

# **Jon Hersey – Industrial Spy**

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# **Jon Hersey - Industrial Spy**

## **Preface**

2005 was the record-setting year for category five hurricanes: - Emily, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. 2005 hurricane records included the highest number of major hurricanes to hit the United States: - Dennis, Katrina, Rita, and Wilma. The record setting 28th storm Zeta ended the 2005 season on January 6, 2006 when downgraded to a tropical depression. The next day it dissipated southeast of Bermuda.

Tropical storm Zeta began December 29, 2005 and forecasted to dissipate in a few days. Like the record setting, unpredictable 2005-hurricane season, Zeta reached Tropical Storm status. Zeta did not reach land. There were no recorded deaths, or damage. Zeta received little attention for its growth to Tropical Storm status. Zeta's limited recognition came from its record-setting statistics.

The Atlantic Rowing Race delayed until a late-November start because of the unusual hurricane season. Most rowing crews ran into unfavorable racing conditions after completing about a third of the race. During the early January re-start several crews crossed through the southern edge of Tropical Storm Zeta.

## A Good Day!

Jon needed a spoon, a bowl, and maybe a chisel. The ice cream was frozen and hard like the tundra. He got a bowl from the cabinet right of the sink, a spoon from the top drawer under the bowl cabinet, and an ice cream scoop from the next drawer down.

There they were - two dried spaghetti noodles with a little sauce. They had taken the shape of the seldom-used kitchen accessories they were laying on. Jon carefully picked them from the accessories. As he held them up, their profile reminded him of the mountains he drew as a kid - two-dimensional. How those two noodles got in that drawer was three-dimensional.

Jon thought back to that evening, it was just four months ago.

Alissa had enjoyed teasing Jon that her family's secret sauce had more people attempting to "steal" the recipe than there were Italian restaurants ... in Italy. On special occasions like their three-month anniversary, 25th date night, Jon's birthday, etc., she would spend the four hours needed to chop, stir, spice, boil, simmer, and taste.

It was his favorite pasta sauce. It was passed down to Alissa, through four generations. She enjoyed teasing him about "knowing something he would never know." When she made her great-great-grandmother's recipe, at the right time, she would LET Jon boil the pasta.

Jon started the whole mess when he leaned over Alissa as if he were spying to see how the sauce was made.

In his best imitation of Colonel Klink, Jon said, "We have ways of making you talk!"

That was when the feisty Alissa defended herself with a spoon of heirloom pasta sauce. Jon tossed some raw pasta at Alissa. He actually threw it hoping to miss her, but she "ducked" right into its path. He started laughing at their version of the Keystone Cops. "Feisty" started laughing and reloading the spoon. Splat! It hit Jon mid-forehead then dripped down his face. Jon grabbed the raw pasta and took a defensive position across the kitchen island. The heirloom sauce and raw spaghetti collected on every surface until the ammunition was gone.

Out of ammo, they slid to the floor laughing at their mess and the outrageously great time they had just had. While they leaned against each other, Alissa fell asleep. She was exhausted. The four hours of preparation, the food fight, and the chemo treatments drained her frail failing body. He carried her upstairs so she could rest. Then he returned to clean up their skirmish. He giggled for three hours as he cleaned-up the battlefield.

Now staring at these two hardened noodles, Jon smiled.

## **Another Good Day ... Almost**

Jon Hersey left the meeting knowing his boss' objectives were satisfied - the final price was under budget, the contract was extended an extra year, and a long-term relationship maintained.

He knew his boss, Paul Tyler, for seven years - the last three and a half years as an employee of Biz Planners LLC. Jon was in his third year of college, and recently engaged to Alissa, when he met Paul the first time. Paul called every two to three months after that meeting to keep-in-touch with Jon. When Jon became an employee, Paul called every two to three DAYS.

Paul had started Biz Planners LLC with 'inherited' family money. Jon thought it strange that Paul changed the subject, or placed a call, when asked about the benevolent family member.

