

The One Percenter

Written by

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Draft Two

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INT. CONVENTION CENTER STAGE

GEORGE stares off screen, his face a blend of ecstasy, fear and sweat. He's lit by harsh blue and red floods.

The sound of a cheering crowd rises over high-energy music.

An amplified voice breaks through the noise.

RICHARD (O.S.)
That's the dream! The dream of the
one percent!

RICHARD moves across the stage like an aroused predator. He's dressed sharp in a blue suit, tailored shirt, collar standing stiff and upright.

George watches him in awe.

RICHARD
A million dollar day, for a billion
dollar life! A billion dollar life!

The crowd picks up the refrain.

CROWD
Billion dollar life! Billion dollar
life!

Richard grabs George's hand and raises it in the air. George throws his other arm up in victory.

RICHARD
George can live it!

He drops George's hand and steps forward towards the crowd.

RICHARD (cont'd)
You can live it! I can lead you all
into the promised land! We can all
live the billion dollar life and be
part of the... what?

George chants it with the crowd, his eyes shining.

GEORGE
The one percent!

CROWD (O.S.)
The one percent!

RICHARD
The one percent! Seize your million
dollar opportunities! Build your
billion dollar life and join the one
percent!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Richard throws his arms up. The wild energy of the crowd washes over him.

George claps his hands off.

INT. - CONVENTION CENTER - BACKSTAGE

Quiet. George stands back stage as Richard and his entourage blow by. A BODYGUARD gently blocks George from coming any closer.

BODYGUARD
Mr. Smiles is taking a break.

GEORGE
I just want to thank him, he....

BODYGUARD
He knows. He just needs a break.
Here, take his card. Call anytime.

George absently takes the card as he watches Richard leave the room.

CUT TO:

George picking up a backpack from a chair in front of the stage. Except for a few stragglers walking out, the room's empty.

George walks out a side door marked Employees Only.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER BATHROOM

George is tying on a tie, and rushing through it.

He throws a jacket on. A badge marked "Center Security" is patched on the shoulder.

A hand grabs him and spins him around.

REGGIE
What was that?

REGGIE's in his face. He's a middle aged black guy: fit, good looking, and wearing the same security jacket, with a cap to match.

GEORGE
What? Take it easy....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
You're on the job, George.

GEORGE
I changed out of my uniform....

REGGIE
You're supposed to be in uniform! Not
on-stage!

Reggie flips open the bag and looks inside. There's an empty
holster.

REGGIE (CONT.)
What'd you do with your gun?

GEORGE
I kept it with me.

He pulls the gun from his waistband and waves it around.

GEORGE (CONT.)
See?

REGGIE
Jesus! Put that away! You're probably
going to get fired already.

GEORGE
What? I need this job.

Reggie pushes George towards the door.

REGGIE
Then you should have done it, George.
You're gonna get the boot over this.

George looks stunned.

GEORGE
What? I'm not going to get the boot.

REGGIE
Look. Take a sick day. I'll talk to
Mark.

GEORGE
I can't get the boot. I need this
job.

REGGIE
Go home, George.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie pushes George through the door.

INT. HALL

Reggie keeps pushing. Desperation builds in George's eyes.

GEORGE
I need this job!

INT. CONVENTION CENTER GARAGE

George walks past an armored truck idling by a security door, his movements furtive. A guard in an armored vest watches George attentively as he talks to himself.

GEORGE
They can't fire me for that. It's not right.

He passes a little too close to the armored truck.

GUARD
Step back, sir.

George turns to face him, gesturing angrily.

GEORGE
It's not right!

The guard puts his hand on his weapon.

GUARD
Sir, step back from the truck!

George punches the truck. The guard draws, but hesitates as George recoils from the pain.

GEORGE
Ahh!

GUARD
It's an armored truck, idiot. Get the fuck out of here!

GEORGE
My hand.

He stumbles away, holding his hand. The guard holsters his pistol as he says something inaudible into his shoulder mic, watching him go.

