

# **The Polish Experience**

**By**

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*This book is dedicated to my son Alexander. Let's hope  
that you cause me more problem than I cause you*

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All characters are fictional, if the name or likeness of anyone has been used it is a coincidence. Several real World events are used in this book but not to the detriment of any individual.

# Chapter 1

I have a problem and you can help me solve it.

My name is James Williamson, I was the seventh best salesperson out of two hundred and fifty or so such workers at a company called Minkins & Minkins. I had been working there for less than a year but was suitably impressed with myself. The fuckers above me had been at the company much longer and thus had better contacts to milk.

I was new, I was fresh, I was closing over 300 sales a month!

Some of the top sixers only closed 20 or 30 sales, admittedly huge sales that dwarfed mine but if I could land a big deal I'd be number one in no time. I just needed that one milky tit to suckle off while I kept bringing in three digit sales, then they'd love me, then they'd respect me.

Sales is a strange mixture of being everyone's best friend and surviving as a lone wolf in a harsh, stab your best friend in the back, environment. That is why I never mixed business and pleasure. I worked then I partied.

I lived with Royce and Ranieer. I dated a Polish chick and bragged about her when I was in the office. Royce and Ranieer didn't think much of her but what the fuck did I care? While she was riding me reverse cowgirl, I could squint and

imagine it was Jenny Frost from Atomic Kitten. That really was the Frosting on the cake.

I had just dropped of my August results and picked up my massive bonus for the last 3 months. I got paid a basic of £1,200 and my bonus this time levelled out at £3k a month. A lot of money for a kid just out of university with no real burdens upon my wallet, how I wish I'd saved that money. Glad I didn't invest it though.

I was happy. I worked. I drank. I bought shit I didn't need.

I wanted more and pushed my boss Steve to give me a promotion. I thought it must have been going to happen until complications with his wife's pregnancy took him away from work for a few weeks and the promotion that was mine was given to a fat moo from accounting who was going to be right-sized. Well until the cocks in HR thought she'd make a useful sales manager.

What the furry animal toys on your desk were you think bobble head?

Accountants are useful people but you need to keep them in their cages, in confinement. Sales' is the purview of the charismatic, the face to facers not the face to calculators.

No!

Wrong choice!

I went over Steve's head and visited Mr. Minkins. I told him that I had worked hard and should be rewarded.

I thought I was going to get fired.

Well I'd walk into another job on better basic, I thought.

No.

As I stood there trying not to be disappointed at the lavender walls and flower bands, Minkins invited me and my Polish girlfriend to his wife's parent's anniversary out in the sticks the following weekend. The varnished brownny orange desk impressed me more than the wallpaper and as I stood there and tried to gather my thoughts he reclined in his leather chair bobbing back and forth.

A weekend away he said.

There is a great B&B nearby he said.

Great, I said, sounds like a winner. Which it did.

We arranged the details and that was that, fuck the afternoon sales meets I was moving up in the World.

Celebrations were required.

I met Royce at the Bee Keepers Inn. It was a funny bar. A mixture of musty old timers watching Channel 4 racing, peering into the communal copy of The

Racing Post while sipping on their bottles of Skol special. Most of them would choke on their flavoured cigars once or twice an hour.

Then the second group were achingly cool hipsters. They thought so at least. Royce hated the posers but loved the old guys. I liked the cheap beer and an occasional flutter so I didn't mind watching the nags.

Even when I felt minted I didn't like to pay over the odds for beer or worse still fruity cocktails that were served in shot glasses. If I wanted to spend £20 on one shot, I'd do it in the back alley not the bar.

It wasn't an unbreakable rule though. Some birds needed you to flash the cash, some like to take it down and dirty. The dive bars or rustic establishments, if we are feeling kind, were easier for me. I felt more at home there. I would remember my Granddad asking me to help him pick his horses for the day, surrounded by the smoke from his pipe and I was always allowed one sip of his bitter. Only one sip mind.

The upscale joints were more serious, people were serious about having fun. That never played well with me. They were too focused when dancing. They tried too hard to impress you when all you really needed was a little small talk. It was possibly because they all wanted to prove their worth, to win your love or they were simply narcissistic and wanted to show you how much they loved themselves.

Royce said that he knew of an award dinner we could get into. It was the main benefit of Royce being a journalist, the free dinners and parties. Royce claimed to have been a descendant of some Viking King and his family moved to Ireland in fear of their life and to populate it with warriors. I didn't care, I didn't know what to believe but Ranieer was a Finnish documentary maker who had crashed at our flat after a party and never left. In the last two months he had organized a small festival and given a speech at Leeds University. How he wrangled that I'll never know.

He was a bearded God though. If only he had more drive he'd make a killer salesman. I think his charm emanated from his lackadaisical nature and to motivate him would be equivalent to killing his charm.