Jon met Paul Tyler and Suzie Anne Carpenter-Tyler at a wedding reception. Suzie and Alissa had attended the same high school in San Diego. Suzie was from the right-side-of-the-tracks with money, privilege, social parties, new cars, and many friends. Alissa was from the same side, but much closer to the tracks - two working parents, car and house payments, Alissa had to borrow dad's pick up, and she had a few close friends.

Suzie and Alissa talked as if they were childhood friends. Jon and Paul struggled to keep a conversation going for more than a few minutes until Jon asked Paul about his consulting business. Paul began a lengthy explanation on why he started a business analysis company instead of a consulting business. Jon watched the clock behind Paul for those lengthy 12 minutes.

Jon glanced toward Alissa to see her happily engaged in conversation with Suzie. He decided she was enjoying the evening, and he was going to ensure she spent as much time as she wanted with Suzie.

Jon thought, "This was what a real man does - keep the dull boring guy busy while the gals chit chatted."

Jon hesitated, then asked, "What has been your most interesting consulting, I mean, business analysis project?"

Paul's interest in their conversation perked up, "My third customer had a desperate need for two CNC controlled lathes. He had been to nearly every bank, but could not qualify for a loan because his personal debt was too high. His wife had a couple of surgeries to fix a heart valve. The customer was about to cancel our agreement simply to reduce his costs. I talked him into waiting while I looked for a couple used lathes and found financing. The search for the "right" used lathes was more involved than I expected, but I found two in Maryland. The seller needed the cash in two weeks. Finding the money was even harder. I tried secondary sources, capital equipment

services, and the Small Business Administration. It looked like the deal was going to fail. I was tying flies for a fishing trip, when out of nowhere the solution hit me. I would arrange a private loan with Suzie's uncle, and he would own the lathes, until my customer could pay for them."

Jon thought for a few seconds then replied, "Why not write the loan yourself and make some profit on the interest? Even below prime would be better than no payment for your efforts."

Paul was silent for 10 to 15 seconds. Jon thought he had said something wrong; or, maybe embarrassed Paul and he was holding his tongue or was preparing to teach Jon a lesson.

Jon said, "Sorry, if I said the wrong thing."

Paul replied, "Not at all. I like your suggestion. How would you like to talk about a job?"

Jon surprised, said, "I have another three months to finish my Business degree, then I have been accepted into the Masters program. Long term, I think finishing my Masters of Business Administration will be the right thing to do."

Paul handed his business card to Jon, "Call me when you are done - let's talk. I like the way you think."

Paul continued selling, "Biz Planners partners with its customers. We provide third party analysis for small businesses on a retainer, partial ownership, or payment plans. You would have a lot of freedom over your schedule, and your analytical team. We are growing, which means many opportunities. We offer above-average pay with generous bonus plans."

Jon answered, "I will call you when I complete my MBA."

Jon and Alissa mingled alone for thirty minutes before they ran into each other.

Alissa said, "Thanks for keeping Paul busy. Suzie and I did not have the same circle of friends, but it was fun to see someone from high school. Dana, the bride, was also in our class. Dana and I won three music awards together. Dana and Suzie were close friends."

Jon replied, "Paul offered me a job when I finish my MBA."

Alissa smiled, and then teased, "You are so lucky to have me around. You would not have met Paul without me."

Jon smiled as he thought of that day from six years ago. It was a significant day. Jon met Paul. Actually, Jon impressed Paul. Alissa enjoyed her time with Suzie. Alissa and Jon had a good time - always a good time with Alissa.

Jon's thoughts returned to today. He felt good about closing the renewed and improved agreement. Jon decided a celebratory local brew was the reward du jour - followed by a run through the Gastonia suburb of Charlotte. Running was cherished private time for thinking, planning, and problem solving; and, time to try out those new "accelerating spring" running shoes.