CONTINUED:

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Mr. Smiles is meditating on his next big breakthrough for life success....

GEORGE

No, it's important, he'll talk to me. He gave me his card.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Of course, I can send you to his Voice Mail to Not Fail Mailbox. It's just \$19.95.

GEORGE

No, he pulled me on stage to tell me the million dollar secret to a billion dollar life, but I'm getting fired instead. It's a catastrophe.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

On stage today?

GEORGE

Yes, and I don't think this was the secret he meant.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Please hold.

George waits, then raises his hand to his head to scratch his temple with a pistol.

GEORGE

OK.

CUT TO:

George, pacing.

RICHARD (O.S.)

George?

GEORGE

Richard!

RICHARD (O.S.)

I understand you had a problem after the show today?

GEORGE

They're going to fire me. You said I'd find a million dollar moment, but they're going to....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD (O.S.)
Do you have the book, George?

GEORGE
Of course! Of course I have it.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Look at chapter three, George.

CUT TO:

George flipping through the book on the table with one hand, the phone in the other. The pistol is next to the book.

GEORGE
"Million Dollar Moments."

RICHARD (O.S.)
Read the first paragraph.

GEORGE
"When life closes a door, the 99 percent do nothing but whine like losers. One Percenters recognize a closed door for what it really is: a chance to seize life by the throat, and to squeeze it until the next million dollar moment shows itself."

RICHARD (O.S.)
See? If you get fired, it means your million dollar moment is right there.

GEORGE
I don't....

He stands up straight suddenly.

RICHARD (O.S.)
George?

GEORGE
I know what my million dollar moment is.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Then seize it.

GEORGE
Seize it! I'll seize it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD (O.S.)
That's great, George. Amanda's going to talk to you about a CD set. Don't sue us.

GEORGE
I needed this door to close so I could seize my million dollar moment.

OPERATOR (O.S.)
Visa or mastercard?

GEORGE
Tell Richard I'll see him tomorrow.

INT. SUBWAY

George is in his security uniform, holding his phone in his bandaged hand. A middle aged woman sits next to him.

GEORGE
(Talking to himself).
I'm fired. They just fired me by text.

The woman looks over at him.

GEORGE (cont'd)
You were right. It's my million dollar day.

The woman gets up and moves away. Richard sits down in the vacant seat.

RICHARD
I told you.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER GARAGE

George walks towards the armored car, followed by Richard. The guard is there, eyeing crowd, angled slightly away.

George stops, paralyzed.

RICHARD
Seize the moment, George.

George looks at Richard, then walks up to the guard. The man turns to him. An annoyed expression crosses his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUARD
I told you....

George SHOTS HIM IN THE HEAD.

RICHARD
Nice shot!

Richard walks over to look at the man laying dead on the ground. George holds his gun like a hot iron between two fingers as he follows.

GEORGE
Oh, God!

RICHARD
You've done it, George. Claim your prize.

He gestures towards the armored car.

GEORGE
Ohhhh, I'm going to jail.

RICHARD
One Percenters don't go to jail, George. Jail is for weaklings and losers.

George goes to the car and opens the door. It's empty.

RICHARD (cont'd)
Uh oh. Tough break.

GEORGE
No, no, no, no!

RICHARD
I take back what I said about jail. You can't afford a lawyer.

He turns to Richard, hands on head, one still holding the gun.

GEORGE
You said! You said seize it!

RICHARD
And you didn't. Are you a loser, George? Or are you going to do something about it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (O.S.)
Drop the gun, George!

George turns to see Reggie edging closer, pistol aimed at him.

REGGIE
Put it down. I don't want to hurt you.

GEORGE
No, no, no, this isn't right. This isn't right!

He backs away from Reggie, into the elevator well.

REGGIE
I don't want to tell my husband I had to shoot his brother, ok? Put the gun down.

GEORGE
I'm sorry, Reggie! I shouldn't have gone to see Richard. He's just a liar!

Richard smiles.

REGGIE
It's ok. It's all ok. You just need help.

