shitty school down in Red Hook. He's been held back a bunch. He's a nineteen-year-old high school senior. Just barely graduated.

GABBY. Technically he's eligible, he should have graduated last year. We can fudge the details and make it look like he's been out of high school for a year.

MR. CANDY. I saved you the good stuff. He's half Hispanic too, they're hot right now in the press. Mom's illegal or something, had to go back to South America. Kid's been in and out of foster homes and group homes.

LIZ. Quite a sob story Candy. I'm sure this one's gonna be a lot of work.

MR. CANDY. You know how to play the game.

LIZ. Why don't you sign him?

MR. CANDY. I'm not taking on any more clients.

LIZ. Since when?

MR. CANDY. A couple of months. Mrs. Candy won't allow it.

LIZ. Since when do you listen to your wife?

MR. CANDY. There comes a time in every man's life when you're not as quick as you used to be. Your balls droop to your ankles and the R word starts to come into your periphery.

LIZ. R word?

MR. CANDY. Don't make me say it out loud, Liz. In fact, let's just call it an extended leave-of-absence in Florida.

LIZ. I see. Is this a new revelation?

MR. CANDY. I was in with Phil Stern this morning. He seemed to know before the official announcement.

*(***LIZ** *looks to* **GABBY**. **GABBY** *types away at her desk and avoids eye contact.)*

LIZ. *(pissed)* Oh he did, did he? Good old Phil Stern knew about this.

MR. CANDY. Don't you worry about him. I'd rather leave the company to you.

LIZ. Can I get that in writing? Gabby, a pen and paper please.

MR. CANDY. Well, it's not that easy. The board has to come to an agreement about who will take over and Phil's at

the top of their list. You're both the best agents we've got.

LIZ. I started at this agency when it was just you and me working out of your garage. I've helped build these walls, not Phil Stern.

MR. CANDY. Look, the board is aware of your commitment to this company. Trust me.

LIZ. That's not good enough for me.

MR. CANDY. You're a partner and you run the whole NBA division of the top sports agency in the country. That isn't enough?

LIZ. What's the real reason behind the board's hesitance?

MR. CANDY. There is the intimidation factor. It's not the first time I've had to talk to you about your people skills.

LIZ. Are you kidding me?

MR. CANDY. If you just smiled more. Made more of an effort to be cordial to people, I think it would make a difference.

LIZ. This company is ninety-five percent men and men are scared of me. How is that my problem?

MR. CANDY. Phil Stern keeps great relationships with all the board members.

LIZ. If by "good relationships" you mean Titty Tuesdays down at Penthouse Executive Club, then I can't compete with that.

MR. CANDY. Maybe you will put the board members at ease if…

LIZ. If…

MR. CANDY. Well, this Red Hook kid is going to be a big, big star.

LIZ. How do you know that?

MR. CANDY. You could use a home run, Liz. Something that reminds the board of why you are an asset to the agency and why you deserve to be CEO. This kid's coming at the right time.

LIZ. My twenty-two year career at The Candy Agency is a home run.

MR. CANDY. Imagine, this kid goes early in the draft, gets a Nike deal, a Gatorade commercial, and wins a couple games, yadda, yadda. You make this talented kid a star within the next year and Phil Stern will be reporting to you by next season's draft.

(A beat. **LIZ** *thinks on it.)*

LIZ. What's this kid's name?

*(***GABBY** *keeps typing at her computer and doesn't look up, just responds.)*

GABBY. Federico Luna. Goes by Freddie. Venezuelan Mother, African-American father who died of a gunshot wound to the head by a gang member when Freddie was four. He's the oldest of five. All foster kids that barely see each other because they were placed with different families all over the country.

MR. CANDY. Sign him.

LIZ. I've got a full plate, Candy.

GABBY. I can schedule something for this week. I've already got his address, phone number, and Facebook profile pulled up on my computer.

(They ignore **GABBY**.*)*

LIZ. Why me Candy? Besides impressing the board, why me in particular?

MR. CANDY. You have a similar background.

LIZ. You want me to represent him because we are both from the projects?

MR. CANDY. Maybe you can connect with the kid on that level. And, he's been in trouble with the law.

LIZ. He has a record? How bad are we talking?

GABBY. I've got it right here.

MR. CANDY. Before you look at his files just remember, he's a young man with a lot of potential. And we can't lose him to Jeff Schwartz or Leon Rose for Christ's sake.

LIZ. What were the charges?

GABBY. Assault, battery. Spent some time in Juvie.

*(***GABBY** *hands* **LIZ** *a file.)*

MR. CANDY. Sign this kid and work your magic, Liz.

LIZ. This is a tough one, Candy.

MR. CANDY. Oh, come on. You're Liz-fucking-Rico. Where's the song and dance? You're my best fucking showman. Or would you prefer I ask Phil Stern to get this job done?

