the bad apples in this company and that's exactly what I'm gonna do. That's what I'm doing on the graveyard shift, Jeff. I'm not just sitting here getting old before my time …

JEFF. I'm not getting old before my time — Oh good for you!

WILLIAM. … I'm working my way through the ranks …

WILLIAM. … and by the time I'm through I'm gonna clean this place up and move up into management, and if they don't want to move me up the way that I deserve, I'm gonna go off on my own and set myself up to compete with these bums, because I know I could do a better job than them with my eyes closed.

JEFF. OK, good for you. *I* was in the Goddamn *Navy* for three years …

WILLIAM. All right, don't lose your temper …

JEFF. No, man, why you gotta come in here and be ragging on me all the time?

WILLIAM. Oh, oh, you can dish it out but you can't take it.

JEFF. I can take it, but there's a *limit*. There's a *level*. I been busting my ass all year tryin' to get my shit together.

WILLIAM. All right —

JEFF. — You of all people should be *encouraging* me. I just had a little bad luck, that's all. Anybody could have a little bad luck.

WILLIAM. Didn't you tell me you got kicked out of the Navy for being on guard duty smoking marijuana?

JEFF. Yeah, but it was bad luck that I got *caught*. The rest of my friends are still sailin' the ocean blue gettin' stoned out of their minds. I get high *one time* and suddenly I'm out on my ass?

WILLIAM. All I'm sayin' is if you hadn't been smoking that stuff in the first place you wouldn't have to be relying on any kind of luck — good, bad, or otherwise. Personally, I believe in giving people a second chance. And I like you. I don't know why I like you, but I do. I regard you as a project. I think you have a lot of potential.

JEFF. No you don't.

WILLIAM. Yes I do, Jeff. Because every human being walking around on this earth has potential, Jeff, including you.

JEFF. Oh Jesus Christ.

WILLIAM. Go ahead and laugh. You probably have more potential

than the rest of these guys put together.

(Pause.)

JEFF. You think?

WILLIAM. Yes I do. If you really applied yourself…? Who knows what you might be good at down the road? You can't measure that potential. It's never been measured.

JEFF. Well, thanks, William. I take that as encouragement.

WILLIAM. That's how it's meant. But you can't just —

JEFF. I always thought I had a lot of potential. I guess I just lost my way a little bit.

WILLIAM. That happens to a lot of people, Jeff. But you can't just —

JEFF. I know. And I'm not blaming anybody else — seriously. But I really had a rough time the last couple of years. *(William starts to speak —)* I'm not sayin' it's all bad luck. I know you gotta take some responsibility for yourself —

[redacted]

JEFF. [redacted]. But do you know from the time I came home from the Navy my old man wouldn't even talk to me? I only went into the Navy to get him off my back in the first place. Then I get kicked out —

[redacted]

JEFF. Because he was ashamed of me, that's why. 'Cause he was this big Navy guy, 'cause he saved all these guys' lives on his ship when he was in Korea. Big deal.

[redacted]

JEFF. Yeah. It's actually a really amazing story. Ship hits an old mine at two o'clock in the morning, twenty-three guys trapped below decks. Everybody jumps overboard except my old man. He finds a blowtorch, goes below decks in the pitch dark, the ship is goin' like *this, (Makes a steep incline with his hand.)* these guys are screamin' for their lives, there's water comin' up to his elbows … Two minutes before the ship goes down he cuts open the bulkhead, everybody gets out. Twenty-three guys he saved, not one of 'em drowned.

[redacted]

JEFF. [redacted] I know it is impressive, because my whole *life* I gotta hear this fuckin' story. Several times a year as you can probably imagine, over and over and over again. Every year when I was a kid

they had this big get-together in New Jersey; they send flowers, cards, whiskey, cigars, all these old guys and their wives and kids and grandkids who they never woulda had all cryin' and kissin' my old man and makin' speeches about what a great guy he is. And I'm like, Yeah, that's because you only gotta see the guy *once a year,* for like three and a half hours at a time. Any of you morons tried living with this guy for two days you'd throw him in the fucking ocean and drown him yourself. Asshole. Maybe if *my* ship woulda blown up I woulda got a better start in life. Anyway, so naturally when I got kicked out the guy won't even talk to me. And I don't mean for a few days. I mean he never talked to me again. He don't want my *mother* talking to me, I got nowhere to live, I bum around like a … bum. I gotta move in with Marty, which is totally humiliating. My old man dies, thank God —

WILLIAM. All right …

JEFF. — I can't get a job, I try to work up a little stake playing poker, I turn around I got the Goddamn loan sharks comin' after me, I gotta borrow five thousand dollars from my brother to keep me from getting my legs broken. I date this girl, it turns out she used to be a prostitute. So OK, nobody's perfect. Then it turns out she's *still* a prostitute, only now she only does it "on the side," whatever the hell *that* means. I break up with her, I'm scared I'm gonna get AIDS, I can't meet anybody —

WILLIAM. Yeah, I get the idea.

JEFF. And *then,* William, *then,* I come to you, William, and with your beautiful generosity, you give me this job, you take a little interest in me, and look at me now: I'm payin' my own rent to Marty, buyin' my own groceries. I'm lookin' around for my own place, which'll be the first time I had my own home in six years. My own little living room where I can sit and watch TV; a nice little kitchen I can cook my own meals in … Invite a girl over for dinner and be the *only one there with her.* And I'm a healthy happy member of the work-force for nine months straight come Friday. And I'll tell you something else, man, my spirit is OK. I don't have a broken spirit. I just want to stick it out here for at least a year, so I can really get that under my belt — just for my own — just psychologically.

WILLIAM. No, I think that's smart —

JEFF. Yeah, that's what I told myself. At least one year, right? Day

shift, night shift, I don't care. And William, I owe it all to you. So see? You really helped somebody. Now that might just be your good character, but it's my good luck.

WILLIAM. Glad to be of service, Jeff. You're doin' all right.

JEFF. Thanks, man. I gotta tell you, I feel pretty good.

WILLIAM. All right, man. I should get going on my rounds. *(William doesn't move.)*

JEFF. Hey, have you seen that little cop — what's that big shot cop's name?

WILLIAM. Who, Bill?

JEFF. Yeah, Bill. Have you seen his new partner?

WILLIAM. Yes.

JEFF. Can I share something with you? Sometimes I have this fantasy I'm being tied up and interrogated by all these lady cops — Like they have me handcuffed to a chair, and I'm naked, and they're walking around in nothing but their hats and gun belts …

WILLIAM. *(Not interested.)* You know what, Jeff?

JEFF. … and the way they get me to talk is by taking turns — you know, doing stuff to me — like, sexually arousing me, see, but only up to a certain point, till I can't take it anymore and I have to tell 'em what they want to know, so I can get some relief.

(Pause.)

WILLIAM. What in the world makes you think I'd be interested in that, man?

JEFF. I don't know. You think that little cop would be interested? Maybe she'd find it titillating. You know: sexy.

WILLIAM. I have no idea. But if I were you I'd just forget about the whole thing because she'll just end up making you feel small.

JEFF. Why would you say that?

WILLIAM. Because whatever you do, you're just an imitation cop and she's a real cop. And if you get involved with some lady policewoman it is a sure bet you're gonna end up feeling outranked and outclassed.

JEFF. I always feel that way. My last girlfriend was a toll booth collector, and *she* intimidated the shit out of me. At least if I was going out with a cop, I'd feel, you know, somewhat safe.

WILLIAM. Go ahead and laugh, man. You know what's gonna happen to you?