Reggie edges closer.

GEORGE
If I drop the gun, can I have my job back?

REGGIE
Sure, George. I'll talk to Mark.

George nods and holsters his weapon.

REGGIE (cont'd)
OK, George, it's going....

Reggie's body JERKS as SHOTS ring out, ripping through him.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S)
Drop the gun!

Reggie's body falls to the ground. George stares in shock. Richard laughs like a psychopath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Police OFFICERS rush past George with guns drawn, ignoring him.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Put your hands behind your head. Stop
resisting!

Richard pulls George back towards the elevator. The doors open up, and the pair step in.

The police cuff Reggie's body as the doors close.

INT. ELEVATOR

George and Richard stand side by side. Richard calmly hits one of the buttons.

RICHARD
I thought that went well.

George looks shell shocked.

GEORGE
Reggie's dead.

RICHARD
And he'll get the blame, too.

GEORGE
Alex is going to be so pissed.

RICHARD
No jail, though. You can look for
your next million dollar moment.

GEORGE
What? No!

George turns on Richard, grabbing him by the collar and throwing him against the wall.

GEORGE (CONT.)
This is your fault!

RICHARD
That's the billion dollar secret! One
Percenters don't care about the
bodies....

GEORGE
Shut up! Shut your face! I'll kill
you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

George presses his pistol against Richard's head.

RICHARD
George. Obviously I'm not real.

GEORGE
Shut up! Just shut up.

He throws Richard against the wall then crouches, head in his knees.

RICHARD
Is that your next big move? Cry like a baby? Suck your thumb?

George rears up and shoves the pistol in his mouth.

RICHARD (cont'd)
That's right. That's how this was always going to end. Might as well get to it.

George's face twists with rage. He pulls the gun from his mouth and stands up.

GEORGE
That's what you've always wanted!

RICHARD
No, George. But it's time to face facts. If you're not a maker, you're a taker. You don't have what it takes to make it to the one percent. At least have the basic human decency to take your own life.

GEORGE
I'm not going to kill myself, Richard. I'm going to kill you.

RICHARD
We just talked about that, George. I'm not here. It just looks that way because you're insane.

GEORGE
I know you're not here. You're in the penthouse. And I'm going to find you.

He taps the penthouse button.

GEORGE (cont'd)
And I'm going to kill you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD
That's...I'm not sure how I feel
about that, George.

GEORGE
I don't give a shit how you feel.
We're done here.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER PENTHOUSE HALLWAY

George steps out of the elevator, alone. He approaches the penthouse door, and knocks. The Bodyguard opens the door.

BODYGUARD
What's this about?

GEORGE
The police asked me to come up, with
the shooter around. Since Richard
knows me.

BODYGUARD
What? Oh, you're the guy from the
show yesterday.

GEORGE
Yeah. Well the police think he's the,
uh, target.

BODYGUARD
I can handle....

RICHARD (O.S.)
He's after me? Really?

The Bodyguard turns to look. George cranes his head through the door and gets stiff armed by the big man.

RICHARD (O.S.) (cont'd)
How exciting. Oh, let him in, Brad.

The Bodyguard drops his arm, and George walks in.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE

Richard is there, sharply dressed in expensive casual wear. He's lounging on a couch with a drink in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

I knew it was just a matter of time,
really. You can't help everyone. And
some of them turn rabid.

George just stares. Richard looks puzzled.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Do I know you?

BODYGUARD

He was in your show yesterday.

George nods. His hands clinch.

RICHARD

Oh. Oh! Wait, didn't you get fired?

The Bodyguard reaches under his jacket as George rushes forward, jumps onto the coffee table and tackles Richard.

They go down in a heap. The Bodyguard runs around the sofas, weapon drawn.

George stumbles to his knees, gets his gun free, and levels it at Richard's chest.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Don't! No, let me help you!

He waves off the Bodyguard, who keeps his gun on George.

GEORGE

You don't help! You just lie!