LIZ. Stern? Stern's from Maine. His idea of the projects is anything below 14th street.

MR. CANDY. I'm keeping the board members hot on you Liz, don't let me down kiddo.

*(***MR. CANDY** *exits.)*

*(***LIZ** *sits at her desk and goes over the file. She takes out two pictures, they're graphic.)*

GABBY. These are the victims.

LIZ. That kid lost his eye?

GABBY. Yup and he paralyzed that other boy. Allegedly.

(a beat)

*(***LIZ** *takes a deep breath and exhales.)*

*(***GABBY** *brings her another file.)*

GABBY. Here are his high school stats.

*(***LIZ** *opens it and reads.)*

LIZ. Fuck.

GABBY. I know.

LIZ. Fuckety freaking fuck.

GABBY. It gets even better.

LIZ. Fucking fucker.

GABBY. The second coming.

LIZ. These can't be right. These are Lebron James' stats, right?

GABBY. Nope, it's Freddie Luna.

LIZ. Are you POSITIVE that these are correct?

GABBY. I triple-checked them with the scouts and the school just now. They are 100 percent accurate.

LIZ. Cancel everything I have today. We're going hunting.

(Lights out.)

Lunch

(A diner.)

*(***LIZ** *sits in a booth going over notes.)*

*(***GABBY** *enters with hand sanitizer and a rag, she squirts the sanitizer all over the table top and cleans.)*

LIZ. Let's hear it.

GABBY. What?

LIZ. I know you.

GABBY. Know me?

LIZ. You're cleaning the table with contempt. Every wipe is a "Fuck you Liz, I could do this ten times better."

GABBY. That's not it at all. I just wouldn't have brought a potential client here.

LIZ. Oh really? Where would you have scheduled the meeting?

GABBY. The Four Seasons. The office. I could think of ten better places.

LIZ. We are meeting him here because we want to come off as down-to-earth. Trust me. This kid will respond to that more than the Four Seasons.

GABBY. Whatever you say.

LIZ. You want my job. I know it. That's why I hired you.

GABBY. *(scrubs harder)* I'm a tad over qualified for this position but I wanted to learn from the best. So. I'm still here.

LIZ. I sleep with one eye open. You have keys to my penthouse and one of these nights, I just know you're going to sneak in and stab me to death with a letter opener.

GABBY. I'm not sure how to respond to that. I'll be waiting outside for you.

*(**LIZ** opens her mouth as **GABBY** sprays some Binaca in it.)*

GABBY. Good luck.

*(**GABBY** begins to exit.)*

LIZ. …Wait.

GABBY. Yes?

LIZ. I'll let you sit at the table with us.

GABBY. REALLY?

LIZ. If you promise to not speak.

GABBY. You won't hear a peep. I swear to God.

LIZ. In fact, I need you to stop breathing. I basically need you to do your best impersonation of a cadaver. Can you do that?

GABBY. *(giddy)* Cadaver. Dead. Got it, Liz.

*(**GABBY** sits next to **LIZ** and watches her excitedly.)*

LIZ. Don't do that.

GABBY. Sorry.

*(**GABBY** looks out the window and hums to herself. She excitedly taps her fingers on the table.)*

LIZ. Do you need Ritalin or something?

GABBY. My first time.

LIZ. You've got to treat every deal as if it were your last. You never know when someone's going to pull the rug from under you.

GABBY. You've got this, Liz.

*(**LIZ** doesn't know how to take a compliment. She gives **GABBY** a half smile and continues to pour over the files.)*

*(Enter **FREDDIE LUNA**, nineteen, handsome and athletic.)*

LIZ. Mr. Freddie Luna?

FREDDIE. 'Sup.

*(***LIZ** *and* **GABBY** *stand to great him.* **LIZ** *extends her hand,* **FREDDIE** *doesn't shake it. He gives her a high five.)*

LIZ. It's a pleasure to meet you Freddie.

FREDDIE. They got cheeseburgers at this place? The lady on the phone said we'd have cheeseburgers and that you'd be paying.

GABBY. The cheeseburgers are the best in the city, get a double on us. With bacon.

LIZ. This is my assistant Gabby. She's not allowed to speak. Have a seat, please.

(They sit. **GABBY** *fights for positioning in the booth,* **LIZ** *shoves her to the side and gives her a dirty look.)*

LIZ. You're a little shrimpier than in the pictures.

FREDDIE. You're a little older-looking than your pictures.

LIZ. So you've heard of me.

FREDDIE. Ya. Of course.

LIZ. Good things I hope.

FREDDIE. Jeff Schwartz says that you'll eat the testicles off a new born.

LIZ. Jeff has a very, very small penis.

FREDDIE. Word?

LIZ. Really, it looks like an elevator button. Don't ask how I know that.

FREDDIE. He also said you're a good agent.