Jon was a private man by nature, and necessity. Jon's view of the world required him to suffer through Alissa's death on his own. When he suffered enough the 'universe' would release him from his vows to Alissa. Furthermore, he was afraid he might lose control and bore someone to death about life, or lack of, without Alissa. He had thought many times that their marriage would be like nesting Osprey - mates for life. He was ironically alone in the crowded pub.

The Thor's Ale was smooth and flavorful. His comfort level tested, as more people crowded into the bar. To avoid the attention given to guzzlers, Jon had deliberately paced his beer while the crowd closed in. Jon looked at his mug and thought the remaining twelve ounces translated into maybe another twelve to eighteen minutes. Jon thought the crowd was growing too fast. He left the bar with about 8 ounces left in the mug.

The new shoes were like running on a cloud. After ten minutes, usually Jon's mind began the logical progressions that separated critical thoughts from nonsense. However, the next assignment was in the town where his soul-mate lost her 426-day battle with pancreatic cancer - 94 days ago. Jon hoped he would not need to start-over, again. There had been some progress in the separating-of-thoughts process the past six months since Jon and Alissa found out the chemo regimen was not working.

The short two months of travel, theatre, art, and holding hands were the time of their lives. Alissa's request to rest a few days turned into 28 days of home movies, laughing at photographs, cooking experiments, and one food fight.

Room service, hot shower, red wine mini bottle, and six hours of channel surfing did little to calm his mind. Two hours of sleep in the past two days brought to an abrupt end by his alarm clock and a wake-up call a minute later. Three hours later the airplane approached the Tulsa International Airport.

As scheduled, Jon was in Tulsa on a Friday. His public job and his private job took place in the same city for the first time since he started the second job 79 days ago.

As he looked out the airplane's window, Jon's thoughts drifted to his first meeting with Daryl.

## **DENVER TO DALLAS**

Jon waited for a flight to Dallas in a concourse coffee bar across from his gate. He wanted something new, fresh, and exciting to provide some relief from the agony of Alissa's death; it was always on his mind.

A man dressed in business casual khakis, Polo shirt, and sport coat approached him then asked if he could use the other table chair. Jon thought he meant to move the chair, but the man sat down. Jon looked around and determined the chair was the only available seat.

Daryl extended his hand, "Thanks for letting me sit. My name is Daryl Alexander."

Jon shook Daryl's hand and replied, "Jon Hersey."

Daryl asked, "Where are you going?"

Jon offered, "Dallas. I work for Biz Planners LLC."

Daryl offered, "I work for a private consulting group."

They talk for about 25 minutes. Daryl's pleasant nature and enthusiasm made the conversation easy. They exchanged stories, and a few laughs until Daryl's zone "one" was called to board.

Jon thoroughly enjoyed the conversation.

Seventeen minutes later, the last zone announced. Jon collected his carry-on, presented the boarding pass, and walked down the jet way. He entered the passenger compartment.

Daryl was in first class. He made an effort to catch Jon's attention and said, "See you in Dallas."

Near the end of the 92-minute flight, Daryl strolled back to the cheap seats - row 31 seat E.

Daryl asked, "If you are not in a hurry to get to the job-site, can I buy you a beer at the Dallas airport? I have a long layover and would like the company."

Jon answered, "Sure. I would like that."

Jon arrived at the top of the jet way and noticed Daryl on his cell phone.

Jon heard only Daryl's portion of the conversation, "Yes. I know. It seems quick. (Pause) Just do the check please. (Pause) It is time to take this project off hold. (Pause) It is going to work out. (Pause) I know, just do the check, gotta go, bye."

In three seconds, Daryl ended the call, stowed the phone, touched Jon's shoulder, and then pointed the way to the pub.

They talk for three beers: - college days, sports, headlines, cars, bow hunting, back packing, but not family, or business.

Daryl checked his watch then said, "Thank you for an enjoyable layover. I need to go."

