

Quanta

By

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INT. PHARMRITE OFFICES - MORNING 1

JOHN sits opposite two PHARMRITE EXECs at one end of a long meeting room table.

EXEC #1

Okay, John.

JOHN

Is everything okay?

EXEC #2

Oh yeah, all good. You're not in trouble or anything. We just called you in for a catch-up.

JOHN

Wow, okay, sure. It's just that, I don't think we've ever spoken before today. I'm a bit...

EXEC #1

Well I'll jump straight to the point. John, you remember the other day we had the doctors from Grand come in and do the whole free vaccinations thing?

JOHN

Yeah of course. It's not... coming out of our pay or anything?

EXEC #2

No, no! Nothing like that don't worry.

JOHN

(relieved)

Oh okay, good.

EXEC #1

No the issue is more, uh, you've probably heard the whole thing about, the government getting a bit too up in our business on the whole getting RJ-29 to market deal.

JOHN

Yeah I think so, I'm only here like three days a week so I probably missed a lot of that story. I saw it on the news though, about the treatment being knocked back or something?

(CONTINUED)

EXEC #2

Well, yeah... look in the long run we were probably better off, as they started testing intravenously on larger animals we noticed some, (nervous chuckle) pretty frightening side effects.

JOHN

Wow, that's probably helped you guys dodge a huge bullet then I'm guessing.

The execs share a glance.

EXEC #1

Well here's the thing, John. Can I call you John?

JOHN

You have been, since we came in here.

EXEC #1

John, some of the guys in R&D felt a little bit like, what's the expression, the company really screwed them over, you know? We kept promising them all this money, and that they'd be super famous, and everybody would be going around using the product of their hard work these last twenty years to sort of, you know, transcend the limits of the human body.

John slowly stops nodding his agreement, confusion spreading on his face.

JOHN

What kind of supplement is this exactly?

EXEC #2

Oh it's not a *supplement* that's been misappropriated. It's more of a neuro-nervous chemical bath.

EXEC #1

Anyways, long story short, one of the guys in particular, a chemist who's been with the company for so long we can't even fire him for

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

EXEC #1 (cont'd)  
Pete's sake, he thinks he might have been a little bit disgruntled about the government not letting him test on humans that morning, and maybe possibly slipped a batch of it in with the vaccinations.

JOHN  
Oh no! Are you serious? That's awful.

EXEC #2  
Well...

EXEC #1  
We did make everyone sign indemnity forms, John. So it's not all bad.

JOHN  
Hang on, so you're calling everyone in here to tell them that someone in the company might have gotten this bad batch of vaccine? Shit. That's pretty heavy.

EXEC #2  
Sort of, John.

EXEC #1  
We're actually just calling you in here. To tell you that you *definitely* got the bad batch of vaccine.

JOHN  
Oh.

EXEC #2  
Now keep in mind, we're about ninety per cent sure that there's a good chance that this might not do anything.

EXEC #1  
Do you feel weird at all John?

JOHN  
Um, jeez. I don't know. What do you mean by weird?

EXEC #2

Do you feel like you sometimes need coffee to stay awake?

JOHN

(suddenly worried)

Yes!

EXEC #2

Well that's probably just normal.

John sees them exchange another glance, ratcheting up his fear.

JOHN

Well what happens now? What can happen to me?

EXEC #1

Are you familiar at all with how the brain transmits nerve impulses through the body?

JOHN

No, not at all.

EXEC #1

How about quantum entanglement? Any first level introduction kind of stuff there?

JOHN

No, I mean, no... never.

EXEC #1

Well, let's just say you have a small, narrow laneway road, and it's fine if you want to ride a bicycle on it, but then one day you drive a big garbage truck through there, and it cracks the road, and garbage juice gets into all the cracks and under the road. Do you kind of see what I'm saying?

JOHN

I really don't.

EXEC #2

John imagine you've got a twelve volt power cord, and someone accidentally plugs it into a nuclear submarine.

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JOHN

Do I need to see a doctor?

EXEC #1

We have one all lined up. In fact, you might want to meet this guy, it's the chemist who slipped you an, *IV mickey*, if you will.

JOHN

This is mental. So the guy who poisoned me gets to treat me.

EXEC #2

Well he's the only one who really knows about it. He's the main guy. Sure he gave you the treatment without any kind of oversight or approval, but still... that's a rare kind of passion.

JOHN

Is it dangerous?

The execs both squint, trying to come up with a creative answer, looking off in two different directions, putting the words together.

EXEC #1

John, I want you to think of this experience as if you're falling down a big, dark hole. What's at the bottom, hm, who knows? Is it pillows? Is it, maybe, marshmallows or spikes or beanbags, who can really say?

John stares down at his hands, then feels his cheek.

JOHN

How will I know if something's happening?

EXEC #2

Do you ever feel anxious for no particular reason?

JOHN

Yes!

Another nervous glance exchanged between the execs, hold on John's restrained anxiety.