GABBY. Uhm, she's the best.

*(***LIZ** *stares* **GABBY** *down again.* **GABBY** *mouths "Sorry.")*

FREDDIE. I'm the best player to come outta Red Hook since Carmelo. So, what's your pitch?

LIZ. Pitch?

FREDDIE. I've been on a couple of these so far, lady. You're not impressing me.

LIZ. Oh?

FREDDIE. People are saying that I'll go in the top ten in the draft. People are saying that I've got major endorsements coming my way. I'm kind of a big deal.

LIZ. And so humble.

FREDDIE. Humility doesn't make the Benjamins, you feel me?

LIZ. You're very ambitious. You ready to put in the work?

FREDDIE. I won the state championship, two years in a row. I'm rated number one in the country. That sound like I'm fucking lazy?

LIZ. It sounds like you're talented, but that only gets you so far. A lot of promising players make it to the NBA and drop off the face of the earth. They aren't interested in listening to their coach, putting in the work, or winning. They just wanna get paid, you feel me? Ever heard of Lenny Cooke?

FREDDIE. Lenny who?

LIZ. Exactly. That could be you in five years, boy.

FREDDIE. I doubt it.

LIZ. This business is a graveyard of talented promising players. It can happen to anyone, even you Freddie.

FREDDIE. Why did you ask me here? What can you do for me?

LIZ. This is the reality of your situation. Can you deal? That's the industry you're stepping into. Can. You. Deal.

FREDDIE. The other agents didn't say this shit.

LIZ. I'm not like other agents. I'm really fucking good at my job, look at my client roster. Kevin Love, Carmelo Anthony, Russell Westbrook, Anthony Davis, James Harden. I take talented young guys and I make them international superstars, that's my legacy.

FREDDIE. Jeff Schwartz said I could be the next Jordan.

LIZ. Jeff Schwartz says that to every motherfucker he meets. His client list is also chock full of old geezers.

Paul Pierce, Ray Allen, Kobe Bryant, they are all on their way out.

FREDDIE. All right, I'm gonna be real with you, I've got some obligations.

LIZ. You have kids? Gabby?

(**GABBY** *shrugs nervously and checks her notes.*)

FREDDIE. No, I've got two sisters and two brothers, all younger. We've been in foster care but I want to make enough money so that we can all live together. My mom's in Venezuela struggling to make ends meet. I need to buy her a nice house.

LIZ. That's a lot to put on a boy's shoulders.

FREDDIE. I'm a man. Who the fuck do you think you are?

LIZ. You're a boy but the day you put on that NBA jersey, they'll judge you like a man. The day you sign your first NBA contract you'll kiss your youth goodbye. Are you ready for that?

FREDDIE. Yup.

LIZ. Do you party? Do you do drugs?

FREDDIE. Why the fuck do you care?

LIZ. I'm making an investment. I need to know. Do you do drugs?

FREDDIE. I don't have to answer that.

LIZ. Two words. Len Bias.

FREDDIE. Those aren't two words, that's a name.

LIZ. You know the story?

FREDDIE. Am I even getting my fucking cheeseburger? Or was that a lie?

LIZ. Gifted athlete from Maryland who was drafted to the Celtics in the first round, second pick overall in 1986, died two days later of a drug overdose.

FREDDIE. Ya, so?

LIZ. He really could have been the next Michael Jordan, he was that good. The potential was limitless. Now he's just another statistic. Another stereotype.

FREDDIE. That won't happen to me.

LIZ. You don't just stand for Freddie Luna. You carry a whole community on your shoulders. The press is going to be merciless. The second you fuck up, it fucks it up for all of us. Is your back strong enough to hoist us up? You tell me.

FREDDIE. This is bullshit. You're bullshit.

LIZ. I'm being 100 percent real right now. The honest truth.

FREDDIE. What can you do for me? The other agents offered me cash up front to sign with them. One even showed up with a twenty million dollar Adidas contract, ready for me to sign. What about you?

GABBY. That's completely unethical.

LIZ. I'm not going to offer you a cent, Freddie.

FREDDIE. What's in it for me?

LIZ. The truth. Straight up. I won't sugarcoat it. Trust me, the truth is something that's extinct in this business. In this world.

FREDDIE. The truth, that's it…this meeting is a complete waste of time. Seriously. Who the fuck do you think you are?

LIZ. Let me tell you a little something about who I am.

FREDDIE. I don't want to hear any more of your crap/…

LIZ. My mom died of cancer when I was three because my father couldn't afford her treatment, so when I got a full scholarship to Yale my goal was to grow up to be someone who could pay to kill cancer.

Now I've got a penthouse on the Upper West Side overlooking Central Park, my neighbors are Steven Spielberg and Oprah Winfrey, and I got a house in the Hamptons next door to Commissioner Adam Silver. Within the last three years, my current client roster has collectively made over nine hundred million dollars. I've been the only woman on the Forbes Most Powerful Sports Agents list three times and I've been on Time

Magazine's Most Influential People list twice. Nobody can stop me. No one. Not even God.

