Neverland Industries
Scene 5 Excerpt

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SCENE 5

Michael puts on a baseball cap and tries to adjust it. It doesn't feel good. He puts it in his pocket. One of THE HELP drops a bag of clubs next to Bill as the others place some outdoor furniture around. Bill walks downstage with the clubs. He takes the hat out of Michael's pocket and puts it on Michael's head roughly. Adjusts it for aesthetic value. He hands Michael a putter.

BILL
I've never seen a worse golf-game in my life. So we're going to play some simpler games to help you improve.

MICHAEL
I didn't even notice this compound had a putting green.

BILL
Putting Green. Tennis court. Indoor lap pool. Did you see the Petting Zoo?
(Michael looks at him for a moment as if he believes it, and then catches himself and shakes his head)
Ah. Ha ha. It's not that far-gone. Okay! This one is like Bacci ball. Just putt one, and see how close together you can get the other two, but the edge of the green is the limit, anything over doesn't count.

MICHAEL
So I just hit it to the edge of the green?

BILL
Yes.

MICHAEL
Why?

BILL
Because it's a game. I like games, haven't you noticed?

MICHAEL
And the point of this one is...

BILL
Practice. Your achilles heel can't be golf, Michael, come on now. I told you I'd make you a survivor.

MICHAEL
I thought you were into games of chance.

BILL
All games are games of chance.

He putts an invisible ball downstage.

BILL
Your turn.

MICHAEL
Don’t think you can dock my confidence just by ridiculing my golf game.

BILL
Is that what you think I’m doing?

MICHAEL
Well first you fill my head full of paranoid lies and then you give me an opportunity to present to investors and now you’re teaching me putting games? Would you like to blindfold me and spin me around in a couple circles too?

BILL
Paranoid lies? I haven’t lied to you, dear. Such mean words. Calling me a liar and I’m just trying to teach you some usable skills. I’d be careful. I’m not retired until Friday.

MICHAEL
Listen, I’m not a fool. I *know* the Neverland Project is a solid project. You’re just trying to test my metal because of some *dude* thing. And I know you just don’t give a fuck about the Neverland Project because you’re retiring and can’t believe anything that *doesn’t* involve you could be viable or *possible*...that’s what I think.
(A nervous sideways glance)
Sorry...

BILL
(Amused)
Yeah.
(Beat)
Putt the fucking ball.

MICHAEL
(Putting)
Shit...

BILL
Really? No eye hand coordination?

MICHAEL
I don’t do the sports thing.

BILL
You’ve certainly been *skiing* quite a bit with Charlie...

Bill makes a non-chalant sniffing motion with one nostril. Michael looks away. Scuffs the green.

MICHAEL
This week is costing me a lot of money with that, you know. I don’t *actually do* cocaine, Bill. I mean I *do* it, but I just had it because...well the party-

BILL
Some people get bored of coke, you don’t have to wear it like a merit badge. It’s called growing up. But I’d be careful of Charlie.

MICHAEL
Tell me about it.

BILL
It’s worse than you think. His kids are in college. His ex-wife is independent and sympathetic, and he just got the biggest, most career sealing promotion of his life...these are angel years. It’s his second adolescence. He could derail. He’ll start dressing in animal furs and shooting down beautiful women.

He makes a motion of someone shooting someone out of the sky.

MICHAEL
I thought being in your 20’s was having a second adolescence.

BILL
No. This is a new century. Your 20’s are your *first* adolescence.

MICHAEL
Why should I be worried?

BILL
Because *you* have the drugs.

MICHAEL
That’s never been cause for worry before. In fact, it’s made me a lot of friends.

BILL
That’s because your white and live in New York City. And now you’re...annoying me. New game!

He holds up an invisible ball. He places it on the ground.

BILL
Don’t touch that.

He goes to his golf bag and starts to take out a flag and a few golf tees.

BILL
Bud Martino taught me this one.

MICHAEL
And who the hell are these people? Am I supposed to know them?

Bill drops his stuff and launches at Michael. He puts him in a loose headlock.

MICHAEL
Ah!

BILL
These people are *professional golfers*! What sport did Robert Parish play??

MICHAEL
(Struggling, barely, basically dealing)
Who? What? Golf??

Bill gives Michael a noogie.