Jon was surprised by the speed of Daryl's departure. Daryl reached for his computer bag, and then shook Jon's hand. He walked off through the concourse. He was gone in ten seconds. Jon again realized how "normal" he felt. Walking toward the baggage claim, Jon thought he saw Daryl boarding another plane.

## **DALLAS TO FIRST CLASS**

After five days of work in Dallas, Jon approached the gate and saw his new friend Daryl Alexander sitting in the waiting area. Daryl had his phone in his lap, and a thin cord dangled from his right ear.

Jon heard Daryl's half of the conversation, "The check was good? (Pause) Good! (Pause) Please stop harassing me about the time; it is going to be fine. (Pause) Then I will terminate the - agreement. (Longer pause) Gotta go; bye."

Again, Jon was surprised by the speed at which Daryl ended the call, and packed the phone. Daryl looked up from the motionless shoes in front of him, recognized the angel pin on the computer bag, and smiled when his eyes met Jon's. They shook hands, and Daryl offered to buy another round at the pub across the concourse.

Daryl asked, "How did your business analysis go this week?"

Jon replied, "Very well. I renewed a contract with an old client."

Daryl said, "I am recruiting my company's newest - consultant."

Jon asked, "How is that going?"

Daryl replied, "Really well at the moment"

Jon thought a lot about their meeting four days earlier and Daryl's positive energy. He wanted a change that might help him set aside the pain of losing Alissa and focus on



the great life they had together. The current job was OK. A new friend might be the answer.

Jon asked, "What's the name of your employer again?"

Daryl answered, "Zeta Consulting Group. We are named after the Tropical Storm Zeta. It was the record setting 28th storm, which few remember, in the extended 2005-hurricane season. It never hit land, did not alter any ship lanes, it did not disrupt commerce in its extended under-the-radar existence. It was, however, a surprise; it defied the experts; it was a rare occurrence; it grew from a tropical depression to a tropical storm then like a ghost it disappeared."

Anticipating Jon's next logical question, Daryl needed to control the direction of the conversation.

Daryl continued, "A little know fact - much like Zeta - the Coast Guard rescued a ship's crew which had three members on the terror watch list. The ship was not sea worthy to begin with and the swells almost sank it. Peter Stone, the founder of Zeta, was in the delayed Atlantic Rowing Race when Zeta was reaching its full strength. He described the adventure as once-in-a-lifetime-experience that he hoped he never had again."

Jon teased, "So. You work for a company that no one's ever heard of, that causes little disruption, and tracks rescued terrorists?!"

Daryl chuckled, then responded, "Two out of three - not bad for a bow hunting, almost Navy Seal, back-packer from atmosphere deprived Denver."

Had Jon told Daryl about his Navy Seal mis-adventure? Maybe? There had been a lot of "bromance" during their short time together.

Over the hum of 20+ pub conversations, Jon barely heard the announcement that flight 348 to Denver was now boarding zone one.

Daryl said, "That's us; you can board with me, they won't say anything."

Jon presented his boarding pass. The pass reader began its alert cycle and printed out a new seat assignment slip. Jon was moved to first class, and it was not a bulkhead seat - double bonus! His boss must be happy with the last negotiation. Jon was shaken from his moment of joy by a pat on the back from Daryl.

Daryl said, "You must not fly first class often."

Jon replied, "This is only the second time my company has anted-up for a first-class ticket. First time I landed my first 250 million deal."

Daryl said, "About that ... "

Jon did not hear the rest as he was wondering why Paul had upgraded his seating on a short flight.

## **DALLAS TO DENVER**

Jon had the window seat and Daryl the aisle seat. Both grabbed a couple file folders before placing their computer bags in the overhead. Daryl's folders had the Zeta Consulting Group logo ... Jon had no logo on his mass-produced plain manila folders. Jon was almost certain he saw the letters JH on the bottom folder before Daryl placed them in the seat pocket. The flight attendant returned with their drinks.

