

FUCK YOU MONEY

By Barbara Bellman

SETTING:

The conference room of a Silicon Valley venture capitalist. JACKSON - the VC - is conducting an interview with ALEXANDER, an entrepreneur of a new start-up, a website called NoFap.com, designed to help men addicted to internet porn.

CHARACTERS:

***Alexander Rhodes**, age 26, is a thin and wiry budding entrepreneur, who doesn't look like he's seen much of the outdoors or the inside of a gym.

***Jackson** is a 40-something VC who is drawn to the concept more for its novelty than for its investment value.

AT RISE:

(ALEXANDER is very nervous and unconsciously fidgets with his pen by stroking it up and down, repeatedly throughout the interview.)

JACKSON

How many users?

ALEXANDER

Over a million unique users a month. NoFap's up and coming.

JACKSON

That's a lot.

ALEXANDER

Yeah. Who knew, you know? I mean, I started this as a way to deal with my own addiction, and it just grew. It's like a surprise boner, you know? And it's about to explode into something, I don't know, big. But to scale it, you know, to handle this load, I've got to have a wad of money.

JACKSON

How've you financed it up to now?

ALEXANDER

I self-financed with the money I made at Google. And my Dad, mostly.

JACKSON

You developed this while working at Google?

ALEXANDER

On my own time. So I own the IP.

JACKSON

You sure?

ALEXANDER

Positive. I was just a contractor, doing data analysis. Worked on my own. Besides, when I left Google, I parted company with clean hands. They're not in my shorts, and I'm not in theirs. We're good. I've got the severance docs to prove it.

JACKSON

Well, that was smart of you.

ALEXANDER

Google didn't want it, anyway. I asked, but this isn't in their wheelhouse.

JACKSON

How'd you get referred to us?

ALEXANDER

I got a list of VC's known for taking risks on some unusual ventures, and I'm just working my way down.

JACKSON

And where are we on your list?

ALEXANDER

Um, three. Third time's the charm, huh?

JACKSON

What happened to one and two?

ALEXANDER

One is interested, but wants to think about it. Two didn't feel it was a good fit but liked the possibilities. They're concerned it won't scale. But based on the number, I know it will. This is a bigger problem than I ever thought. Did you know that one out of three men log onto Internet porn at least twice a day? That's average.

JACKSON

Porn pays.

ALEXANDER

Yeah, but for a lot of us – me in particular – the price was too high. It fucked up my life – and every relationship I tried to have. It’s a sickness, man. And a lot of us have it.

JACKSON

And you have the solution?

ALEXANDER

I have A solution. And it seems to be working, for a lot of my users. According to the data, masturbation is way down domestically. We don’t have the international numbers yet but once it catches on, it’ll explode. Smart money says you wanna ride that bullet.

JACKSON

How is this data validated?

ALEXANDER

Well, currently it’s self-reported, but ad revenue is way up for porn-blocking software and online programs that promote the idea of steering clear of porn and masturbation. And we match men with “accountability partners”, like AA – kind of a hands on approach to “hands off” if you catch my drift.

(As ALEXANDER talks, he continues to stroke the pen up and down – distracting to JACKSON – but ALEXANDER remains oblivious to this tic.)

JACKSON

People subscribe to this?

ALEXANDER

Natch.

JACKSON

And where is your base of operations?

ALEXANDER

Don’t laugh, but my Dad bought this abandoned church. I can build a staff of fifty with no problem. Ironic, isn’t it? I mean, I’m not religious or anything, but here I am in this space – it still has a confessional and everything. My booth is the web. That’s been my coming out party.

JACKSON

How much are you asking for?

ALEXANDER

First round - \$5 million. That'll allow me to build the servers and hire the staff to respond to the users. You have no idea how needy they can be. It's not just stopping, it learning how to start again with a real relationship. A live girl!

JACKSON

That seems time intensive. And resource intensive if you're relying on actual person to person interactions.

ALEXANDER

That's just a part of it. We have tutorials, webinars, books and software. That's on the user level. Then there's the ad revenue from porn related products – and alternatives to all things porn. We also want to add a dating site for recovered porn addicts, to help them re-enter the world of relationships in a healthier way.

JACKSON

That's novel!

ALEXANDER

Yeah, and that's going to shoot off like a rocket. I know, believe me. I can tell you there's a steep learning curve in trying to just learn how to talk to a woman, let alone get her to fuck you. I mean, make love. It's a bitch, man, you know? I mean, girls don't just drop to their knees to suck you off like on the web. You gotta get to know them first. Talk to them. Who knew? I never got what to say to a girl – it's a whole new world in the flesh. Weird, huh? Lots of ups and downs in the courtship department – no pun intended.

(JACKSON gets up to pour coffee, notices he's got an erection, and is embarrassed. He covers it with his cup and sits back down. Hands shaking, he spills coffee on the table.)

JACKSON

Coffee?

ALEXANDER

Nah. I'm good. (Pause) Don't worry, man. It happens. Just talking about this makes me hard too. But now that I'm self-aware, I have healthier ways to deal with it. In the past, I'd excuse myself, go to the john, log onto porn if I was in a WiFi zone, whack off and be back in, say, five minutes - max. Now, I channel that energy into thinking about how I'm going to make money on this. Fuck You Money, you know? Turn lemons into lemonade, that sort of shit. And there's a lot of lemons, man. A fuck-wad of lemons. (Pause) So, I'm asking if you've got the balls to back me. It's gonna take some shwing to pull this off, but the payload promises to be big, man. Big. Like all over her tits, man.

(JACKSON reaches over and stops ALEXANDER from stroking the pen.)

JACKSON

Stop!

ALEXANDER

What?

JACKSON

That.

ALEXANDER

Oh. (Pause) Unconscious, man. Habit's hard to break. (Pause) Which is why this is such a goldmine, dude.

(JACKSON keeps his hand over ALEXANDER'S)

ALEXANDER

So, you want in?

JACKSON

I want in.