GABBY. Oh my God, I have /goosebumps…

LIZ. What I can offer you as an agent isn't anything you can buy. It's my marrow, it's the tenacity that led me to this table. I will fight for you to be successful the way I fought for myself to make it in this world that doesn't want people like us to succeed. I make that promise to you in exchange for a commitment. I need you to promise that you will stay out of trouble.

FREDDIE. You saw my files.

LIZ. Hey, shit happens, right?

FREDDIE. I didn't do it. I was on the wrong street at the wrong time.

LIZ. That happens when you're hanging with the wrong crowd.

FREDDIE. Don't talk to me like that.

LIZ. Like what?

FREDDIE. Like I don't know shit. I know shit, or else we wouldn't be here meeting.

LIZ. Point taken.

FREDDIE. Is my past going to be a problem? Is it going to come up again?

LIZ. You can't allow your past to define you. That's the bottom line. My job is to ensure that your past informs where you want to go. Straight to the top. I want you to be one of those success stories. From Red Hook to the Upper West Side. Shit, I grew up in the projects, too and now look at me.

FREDDIE. Nah, really?

LIZ. I grew up on mayonnaise sandwiches and sugar water, but I worked my ass off to get out. And look at me now. Baby, I run shit.

FREDDIE. I've worked hard too. I wake up at 4 a.m. every morning so I can do conditioning before school. Then after practice I stay on the court 'til 8 p.m. to shoot

around with my coach. Then I play pick up games around the neighborhood until 11 p.m. That's my schedule six days a week.

LIZ. That's the kind of dedication I'm talking about. I'm here to help you with the business side of things. Freddie, I've been an agent for a very long time and if there's one thing I've learned it's that white people don't want us, they want our money.

FREDDIE. Meaning?

LIZ. Corporations don't want to hire people like us, they usually have to by law. But they want our money. They need our money so they can continue running the world.

FREDDIE. How are you gonna help keep me in business? When I leave Red Hook, I'm not trying to go back.

LIZ. That's my specialty. I will keep you relevant. We'll create a public persona for you and keep re-creating that persona throughout your career. I've got you. Buy your one way ticket out of this place and join me in Manhattan.

(A beat.)

*(***FREDDIE***'s starting to be persuaded.)*

FREDDIE. You think I'll go in the top ten?

LIZ. I will ensure that for you, Freddie. I've already called the Knicks and they've expressed a lot of interest.

FREDDIE. They did?

LIZ. I deal with the Knicks all the time. They're good people. I can get you there.

FREDDIE. Empty promises.

LIZ. Not empty. Have you ever Googled me?

FREDDIE. You are a very cocky chick.

LIZ. Call me a chick again and I'll let you sign with Jeff Schwartz and make the biggest mistake of your life.

(A beat.)

*(***FREDDIE** *laughs it off. This lady is the real deal.)*

FREDDIE. You really gonna get me on the Knicks in the first round?

LIZ. Try me. Are you going to listen and keep putting in the work?

*(***LIZ** *extends her hand to* **FREDDIE**.*)*

FREDDIE. Try me.

(They shake on it.)

GABBY. Waiter? Cheeseburgers, we need a couple cheeseburgers over here STAT.

(Lights out.)

The Draft, Baby

(The office: it's messier than before. **LIZ** *and* **GABBY** *sit by the TV, the NBA draft is on. They look exhausted and have paperwork surrounding them.)*

*(***GABBY** *works on a laptop and wears a phone headset.)*

*(***LIZ** *wears a Bluetooth and sips on a Red Bull.)*

(They are both on their respective phone calls.)

LIZ. You're playing me, Marc. Why the fuck… Cold feet? This kid is the second coming. I'm telling you. His field goal percentage. His defense. He can even shoot the three. He's unique. Fuck you, Marc. Just fuck you *(***LIZ** *hangs up on Marc)* …who do you have? Who do you have? WHO DO YOU HAVE?

GABBY. Mr. Billy King, Liz is on the other line but she'd really like to speak with you. Can you hold? Please hold. I know it's a busy day but I assure you that it's worth your while to hold. Who is she on the phone with? I shouldn't/ say… Take a wild guess. That's a great guess.

*(***LIZ** *snaps wildly at* **GABBY**. *She's off her call but* **GABBY***'s still on the line and wasn't aware that* **LIZ** *was speaking to her.)*

LIZ. Marc's off. Who do you have??

GABBY. *(covers her receiver)* Are you talking to me?

LIZ. Yes De Niro. Who the fuck do you have on the phone? It's draft day, pay attention.

GABBY. The Nets.

LIZ. Transfer him over. NOW.