Jon's sixth sense was tingling - several happenstance meetings, and beers with a new friend. Jon's mind went to full strength and separated the critical from the nonsense for the first time in several months. First, what are the chances Paul upgraded him to first class? Then second, he was assigned the seat next to Daryl? Moreover, the folder with JH was suspicious. Did Daryl say he arranged the upgrade as they were boarding?

At 10,000 feet, the flight attendant announced the pilot had approved the personal use of electronic devices. The entertainment-portion-of-the-flight was Daryl's queue - he knew most of the passengers would be in their own e-cocoon.

Daryl started the conversation, "Jon; It was not pure coincidence that we met in Denver and Dallas. I arranged our first couple of meetings to get to know you. I also arranged this first class upgrade to see if you might be interested in a new job. We, Zeta, have been interested in you for 28 months and put your 'recruiting' on hold so you could focus on Alissa."

Jon's focus was razor sharp when he asked, "How do you know about Alissa? Why is Zeta interested in me?"

Daryl calmly responded, "I have two files for you to review - one about Zeta. It's about who we are, what we do and why. The other folder explains - why you. If after you read these two files, you are not interested, you can decline and never hear from Zeta again."

Jon still instinctively protecting Alissa, "How do you know about Alissa?"

Daryl said in a calm soothing voice, "Jon, it's all in the files. Please trust me. The files explain everything."

## **DALLAS TO DENVER ... with Zeta**

Daryl handed Jon the first folder labeled 'Zeta Mission'. Jon paused for a moment, then took the folder.

Jon thought, "This is a very unusual recruiting / job interview. Something must be out of the ordinary with this Zeta group!"

Jon opened the folder to find a single sheet of paper.

### **Zeta Consulting Group**

**Mission:** Through the use of clandestine methods, we shall bring about the disruption of American companies involved in illegal anti-American activities. Government, legal organizations, and targeted companies shall not know of our existence and activities. Our goal is to keep the goods, and services delivered to the government without anyone knowing of our existence.

**Scope:** Targeted companies shall be located on American soil. Companies / Individuals suspected of, and / or involved, in anti-American activities shall be targeted. Innocent employees will keep their jobs. Targeted companies will not be closed for investigations, and the goods and services provided to the government will not be interrupted.

#### **Responsibilities:**

1. Board shall be responsible for approving and recruiting personnel.
2. Board shall maintain a priority list of target and suspect companies.
3. Board shall authorize personnel assigned to analyze target companies.
4. Board shall keep all records and activities confidential.
5. Personnel shall have final Disruption plans approved by the board.
6. Personnel shall not recruit or solicit outside personnel or services in the execution of Disruption plans.
7. Personnel shall keep all records and activities confidential.
8. Personnel shall conduct Disruptions in complete secrecy outside of Zeta Consulting.

**Funding:** Funding shall be by anonymous donations only.

*Peter Stone 1-26-06*

Jon closed Zeta folder one, then stared out the window for - forever. His mind was racing. An organization like this really existed? Why were they interested in him? What does Disruption mean? Who was on the board of an organization like this? How did they know about Alissa? How would someone make anonymous donations to a ghost company? Where have I heard of Peter Stone? Who? Where? Why? When?

Daryl's experience told him to let the recruit deliberate at the recruit's pace.

Jon did not hear the pilot announce the upcoming turbulence, but was shaken from his thoughts by the violent jostling of the plane. Jon turned to Daryl.

Before he could ask his first question, Daryl interjected, "I will be available as long as you need me and will answer ALL your questions - in Denver. Let us trade folders. This folder will explain a few things."

Jon opened the second folder. Like the first folder, it contained one page.