George lunges forward, wrapping an arm around Richard's neck. And presses the gun against his temple.

BODYGUARD

You pull that trigger I'll kill you!

GEORGE

Do you think I care?

George drags Richard out through the glass doors onto...

EXT. BALCONY - DAY

The balcony, on a gorgeous day. The city shines in the sun.

George pulls Richard out with him, and looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Is this it? Is this the billion dollar life?

RICHARD

What? No, I'm not a billionaire.

GEORGE

You lied about that? That's your whole schtick!

He pushes Richard away and points the gun at him. The Bodyguard angles for a shot.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Tell him to go or I'll just kill us all.

Richard gestures and the Bodyguard backs away.

RICHARD

Let me help you. OK? What's your name?

GEORGE

You know my name! We've been talking all day!

RICHARD

We've been...OK.

George presses his hand to his head.

GEORGE

Wait, no. That wasn't real. I get confused.

The Bodyguard starts moving in, but Richard waves him off.

RICHARD

It's ok. We're going to talk.

GEORGE

No....

George raises his gun hand to his head, then lowers it for a second to SHOOT THE BODYGUARD IN THE CHEST.

RICHARD

Oh, Jesus!

The Bodyguard collapses to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE
He makes me nervous.

RICHARD
Ok! Ok! It's ok. Brad's an asshole.

George nods.

RICHARD (cont'd)
These things happen. Look. You're off your meds, right?

GEORGE
I don't need meds! I need a better life!

RICHARD
I know. I can help you. You want to know my real secret? Antipsychotics.

GEORGE
What?

RICHARD
Yeah. Antidepressants too. The whole bunch. Amoxapine, Quetiapine, Clozapine. I'm still on them.

GEORGE
I'm on Olanzapine.

RICHARD
Olanzapine's a bitch. I hated olanzapine.

GEORGE
Yeah. I stopped. I can't do it any more. Only....

RICHARD
It gets hard to tell what's what.

GEORGE
Yeah.

RICHARD
It's ok. Look. But for luck, there go I. I could be you. You could be me.

GEORGE
Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

Yeah. I talk about seeing opportunities, but most of the time I just saw stuff that wasn't there. You know what I mean.

GEORGE

I can't even tell anymore.

RICHARD

I know. But look at me.

He takes a step forward and extends a hand. George looks him in the eye, the gun dangling by his side.

RICHARD (cont'd)

You're going to be all right. When you're ready, I can help you. I promise.

George looks at the hand, then out at the skyline, gleaming brightly. Like a promised land.

GEORGE

You promise?

RICHARD

Of course.

George nods. He places a hand on the railing and just takes in the air. At peace for a moment.

GEORGE

I want this.

RICHARD

You can have it.

Richard lunges towards George, shoving.

George steps slightly away and angles his gun, casually putting a bullet through Richard's chest. Richard's momentum carries him to the balcony. He stumbles, falling forward over the edge.

George pulls him back and drops him on the deck. He shakes his head.

GEORGE

You're such a liar.

RICHARD

OK. Wait. There's an opportunity....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

George shoots him again. Richard's body jerks, then is still.

George looks at him for a moment. Then around at the skyline.

He holsters his gun, bends down, and drags Richard's body into the Penthouse.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER PENTHOUSE HALLWAY

The sound of boots reverberate through the hallway, where the door to Richard's suite is cracked open.

Police move up to it in tactical formation.

A POLICE SERGEANT nods to another officer, who pushes through the door.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE

The police come through the door, weapons aimed at the center of the room.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Don't move!

POLICE OFFICER 2

Put your hands on your head!

We pan from the officers' weapons around the room.

Past Richard's body, naked, his blood pooling on the hardwood.

Onto George, wearing Richard's clothes, bloodstained shirt and all. He's sitting casually on the sofa.

POLICE SERGEANT (O.S.)

Get on the ground!

GEORGE

It's ok, officers. See?

He gestures around the room with both hands. He's still holding the gun.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I'm living the life.

Blackness. The gunshots are deafening.