GABBY. *(into the phone)* I have Liz Rico, Mr. King.

LIZ. Billy. Big Willy. How are the kids? Oh, good. You know I love you right? Who's my Bill-ster? Who? … You heard about the Mavs? …No, I think Marc is such a dick wad. I… I've been meaning to call you. I want to screw the Mavs. I mean who likes Dallas? Freddie's from Brooklyn. HE WANTS to stay home. I've got your back, Billy. When have I lied to you? When?

*(***GABBY** *waves* **LIZ** *down.)*

GABBY. Knicks. I have the Knicks call coming.

*(***LIZ** *does a giddy dance and mimes for* **GABBY** *to give her one minute.* **GABBY** *answers the call.)*

GABBY. Liz Rico's office. Yes, Mr. Mills. Please hold.

LIZ. Billy. I gotta call you back. But don't let me down. Remember our good times at the Draft in '99. No, I wasn't that drunk, Billy. I remember every word. Yes, babe. Okay. You stay strong over there. We wanna go with you. Talk soon. Bye.

*(***LIZ** *hangs up the call and takes the next call.)*

Steve. Steve-o. My Stevie Wonderful. You know Freddie WANTS to stay local. He's a Brooklyn kid who grew up watching Patrick Ewing and John Starks. He wants to be a Knick. He has a poster of Melo in his locker… Nope. Fuck the Mavs. No, we wanna do business with YOU. Just YOU.

*(***LIZ** *high fives* **GABBY**. **GABBY** *turns up the TV. The Commissioner of the NBA speaks.)*

COMMISSIONER. The Los Angeles Lakers have selected Anthony Miller from UCLA as their first round pick.

LIZ. You need a superstar guard, Steve. You also need a miracle. I know. I hear you…Well, look at your TV screen because Miller's a Laker now. Yup. I know…

(We hear the crowd go wild on the TV.)

GABBY. *(to* **LIZ***)* Knicks are next.

LIZ. Would I lie to you? Would I? …okay, so I've lied to you but this kid is different… I realize that, but he's

matured since then… I assure you. He's a harmless kid, Steve. I'd bet my life on it.

*(***GABBY***'s phone rings.)*

GABBY. *(to* **LIZ***)* I have Billy on the line.

*(***LIZ** *mimes to* **GABBY** *that she needs to stall Billy.* **LIZ** *mouths "Five minutes.")*

LIZ

Steve, this would be the biggest mistake of your life. I mean, how will you be able to look your kids in the eye after this? Freddie Luna will be the next Kobe Bryant, the next Chris Paul. I'll let you go then. It's up to you. But I've got the Nets on the other line, Steve. They want him bad, so it's up to you. When Luna scores the game-winning dunk and the Nets sweep you this season, I won't be saying I told you so, I'll just be sipping Cristal and cashing the checks. Buh-Bye.

GABBY.

Good evening, Mr. King. You sound a little sick, do you have a cold? …Liz will be with you in five short minutes. How's your wife doing? …I'm not at liberty to tell you who Liz is speaking with… I'm aware of that… Liz is not playing the field, Sir. She's very honest about her client's intention to sign with the Nets. I assure you…

*(***GABBY** *waves to* **LIZ***, mimes that* **LIZ** *needs to take this call now.)*

*(***LIZ** *waves for* **GABBY** *to transfer the call.)*

LIZ. Billy. I missed you… Whoa, whoa. What's with the tone? No I was not on the other line with Steve. I'm committed to you. Freddie Luna wants to be a Net… Are you gonna fuck me over? Your pick is coming up, Billy, put your money where your mouth is.

GABBY. Knicks have one more minute.

*(***LIZ** *gives* **GABBY** *a thumbs up.)*

LIZ. Make the right decision Billy. Listen to your heart.

(sings)

LISTEN TO YOU HEART.
Shhhh…just, what does your heart say?

…okay, okay…how about your gut? Is that telling you anything different? …okay, you should go with your gut here Billy.

GABBY. They are announcing it.

LIZ. I've gotta get going Billy… No it's not because of the Knicks pick… I've gotta go to the bathroom… I have lady needs, all right? Jesus. Talk to you in five. Pick wisely. Bye.

*(***GABBY** *turns up the TV. The NBA* **COMMISSIONER** *appears again.)*

COMMISSIONER. The New York Knicks have selected Federico Luna from Red Hook High School.

(The crowd on the television goes wild.)

*(***GABBY** *and* **LIZ** *let out a sigh of relief. They are too exhausted to be excited.* **LIZ** *takes out her Bluetooth and kicks off her heels. She plops her feet on the couch.)*

GABBY. Martini?

LIZ. Whiskey on the rocks. This one was a real ball buster.

*(***GABBY***'s phone rings.)*

GABBY. Nets are on the line.

LIZ. Don't answer, that needy bastard needs a shrink NOT me.