We all piled into a new glass structure. There were water features that I couldn't describe even with the aid of a gardening magazine, Chinese looking girls thrashing away furiously at violins and dolled up models dressed as air stewardesses (the porn fantasy version not the Ryanair lot) handing out drinks.

"Hat's off to you again Royce." I said taking a glass of free whatever.

"Yeah, sweet bro." Ranieer chipped in.

"Sometimes it's good to be me." He said smiling widely.

"Let's run the circuit." I suggested.

Running the circuit was simple. We each set off in different directions looking for the essentials and making mental notes of where they were so when we were busy schmoozing we didn't look stupid as we needed another bite, the toilet or more likely another round of whatever free booze was knocking about. We also took the opportunity to scope out all the women in the room.

Rule one: Availability.

If they are unavailable they could be the roughest dog or the hottest model you had ever seen but you were just wasting your time. It was a complex art though. Married didn't mean unavailable and vice-versa. Many a bored wife would shimmy off to the toilets while their husbands were lauding it up with their colleagues.

There were really no more rules than that. Obviously you'd aim high but at the end of the day you have to think about your batting average before you think about the trophy cabinet.

"How'd you do?" Royce asked when we finally all met back at the water features.

"Golden." I replied. "Spotted two bars, the toilets, the meat station and at least three bored wives."

“Did you see the personal *ass*-istants table?” Royce asked cheekily referring to the table of extremely well groomed tall and thin twenty something women huddled around a table sharing an olive while checking their blackberry’s.

“I did but give them up for dead. They are either fucking their bosses, they want to be or would do for a promotion.”

“You ain’t Kilimanjaro.” Ranieer added.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Royce asked perplexed.

“They are climbers bro and you ain’t a mountain.” Classic Ranieer.

Cathy was coming by tomorrow but I could catch me some strange tonight then McDonald’s her tomorrow on my way to meet Cathy at the station. Cathy wasn’t her real name it was Kasia, like Cash- ah but she preferred to be called Cathy. It annoyed me but not enough to actually raise the issue in anything but a polite, ‘hey you have a name, you don’t need to make one up’ kind of way.

After a little bollocks about how amazing the architecture was I finally hooked me a fine catch for the night and once the boys had theirs we moved onto our private party.

“Wanna go to an exclusive club?” I’d ask.

“Sure. What’s it called?” They’d always ask.

“It doesn’t have a name.” That sounded cool.

“How did you hear about it?” They’d ask.

“I know the bouncer.” I’d reply.

“Oh.” They’d swoon. “No waiting in line then.”

“Nah.” I’d reply putting my arm around her. “I know the DJ too so I can get him to play your favourite song.”

You’re so impressive.

Ok. That would be me thinking that most of the time but when we arrived back at the flat and I opened up youtube some of them laughed, others left. That was disappointing. The ones who didn’t leave got a free breakfast at the McDonalds around the corner from the super club.

Not so much a gentlemanly move but more of a get you the fuck out of my flat thing. Sometimes after a double shift I’d be hungry and quite frankly I thought the egg and sausage McMuffin to be the greatest sandwich ever invented.

Everyone was a winner. Well by everyone I mean me.

It worked well though and you shouldn’t change a winning formula.

## Chapter 2

So after McDonald's-ing Kara or Clara or whatever her name was I headed to the train station and bought a big bottle of water and paid for my copy of The Times in the honesty box.

I always wondered if it really worked, if people stole out right or maybe dropped in small change when paying for more expensive items. I imagined that I'd do that but every time I paid the right amount. I was never really sure why I did but I did.

She strode through the rolling barriers and her big smile lifted my gloomy hangover. When she smiled it took up all the bottom half of her face and her nose seemed to disappear as only her white teeth and blue eyes remained.

She was carrying flowers. That probably should have been the other way around but I never saw the point on spending money on something that died so quickly.

I liked cacti.

You could get some pretty ones and if you put them in your garden the cats wouldn't dig them up and dogs wouldn't piss on them. I had read that in the desert they create some kind of drug in their centre, why not in Leeds?

I didn't have any though. Even they were too much responsibility for me.

"Hi." She said as we kissed cheeks.

"Hi." I said taking a swig of water as if that would hide the stench of hung over morning breath. "Can I take that?" I said motioning to her bag.

"Take it where?" She said rehashing an old joke that we shared nearly every week. I had said it to her once and now she liked to repeat it. I thought it was witty at first but now it was tired and I felt it reflected poorly on me.

"Come on." I said swinging my arm around her. "I need another shower."

"You sure do." She screwed up her nose and opened her mouth pretending to gag.

It probably shouldn't have aroused me but it did.

Everything did.