## Zeta Consulting Group

Recruit: Jon Hersey (no middle name or initial)  
4341 North Aspen Drive  
Empire, CO 78432

Age: 29 Single (see below) - no children

Current employer: Biz Planners LLC  
6932 Orchard Plaza  
Boca Raton, FL 23758

Employer Notes: - Biz Planners analyzes growing companies looking for opportunities to improve client's net income. Biz Planners offers funding at below prime and consulting services at negotiated contract rates. Revenue sources are: - fee for service, - percentage of future client revenues or gross margins, - percentage of ownership, - interest on loans.

Recruit Job Function: On-site analysis of potential clients. Reviews: - potential client's status, potential for product growth, operating and accounting systems, and stability plus quality of management. Analysis takes about three weeks to compile. Contract presentation and negotiations take about three days. Analyst manages a team of three, but is the only client contact. Note: Jon is highly successful.

Experience and other conclusions:

1. Nearly completed Navy Seal training. Suspended training on final day after call from spouse regarding cancer (first diagnosis). Jon was granted seven-day leave, then family hardship emergency leave. (NOTE: - Jon and Alissa are without other immediate family members to assist with treatment demands. Jon's parents died in a tour bus accident. Younger brother, Matthew, (age 11) killed by hit and run driver while running from a bully. Alissa is an only child. Her parents died from asphyxiation - gas vent covered during a routine roof repair).
2. Attended University of Colorado. Graduated with Bachelors of Science in Business within three years. Acquired MBA 18 months later. Top 3% of class.

3. Has demonstrated a unique ability to find relationships between odd business facts and what appears as unrelated data. This makes him highly successful at finding the changes that improve Biz Planner clients. This talent will be extremely useful in analyzing target companies.
4. He has progressed up the Biz Planners organization rapidly. Four promotions since Naval discharge.
5. Appeared to take the job with Biz Planners because the flexible scheduling gave him the time to take Alissa to appointments and treatment sessions.
6. Peter Stone met Jon during a presentation at Arc Systems. Very impressed with the ability to assemble new data and determine its importance to the proposal.
7. Jon quickly responds to new problems in a thoughtful professional manner. He has a quick mind.
8. Recruiting terminated - temporarily - Jon focused on Alissa's cancer treatment (second diagnosis).

Conclusion: Jon's business abilities would be extremely useful to ZCG. Seal training has given him the ability to handle covert operations. Recommendation is recruit.

File: 12-3567RR JH

Jon was overwhelmed, and impressed, with the accuracy of data and by the implications of two single sheets of paper. The discomfort of the Zeta 'page' was soothed, to a degree, by the ego feeding 'JH page'. Yet, he was surprisingly uneasy.

Jon's mind went into the automatic analytical mode again. He was collecting facts, data, and information to be prioritized: - clandestine, illegal anti-American companies, Disruption, analysis, Seal training, unique skills, and so on. Jon's mind also began reviewing the possibilities of what was not in those two pages: - Disruption not destruction, clandestine (without weapons) and analysis, illegal anti-American not just anti-American, and so on.

The flight attendant announced the entertainment portion of the flight was over. Jon turned to Daryl, returned the JH file, and gave Daryl a single nod - the kind of single cautious nod you gave to a new acquaintance.

Daryl had felt good about the recruiting process up to now - felt a small twinge, and for the first time had doubts about Jon's recruiting.

## **DENVER TO EMPIRE**

Jon and Daryl exited the plane together, but walked down the concourse separately. Jon wanted some personal time and space. Daryl wanted to avoid being recorded on the airport video system with Jon.

The long walk down the concourse plus the wait for their luggage gave Jon some valuable thinking time. At the transportation curb, Jon boarded the Rocky Mountain Rental Car's courtesy mini-bus - followed by Daryl. They sat on opposite sides of the bus.

Terri, the courtesy bus driver, stopped in front of Jon's Jeep Grand Cherokee.

She gave Jon a big smile and said, "Good to have you back in Colorado."

Jon grabbed his bags from the rack, gave Terri a five-dollar tip, exited the bus, then began the where-did-I-put-my-keys ritual.