GABBY. You played him, Liz.

LIZ. You have to come at all these deals from a place of yes. When the offers come in, then you can be picky. Until then it's "YES. YES. YES."

*(***GABBY** *pours two whiskeys. They clink glasses.)*

GABBY. To Freddie Luna.

LIZ. To US.

(They both take sips. **MR. CANDY** *enters with a bottle of Champagne. He pops the cork.)*

MR. CANDY. *(Sings)*

FOR SHE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW.
FOR SHE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW.
FOR SHE'S A JOLLY GOOD FELLOW,
WHICH NOBODY CAN DENY.

LIZ. Candy, you have a lovely singing voice.

MR. CANDY. WE DID IT KIDDO!

GABBY. We?

MR. CANDY. Get us a couple glasses, would you? Uh…

LIZ. Gabby.

MR. CANDY. Gabby, yes. The nice crystal glasses in my office.

*(***GABBY** *exits. Disgruntled.)*

MR. CANDY. You did it again.

LIZ. Are you surprised? I've been doing it for twenty-two years.

MR. CANDY. Can't we sit and enjoy the fruits of our labor for one minute?

LIZ. Okay. All right.

(They sit quietly. Not much to say. **MR. CANDY** *looks around her office.)*

MR. CANDY. I like what you've done with the place.

LIZ. I've been in this office for ten years.

MR. CANDY. Why don't you have any African art up on the walls? Berry in accounting has this great African art up, he's really proud of it.

LIZ. Just because Berry and I are both Black doesn't mean that we are going to decorate our office the same way.

MR. CANDY. I know. I know. I'm just saying. Be proud of your heritage, it's unique and exotic.

LIZ. Do you have white artists plastered all over your walls?

MR. CANDY. Not specifically, no.

LIZ. You're not proud of your heritage?

MR. CANDY. Don't get defensive. You're always getting so defensive. That's my biggest criticism of you after all these years.

LIZ. Uh huh.

MR. CANDY. Be proud of your heritage. Be proud of your past.

LIZ. That's not the issue.

MR. CANDY. I'm just so proud of you. I've seen you work so hard… Can I confess something to you Liz? Do you mind?

LIZ. Yes but try your hardest not to be offensive.

MR. CANDY. Well, ever since your father passed away, I've felt like your father figure. Like your father passed the reins on to me.

LIZ. But you have your own children that you never see.

MR. CANDY. I've been looking out for you, it's an instinct. And secretly I've been hoping you would find a nice man to marry who could take care of you. So I wouldn't have to worry about you so much.

LIZ. I can take care of myself, did that ever occur to you?

MR. CANDY. I know you can but as a father, you want the best for your daughters. Safety. Good man by her side.

LIZ. You're not my father, Mr. Candy. You're my boss. It's a very different type of relationship.

MR. CANDY. I feel comfortable with you Lizzie. Think of it as a compliment.

LIZ. Lucky me.

MR. CANDY. Listen, the board is going bananas over the Luna kid. They couldn't be happier with the good publicity. My assistant caught Phil Stern masturbating while crying in the men's room. You're in the lead, my dear.

LIZ. Are you surprised?

MR. CANDY. You going to miss me around here?

LIZ. Kind of, I guess.

MR. CANDY. You guess?

LIZ. I'm sure you'll be around.

MR. CANDY. Nope. I'll be out of your hair forever.

LIZ. You'll be calling me every five minutes.

MR. CANDY. No, no. I'm leaving the place in good hands. I'll back off.

*(***GABBY** *returns with two champagne glasses as* **MR. CANDY** *gets up to leave.)*

MR. CANDY. Catch you later, my little supernova.

*(***MR. CANDY** *exits.)*

GABBY. What did I miss?

LIZ. Pour it. One for you, too.

*(***GABBY** *pours the champagne and they toast.)*

LIZ. To all the motherfuckers who want a piece of you when you're on top.

GABBY. Like Mr. Candy?

LIZ. You remember this Gabby. You remember how hard we worked and how fast someone else pranced in here to take all the credit.

*(***LIZ** *downs her champagne.)*

*(***GABBY** *watches her.)*

(Lights out.)

Welcome To The Pros, Now Fuck Off

(An office. **FREDDIE LUNA** *and* **LIZ** *sit.* **FREDDIE***'s nervous, he keeps fidgeting.)*

*(***LIZ** *checks emails.)*

*(***FREDDIE** *starts to beat box. He starts to dance along to the beat. He gets into it.)*

*(***LIZ** *slaps* **FREDDIE** *upside the head.)*

LIZ. Grow the fuck up.

FREDDIE. I'm grown.

LIZ. Sit up straight. Stop moving around in your chair. You look like a lizard on coke.

FREDDIE. Coach Jones is someone I really look up to, I wanna make a good impression.

