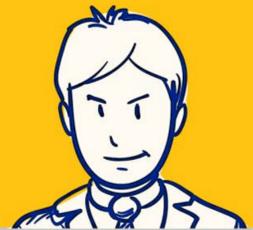




His mind racing just ahead of his pounding heart, Jim stalled by smiling broadly at Don Bird and looking slowly around the room. “Why don’t I smoke a pipe so I could fiddle with it and look wise,” he thought ironically to himself.

Then, “Son of a bitch, I’m going to win; I’m going to make sure that the people in this room know that I’m going to lead.”



Folding his arms across his chest and sitting up very straight, Jim turned to Bird, said “*Thank you, Don*” and then swiveled back towards the others:



“I’m delighted to be here this morning, even though some of you probably do not share my enthusiasm. I realize all of you may not be with me. Given the success of Famous Products it is presumptuous of me to think that you know I’m qualified to lead you; we’ll let time tell on that score. In the meantime I’m looking forward to getting to know all of you well, and working with you to make this great company even greater in the future.”

Then, determined to not only take charge and establish his leadership, but also to show that he was human, Jim proceeded to tell some non-threatening facts about himself, that he was married, had 4 kids, was Catholic and the like.

He concluded by saying *“I hope in the days ahead we become good friends - colleagues - and I will try not to let you down.”* Then he turned back again to Bird, said, *“You lead for a while,”* and sat back to observe.

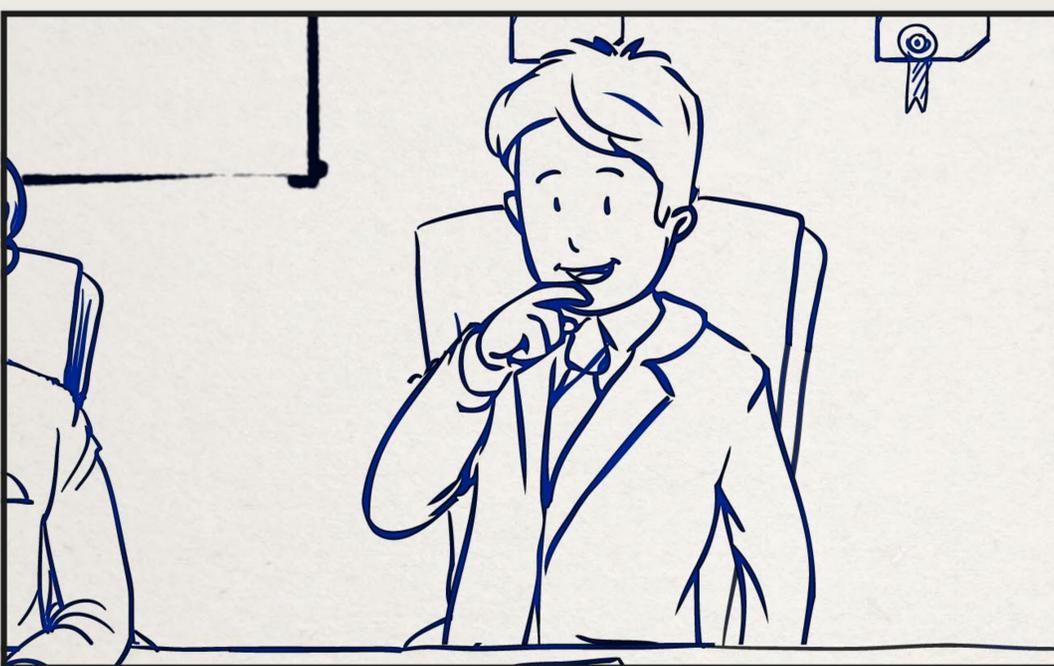


What he saw over the next 2^{1/2} hours made him feel worse and worse. The meeting seemed to have no point, discussion was superficial and rambling, and only low-level operating details were discussed.

Near the end of the meeting one of the executives, Ed Walker - the only one who appeared to be under 60 - raised his hand and was called on by Bird. Flushing visibly, and with a voice quivering with emotion, Walker faced Jim and said:



“Jim, I do not understand what kind of a man you are. If you are so good why didn’t you stay with your last company? We don’t think we need you; why do you think you can help us?”



Smiling once again, while rapidly thinking to himself *“he’s attacking me, not my qualifications... what kind of person am I? Am I really pure and doing the right thing? What would General Patton, a great leader, have done now? Oh, hell, you have to be a bit Machiavellian if you’re going to be powerful...,”* Jim readied himself.

Taking a deep breath and looking Ed Walker right in the eye, Jim actually said:

“Thanks for getting it right out on the table, Ed. It’s important that I know how you feel. I hope in the days ahead we get to know each other.”

Then the meeting ended

“This is the most boring, useless meeting I have ever attended,” thought Jim. “They were right in sacking Bird. And the treasurer is a basket case. Holy Hanna, is this going to be a big headache!”



Just before Jim left that day, Bird got him aside and said, *“Why don’t you have a word with Ed Walker.”*



Musing to himself about great leaders always thinking of the organization’s welfare and appreciating Bird’s concerns, Jim found Ed in his office and reassured him, once again making sure to look him right in the eye,

“I see that you’re a person who never has uttered a word you didn’t believe.”



Finally, as he was hurrying to catch his plane, Jim was stopped by the beer-bellied Sales Manager.

“I’m sorry for the way things went at the meeting, Jim.”

“Don’t feel sorry,” replied Jim, adopting the hearty voice and warm manner he knew went with relating to sales type.

“Famous Products is a great company. I’ll see you in 10 days.”