BILL
The answer’s Basketball you fuckin narc. Cal Ripken!?

MICHAEL
Baseball! Baseball!

Bill releases him. Picks up his belongings.

BILL
That was an easy one.

MICHAEL
Jesus! Do you just want to wrestle, Bill? Cuz we can wrestle. Is that what you wanna fucking do? Because I’ve *met*
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
men who just want to wrestle, but they're usually more up front about it.

BILL
I don't know, Michael. I just have this overwhelming urge to tackle you into the ground and dirty you up.

MICHAEL
Yeah...I've heard that before too.

BILL
(Beat)
What's this? Michael...I really want to just *bully* you. That's all. But has Jane got you thinking Charlie and I want to have sex with you now? Has she? Or is it just me she accuses.

MICHAEL
(Beat)
No. What?
(Beat)
What? How did you know Jane said that?

BILL
It makes sense. She can't discern power dynamics from play dynamics because she's used to unconcerned tech people with simple hobbies and useful skills...you don't want her advice.

He finishes setting up the tee's. Michael watches him.

MICHAEL
Well then. Either way. I don't care. I really don't. Because I'm...I'm loving this. I love being here. And for once in my life I feel like I'm doing the work I want to be doing in a place that matters, and where...well frankly, where I'll get noticed. And I don't have to be hush-hush about that.

BILL
The work you *want* to be doing?

MICHAEL
Yeah. This is fun for me.

BILL
Well...good for you.

MICHAEL
(Beat)
Bill...can I be honest...please?

BILL
(Raised eyebrows. Crossed arms.)
Permission to speak freely.

MICHAEL
Teasing aside. Pressure aside. All things aside...

BILL
...Yes?

MICHAEL
Thank you.
(Beat)
Really.

BILL
(Something smells bad)
Don’t do that.

MICHAEL
I’m really thankful for this opportunity.

BILL
The opportunity hasn’t occurred.

MICHAEL
Yes it has. Well even if it hasn’t...I know this isn’t the way the world works, okay? I’m not naive. You don’t just get pushed to the top of the food chain on a whim. You really helped me out with this, just by getting me closer to these people that are here this weekend. I...

He pauses, scratches his head, getting ahead of himself.

BILL
Putt.

Michael putts. It appears to go in nicely.

BILL
(Noting the putt with surprise)
Hm.

MICHAEL
It’s like this. I grew up in middle-class suburbia with middle-class parents with middle-class values, and this one time when I was 16 my uncle gave me a car, one year used, with a freakin spoiler on the back and- just *gave* it to me. And my parents couldn’t decide what to do with it, because they didn’t want me to think that this was the way the world worked, that things didn’t just appear like that, gifts,
(MORE)

MICHAEL (cont'd)
opportunities. So the car just sat in my driveway all winter and all spring until it just...well I needed a car...and that was that. Still drove that same car until CCF&Williams hired me and I bought a- the point is...I understand that good things don't just *happen* even though...they do...
(beat)
And even though you've been abusing me for your own enjoyment this week, I know that what you're doing for me is very *important*...for the both of us.

BILL
(Pause)
So you think you understand what motivates me? Eh?

MICHAEL
That's not what I'm saying I-

BILL
That was a really impressive speech you gave to the Rio people.

MICHAEL
Well, thank you, but-

BILL
But I think it's shit.

MICHAEL
Okay. Come on. I didn't mean to-

BILL
NEW GAME, I said. This one's really easy.

He holds up two balls.

BILL
A man has two balls. For symmetry. And for backup. In this game, you put one ball on the ground and strike it gently. The second ball, you place on the ground, and when you strike it, your aim is to hit the first ball. Super easy. For children and *learners*.

He hands Michael the balls. Michael sets them down. He hits one.

MICHAEL
All I said was thank you. I get it.

BILL
Do you? The future is a very very frightening place, you know that? The world is changing *very* fast, and we don't know what's going to happen. Future shock...is what that's called. And you'll feel it worse than I ever will...

(Beat)
I’m going to give you to Stacy. She’s a survivor. She’ll show you the way.

MICHAEL
What?

BILL
I invited her to come teach you how to swing better. And while we do that, we’re going to make *you* seem like *her* idea.

MICHAEL
What do you mean?

Bill takes him by the shoulder.