LIZ. Tuck in your shirt and don't say anything stupid.

FREDDIE. When I was little my mom would sing to me when I was scared.

LIZ. No fucking way, buddy.

FREDDIE. She would sing in Spanish. It really calms me down.

LIZ. Take a Xanax like a mature person.

FREDDIE. I just wanna do a good job. This is the only way I know how.

*(***LIZ** *makes a call on her cell.)*

LIZ. Get in here.

*(***GABBY** *enters before* **LIZ** *can hang up the phone.)*

GABBY. Did I forget something? I'm so sorry if I forgot something. I swear I triple-checked all the arrangements last night and again this morning.

LIZ. Shut up and sing something.

GABBY. Excuse me?

LIZ. Sing in Spanish, for Freddie.

GABBY. Uh.

LIZ. Name a song Freddie.

GABBY. This is kind of racist, Liz.

FREDDIE. I don't know the names of the songs. I was little.

LIZ. Sing, Gabby. Something traditional.

(A beat. **GABBY** *thinks, but nothing is coming to mind.)*

LIZ. Just do it!

*(***GABBY'S** *still thinking, then it hits her.)*

GABBY. *(sings)*

DE LA SIERRA MORENA,
CIELITO LINDO, VIENEN BAJANDO ...

FREDDIE. Oh snap, I know this song. I love this shit.

GABBY. Sing it with me, Liz.

FREDDIE. Yes! Come on, Liz. We're all nervous.

LIZ. I don't speak Spanish.

GABBY. But I got you Rosetta Stone for Christmas?

LIZ. Oops.

FREDDIE. How can you not speak Spanish? Get Leon Rose on the phone. He speaks it fluently.

LIZ. You're killing me kid. Killing me.

*(***GABBY** *and* **FREDDIE** *sing together.* **FREDDIE***'s smiling and enjoying himself.* **LIZ** *works on her phone.)*

GABBY & FREDDIE.

UN PAR DE OJITOS NEGROS,
CIELITO LINDO, DE CONTRABANDO.

GABBY. Why don't you come in on the chorus, Liz?

LIZ. Why don't you look for another job, Gabby?

*(***FREDDIE** *takes out his phone and pretends to dial.)*

FREDDIE. Hello? CAA? Ya, I need to speak with Leon Rose please?

*(**LIZ** groans and puts her phone down. She half-heartedly hums along.)*

GABBY, **FREDDIE**.

AY, AY, AY, AY,
CANTA Y NO LLORES,
PORQUE CANTANDO SE ALEGRAN,
CIELITO LINDO, LOS CORAZONES.

LIZ. All right. Okay. All right. This isn't therapy, kid. Gabby? Meet you outside.

GABBY. Sure.

*(**GABBY** smiles and exits.)*

FREDDIE. She's the best.

LIZ. I'm the best. She's my assistant.

FREDDIE. Jealous?

LIZ. Did Gabby get you here? Or did I?

FREDDIE. I've been thinking a lot about you Liz.

LIZ. You have?

FREDDIE. Why the fuck would anyone want to be an agent? It's the fucking worst job in the universe.

LIZ. Yep. It's pretty bad.

FREDDIE. I mean you don't really do anything and you take four percent of my money. What the fuck do you even do all day?

LIZ. I do a lot, kid.

FREDDIE. Like what?

LIZ. I ensured this deal. The Knicks deal? Twenty million for three years. I got you a shit load of money.

FREDDIE. Ya but how?

LIZ. Let's put it this way: I do all the things that nobody else wants to do. I lie, cheat, and steal for my clients. I make sure they're rich.

FREDDIE. So you just woke up one day and said to yourself "I want to be an agent."

LIZ. I was a basketball player, played for Yale back in the day.

FREDDIE. What position?

LIZ. Point guard. Had a mean crossover.

FREDDIE. Seriously.

LIZ. To this day I'm convinced that Allen Iverson stole my moves. He was six or seven years old when we won the NCAA championship and it was nationally televised. I know that asswipe stole my game.

FREDDIE. You're fucking nuts Liz. I love it.

*(***COACH JONES***, fifties, Black, enters. He wears a tracksuit and chews gum profusely.)*

COACH JONES. Liz.

LIZ. Coach, good to be doing business with you.

COACH JONES. Always a pleasure.

*(***COACH JONES** *hugs* **LIZ** *warmly.)*

LIZ. Is that an iPhone 6 in your pocket or are you happy to see me, Coach?

COACH JONES. Maybe a little of both.

LIZ. Allow me to introduce you to this future hall-of-famer. Federico Luna.

*(***FREDDIE** *extends his hand to* **COACH JONES***, they shake hands.)*

FREDDIE. It's a real honor, sir.

COACH JONES. Call me Coach.

FREDDIE. Coach I… I've read all your books. I think you're one of the greatest coaches of all time. I can't believe you are my coach. I… I'm your best player.