Hell, every time I looked at her big mouth and full lips I felt a funny tingle. It made walking through a packed train station a much more self conscious experience than normal.

We got home and I peeled off my clothes and jumped in the shower. When I got out Cathy had slipped into my bed and was watching the PowerPuff Girls. She loved anything with CGI or animation.

She had told me that she learnt English from watching the Cartoon Network but I don't know if I believed that.

“You should wash sheets.” She said kicking out one of her long legs.

“These sheets.” I corrected. “Or your sheets.”

“Ok.” She said.

Did it matter?

Not really.

I dropped my towel and got back to work. Thank God for the renewing powers of the McMuffin and vanilla shake.

We didn't really have any plans for the weekend but we did like to go to the park and watch the dogs and dog owners. We made up back stories for the other people in the park. I liked playing that game and she liked me playing it too. We sat there not getting cold on a mild Saturday.

“Oh.” I said remembering I should tell her about our invitation for the following weekend and Minkins probable job offer. “I have booked us a little trip for next weekend, you're free aren't you?”

God damn am smooth.

“Yes.” She snapped back. She didn't move. Didn't think about the offer. Didn't even ask about where, why or who was paying for it. She just lay wither her

back resting on my chest, legs up, spread out on the bench watching the dogs walk by.

“Actually my boss invited us.” Still nothing. What would she say if it was a swinger’s party. “I think am going to get a promotion.”

Now she spun around to look at me. “Great.” She said and as quickly as she had spun around she had eased back into the groove that she’d been working into my chest.

“Yeah, I think so.” I really did.

Well it seems innocuous but that was the beginning of the end.

On our way back to the flat we stopped for fish and chips. She couldn’t get over the fact that I hated fish, all seafood in fact, except for cod from the chippy. I drowned mine in vinegar and added a little salt, by contrast she hated vinegar and poured the salt on until every chip was thickly covered in white.

We ate and walked not saying anything but I could see the cogs turning behind her blue eyes. Cathy wasn’t very talkative about her feelings or thoughts, even though she talked endlessly about crap it rarely was about what she thought or felt.

She didn’t like a dress, actress or hairstyle but when she told me about people she worked with I could never decipher if they were her favourite colleague or a

nemesis. I joked that she had a work husband because a guy called David Kipling was always lurking about in her anecdotes.

I joked because from what I gleaned from her, she saw him as a helpful asexual lump. I am sure he saw things quite differently. I had my work wives though and a little flirting went along way. It was easier to dine with secretaries than other sales staff as well. I got so bored of sales talk.

I was good at my job but I was not my job.

“I could move with you.” She offered.

“Move with me where?” I said surprised.

“Where ever your promotion is.”

“What about your job?” I said deflecting.

“I don’t need a job.”

Not I’ll find another job.

I don’t need a job. Had she won the lottery?

“We can start our family.”

And that was the end of the end, well the end of whatever we were and I knew I had to finish it. Well first we’d have some goodbye sex. Should I have told her that it was goodbye sex? Probably.

I didn't though and selfishly wanting my Sunday to be uncontaminated by a break-up I did it after the sex.

I know.

Am an asshole, or at least I used to be. You can make up your own mind but I don't mind being an asshole, it can be extremely useful.

A few things were thrown, tears were shed and then she left cursing me only to return a few minutes later to ask if I'd accompany her to a wedding later in the month. I refused and she cursed me again and finally left for good.

As I slouched down onto the couch Royce couldn't keep his laughter in anymore and it burst out of him in a loud cackle.

"Good fookin riddens my son." He said.

"What are we watching?" Ranieer said coming in with a burger. "Where is Cath?"

"She is gone." I replied.

"For good." Royce added swiftly.

He wolfed down his burger and grinned at me with mustard staining his teeth.

"Are we going out to play then?"

I shook my head and flipped through the channels until I found a Red Dwarf re-run, smegging what I needed to recover my day.

I thought I'd made the right move. Hell I wasn't ready for kids and I certainly didn't want a fully grown dependant weighing me down and siphoning my earnings. No, it was the right move.

Well until I talked to Minkins PA on Monday morning.

"I have booked you into the Courtly Lodge." She said. "I didn't know your girlfriends name so I just booked you in under Mr and Mrs. Williamson."

How fucking insane would that shit have been.

"It'll just be me." I replied.

"It can't be." She reeled back in mock horror. At least I hope it was mock horror. What did she care about my romantic involvements anyway?

"Why?"

"You need to take your Polish girlfriend." She said very seriously. "It is very important. You will thank me later." She said handing me an itinerary.

I certainly didn't see the need.

Maybe it was a swinger's thing.

I spent the rest of the day musing on how far I'd go for a promotion. Would I do a three way with the Minkins? If there was tequila, probably yeah. Would I do

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