He heard Terri laughing as the bus door closed. Terri drove Daryl and four other passengers to the rental counter.

The keys were found in the pocket next to the small Angel Pin flap of his computer bag. Jon stared at the pin for a few seconds, smiled, unlocked the Jeep, started the engine, then stowed his bags in the back. He looked into the rental counter area and saw Daryl was last in line. The Jeep was ready, but Jon was not. He toyed with the idea of leaving Daryl at the rental counter. As always, when his mind went toward a little devious, the voice of 'his' Angel reminded him to 'be good'. Jon drove the Jeep under the canopy then entered to pay for his regular parking spot. Terri sat at the desk where parking fees were paid.

Terri teased, "Found your keys again, I see."

Jon replied, "Yes. I've got to start storing them in the same place."

Terri offered, "Leave them with us next time."

Jon answered, "I might do that next week, but I will miss your laughter when you drop me off."

Terri thought, "Me too!"

Terri continued, "See you Monday morning."

Daryl was one away from the rental counter. Jon walked up to Daryl.

Jon initiated the conversation, "We sat by each other on the plane? Didn't you say you were going to Empire?"

Daryl responded, "Yes; I am visiting a friend in Empire this weekend."

Jon teased, "Are you sure your friend is home?"

Daryl answered, "He is driving home and should be there about the time I find Empire."

Jon said, "I have to be back to the airport early Monday morning, and can bring you back. Empire is a small town, so I can drop you off at your friend's house, and I wouldn't mind the company on the long drive home, and back."

Daryl was thankful he would not need to find Jon's house in the dark.

Daryl said, "That works for me."

Jon continued, "Let's get your bags; I am parked by the front door."

Daryl replied, "Really appreciate this, thanks."

They left the rental lot in silence.

It was a few miles before Daryl decided to break the silence, "If you need groceries, stop by a store, so I can buy us a few meals. I am a pretty good cook."

Jon replied, "Not to worry. The retired couple down the road watches our place and stocks the fridge on Thursdays. So you can cook? What kind of food?"

Daryl answered, "Italian and Greek."

Jon asked, "Alexander - your heritage - English?"

Daryl answered, "English, yes. My mother was a Home Ec teacher in a town full of Italian, Greek, and Slavic miners."

Jon decided to get to the point of this weekend job interview. He said, "Tell me about you, this Peter Stone guy, and Zeta."

Daryl did not waste any time and began his Zeta story: - He and Peter were longtime friends. He was Zeta's second employee. He was a recruiter, mostly. He had a strong belief in Peter's cause. He completed some Disruption assignments. First was a water purification company where the owner was sending profits to his brother in the North Korean government. His favorite Disruption was the raft manufacturer selling bulletproof rafts to Somalia - still used his bullet-proof raft for fishing.

Jon was sure Daryl was vague on purpose. He would get the details before he made any decisions.

Daryl continued talking, "Peter is from a politically active family. In his younger days, there were frequent visits by presidential and state candidates vacationing, partying, and fund raising at Stone Farm.

Peter is the shy type and prefers to be in the background. The candidates would bring their election teams. Peter met those that made others successful. He watched intently and learned their skills. Through them, he discovered the power of trust, research, networking, and secrets. All talents he has honed to a razor's edge. There are rumors that Peter has yet to reveal a single secret. His relationships in Washington DC are solid, deep, and old.

He can get difficult if he thinks his relationships are in jeopardy; he will start tinkering with your projects. He is addicted to helping others; and, he can micro-manage an activity to death. In contrast, he is not afraid to bend the rules to the breaking point. I think he will rely on his influence and family money to bail him out if he needs it. Peter hates publicity because it limits the possible solutions for problem solving. When Peter was six to fourteen years old he spent his summers with his great uncle. The uncle left him over \$20M dollars, which Peter used to buy four small businesses. Those four businesses turned into the bank that funded the purchase of 13 more businesses over five years. The seventeen total businesses are the de-facto anonymous sources of Zeta funding. And he is Zeta's only true board member."