LIZ. He's a little nervous.

COACH JONES. Do you want some water, kid?

FREDDIE. I meant to say, you will make me a better player.

COACH JONES. Right. Good.

LIZ. We are thrilled to be with this franchise, Coach.

COACH JONES. I see that. I feel it. Liz you mind letting us talk man-to-man here? I mean you won't be around the majority of the season. I'd like to get to know Freddie one-on-one.

LIZ. Okay. Sure. I'll be waiting outside if you need me, okay Freddie?

*(***LIZ** *opens the door to leave, we hear her scream for* **GABBY**.*)*

GABBYYYYY? GAAAABY??

*(***LIZ** *exits.)*

(A beat.)

*(***COACH JONES** *stares at* **FREDDIE** *intensely. It's searing.* **FREDDIE** *feels warm/nervous, he grins at him.)*

FREDDIE. Coach Jones, holy shit. I can't believe you're my coach, sir.

COACH JONES. You better. This is all very real, son.

FREDDIE. I didn't mean it like that. I just really look up to you, Coach.

COACH JONES. Uh huh. Okay. You have some great stats, Luna.

FREDDIE. I'm ready to play coach, I'm locked in.

COACH JONES. You averaged a triple double every game last season. Two-time state champ. That's all pretty good… for high school.

(A beat. **FREDDIE** *doesn't know how to respond.)*

There's a big difference between playing against a bunch of teenagers and playing against professional athletes. Do you think you're ready? Or do you just need the money? That happens a lot nowadays.

FREDDIE. I'm ready to play, that's all you need to know.

COACH JONES. Uh huh. Uh huh. What about your criminal record? Those assault charges. That something I need to worry about?

FREDDIE. I was at the wrong place at the wrong time, sir.

COACH JONES. But I heard you have a temper. I heard that it's possible that you actually beat the shit out of those kids.

FREDDIE. I'm telling you the facts. The truth. I'm a lot of things but I'm not a liar.

COACH JONES. Answer the question, do you have a temper? Do I need to worry about technical fouls here?

FREDDIE. I mean, I get passionate, sir. I'm not going to lie.

COACH JONES. Latrell Sprewell passionate? Another Ron Artest?

FREDDIE. I just like to win. That a bad thing coach?

COACH JONES. When do you turn twenty?

FREDDIE. January.

COACH JONES. Capricorn.

FREDDIE. Hm?

COACH JONES. Astrology.

FREDDIE. That matter?

COACH JONES. Just trying to get a sense of you. I don't normally like Capricorns.

FREDDIE. I don't even know what that means, sir.

(A beat.)

*(***COACH** *continues to stare at* **FREDDIE**.*)*

COACH JONES. I'm going to be honest with you. I didn't want to draft you.

FREDDIE. Oh?

COACH JONES. I wanted us to draft Anthony Miller. He's led UCLA to the Final Four, twice, he's poised, mature AND he has great stats.

FREDDIE. Anthony Miller?

COACH JONES. But fuck me. Last year our record was the laughing stock of the league and I don't have a say within this doomed organization.

FREDDIE. Word? You seem powerful, sir.

COACH JONES. Listen. If Anthony Miller was here we'd have a shot at winning some games this year. But the higher ups just want us to sell tickets and entertain a bunch of beer drinking assholes with hot dogs sticking out

of their dick-sucking lips. Instead of a championship contender, they drafted me a fucking baby. I'm not a coach. I'm a babysitter.

FREDDIE. I…uh.

COACH JONES. I'm gonna make this really easy for you, okay?

FREDDIE. Okay, ya.

COACH JONES. Show up. Don't do anything stupid. Don't make me look bad. I like my job, I've been here for a couple of years and the front office has stuck with me. The second we start losing again, the second some baby throws a tantrum on the bench, then my ass is out on the street. So don't fuck up or I will kill you. Got it?

FREDDIE. I got it, sir.

COACH JONES. Glad we had this chat. See you in practice.

*(***COACH JONES** *shakes* **FREDDIE***'s hand. Meeting's over as far as he's concerned.)*

FREDDIE. That's it?

COACH JONES. Oh sorry, did you want me to roll out the fucking red carpet you little shit?

FREDDIE. No sir, I just wanted a little direction. My goal is to start.

COACH JONES. Start?

FREDDIE. I'll work hard. I'll do whatever you say, Coach. I just want to start.

COACH JONES. So I start you, then what?

FREDDIE. I'd be eternally grateful.

*(***COACH JONES** *puts his head in his hands, lets out a deep sigh. This kid doesn't get it.)*

COACH JONES. It's not about you, idiot.

FREDDIE. Okay?

COACH JONES. Get out of my office you fucking baby.

FREDDIE. Okay. Uh, thanks Coach.

COACH JONES. Welcome to the pros. Get out.

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