BILL
You think I’m the big bad guy? Well you can’t even begin to penetrate the evil of Stacy Sherman. She is barely a person of this earth. She’s a crocodile. She’s a spirit of evil older than clay and I hear her in my brain like a tick...tick...tick...and she’s going to tell you to do some awful awful things, but I advise you, Michael, *do those things*.

A spotlight suddenly appears upstage. Stacy Sherman. Dressed as a female golfer would, save for a pair of GIANT yellow sunglasses that cover her face. One of THE HELP gives her a club and fixes her up.

STACY
(Sing-songy)
Oh *William*!

BILL
She comes from the *sea*, and she just loves me, Michael, she loves the taste of me. Don’t let her get a bite. You’ll regret it always.

MICHAEL
Does Stacy...know that I know? About the...well what you told me the other night. If...it’s true. Does she know?

BILL
(Contemplating thoughtfully)
Does Stacy know...

MICHAEL
Does she?

BILL
Does she?
(Takes him by his shirt collar)
Don’t. Thank. Me.

Stacy walks down to join them.

STACY
How’s the pupil doing?

BILL
Ready to move on I think.

STACY
I hope you’re picking up on more than golf this week, Michael. To begin with - never drive Jacob Hicks to LaGuardia and then leave him there without a flight. This is far more of a headache than it should be, so I’m glad to finally be out on the green.

MICHAEL
Is Jacob not a man who likes to wait?

STACY
Are you a man who likes to wait?

MICHAEL
Hah...touche’...I just don’t know much about this guy...and everyone seems really bent out of shape about him coming, anything I should be worried about?

BILL
I’m the one who should be bent out of shape. He’s drawing all the attention away from my retirement party.

STACY
Oh, as if you *care*. Michael, Jacob is just high maintenance. He’s a very...traditional man. Appointments are sacred contracts to someone of his...*breed*. But we’ll get to that. Come here. Alright. I saw your problem right away on the course today. The thing to remember is that your driver is your *barrage*. It’s your first *attack*. Which is why it must be powerful, to cover *ground*.

She hoists her club, swings. It’s elegant.

STACY
Demonstration over. Your turn.

She points at the ground in front of her. Michael comes over and stands. She smiles at him.

STACY
Now turn around.

He does.

STACY
Club in both hands now...

Stacy comes up behind him and holds his hands over the club. She spoons him. He raises his eyebrows. She rests her cheek on his back for a moment and closes her eyes. She sighs happily. There is a beat. Bill watches this, amused. Michael looks at him.

MICHAEL
So...

STACY
Sh. Sh. Meditate with me now. You smell like cotton.
(Eyes closed, still seemingly hugging him.)
Feet further apart.
(Moving him)
Now, keeping the head at a horizontal angle to the ground, we swing back slightly, keeping the head in front of our hands, and now we hinge.
(She backs away from him now. She adjusts his haunches.)
Bend slightly.
(He does)

STACY
Now pull all the way back and *swing*.

Michael swings. It’s decent. He turns back to Stacy. She smiles at him.

MICHAEL
Well?

STACY
Jacob Hicks is our *power swing.* See what I did right there? Practical metaphors. See what I did?

BILL
Emphasis on *swing*.

MICHAEL
So he has the...money...or...?

BILL
Money? Who needs money? Jacob has the *Rolodex.*

STACY
Truth. Here’s the history lesson. Jacob, Bill, and I used to be associates at Chefelu and Cirincioni long before it became CCF&Williams. We went seperate ways, but Jacob was the one who came up with the *Unicorp* model, the umbrella organization we all belong to, and from *Unicorp* comes the Neverland Project. So, even though this is a joint venture between many different firms under the *Unicorp* umbrella, Jacob is still the "yes" man. He’ll get final say about all the investors and see to it that the deal goes through.

MICHAEL
But...I thought the deal had gone through, and now we’re just waiting for-

BILL
Oh it’s gone through.

STACY
But now it just has to fit the standards of Jacob Hicks.

BILL
The *vision* of Jacob Hicks.

MICHAEL
Or else...

STACY
He could...change his mind.
(Beat)
But we’ll make sure that doesn’t happen.

BILL
Stacy, I really think you should head the Jacob Hicks preparation for the young lad, don’t you think?

STACY
Not up to the challenge, Bill?

BILL
I haven’t brought my earplugs.