Jon added, "I remember Peter Stone. Biz Planners went into Arc Systems hoping to land a new customer, but never heard from them again. Paul felt slighted, because I had offered a fresh solution to their problem."

Daryl added, "Peter was completely impressed with you and your solution. He wanted you at Zeta. He wanted to be sure that you are not an employee, or a supplier. He did not want to put you in a conflicting position. He has been monitoring your situation for quite a while."

Jon felt like they were having beers in the Dallas concourse - Daryl the storyteller was completely at ease, paused for effect, added an occasional embellishment, used the right words, and sequenced the main points for a climatic ending. Jon did not enjoy listening to anyone this much, except for Alissa.

Jon thought, "I really miss you, Alissa."

Daryl talked about Zeta from outside the rental-car lot to the gravel road leading to Jon's home. Five minutes later they pulled into the driveway of Jon and Alissa Hersey according to the sign next to the mailbox. Jon pushed three buttons on the overhead console: - the garage opened; the path between the garage and house was lit, - and the lights in the mud-room came on.

Each man gathered his bags. Walking along the path, Jon separated his keys so the house key was ready. When the door was unlocked, the garage door closed. .

The guest room was down the hallway from the mud-room and next to the guest bath. Jon does the host thing: - light switches, towels, closet, hangers, directions to kitchen, and alarm clock.



Jon said, "Meet you in the kitchen in about 15 minutes."

Ten minutes passed before the fine aroma of good food drifted through the house. Daryl made himself at home - pots, spices, plates, carving chicken, and stir frying vegetables.

Daryl brings two plates over to the table.

Jon asked, "Are you married?"

Both noticed the long pause before Daryl took a deep breath.

Daryl explained, "Peter is the only one who knows the whole story. I told him when we started Zeta, so there would not be any secrets between us. Cecilia Sanchez was, and still is, the girl of my dreams.

I was in my fourth year in the Army Cryptology Department. I met Cecilia at a small diner just off base. She was in a hurry to catch a train. I had just sat at the last table. I offered her the table and planned to wait for another one. She accepted my offer, but only if I stayed and ate with her. We walked out with the owner at midnight.

We started dating, and every date was the same - time flew by, and we enjoyed each other's company. On the six-month anniversary, I proposed. She said yes. Three months later, we had a traditional Spanish wedding - many friends, big dinner, dancing, and it ended well into the night.

Three months pass before I was sent to the field to upgrade hardware and software at a remote listening post. Sorry, I cannot tell you where, except that it was a warm, sunny, vacation kind of spot. The rebels were quiet for nearly a year. We really did not have a honeymoon, So we bought Cecilia a commercial airline ticket. I flew military transport and met her. For two days, I got a day pass, left the base, and met Cecilia. We were having a great time.

On the third day, an Army Special Forces team escorted me into the jungle to complete my assignment. We arrived at the listening post and informed that if I completed the job, I would never see Cecilia again. The Special Forces leader convinced me they would find Cecilia, as soon as we returned to base. They looked for two weeks before they were re-assigned.

A sealed envelope handed to me as I boarded the transport back to the U.S. Basically, it said Cecilia was alive, but I would never see her again, because I had not followed their instructions.

I completed my crypto tour in four months. The next day I enlisted for Special Forces training. My crypto experience sealed the deal. I was a model soldier for two years. When it was over, I returned to find Cecilia.

I used all my Special Forces training and developed a few new skills. Two weeks in the jungle, I must have been close. A teenage girl approached me, she handed me another sealed envelope. It was a letter from Cecilia, which said she was blackmailed into marriage to keep her capture from killing me. In addition, if I continued to look for her, she would be sent to jail for life. I could not put her in harm's way. Occasionally, I hear rumors of her. I still love her.

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