

Missing Profits?
Corporate Intent Series
Hallett German
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Table of Contents

Introduction

Chapter 1: Free Money

Chapter 2: DCRI

Chapter 3: Capturing the Quarry.

Chapter 4: Sample from Corporate Intent #1: Missing Employees.

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Introduction

Some corporations are real and some exist only in the mind.

This is a story about the latter, presented both as a fantasy and a mystery.

Nothing more than that.

HG

[For some time, it was on my "To Do" list to write a free story for the Corporate Intent Series. But I could not think of a topic that could be comfortably covered in a few pages. Then one day, I was listening to a radio broadcast about a store in the United Kingdom that gave away free clothes. This turned on a light and led to this story about a "bank" giving away free money. Note that "Missing Profits" takes place before the first book in the Corporate Intent Series. Enjoy!]

Chapter 1: Free Money

The whole thing would have never happened if Judy and Diana didn't have a real craving for off-world coffee one cold Saturday morning. They had both heard about an amazing, small place that was out of the way in Atkins Corners. Once fueled up with caffeine, they would be able to take on the nearly full day of intense work planned ahead. The number of activities had dramatically increased at their workplace and there was a short-term need to work an extra day to keep up.

So the two women had started on their way to quench their undeniable thirst. But the effort to find this place became unexpectedly difficult. They were hampered by a non-working electronic directional system and a lack of maps. It also didn't help that the buildings lacked numbering and the street signs were gone or faded. Other visitors had nicknamed the area "Confusion Corners." After being lost twice and getting contradictory directions, the women had finally achieved their goal.

But the sight that greeted them was not expected. They were told that the coffee house was so popular that it was always busy, both day and night. And there were always supposed to be long lines of patient customers waiting for their liquid salvation. Judy started talking to the barista.

"You have a hard place to find."

"Sorry about that Miss. We are only hard to find the first time you visit. If you take the right highway exit, we are very easy to get to. When you are ready to go home, simply go to that next light, take two lefts and stay on the road for exactly ten miles. You will see a huge sign saying "BOBBY LEES." Take a left at the sign and you will see the highway entrance. Always, always take the Boaz Road exit and never take the Jeremy Street one. Sure, it is ten more highway miles but it will save you lots of aggravation. Once off the Boaz Street exit, take a right and a left and then you will see the BOBBY LEES sign". You can't miss that sign day or night. We hope you come back again."

"Thanks for that. I was going to ask you where everyone went since we heard this place is always busy."

"Just a few minutes ago, we were jammed as usual when a large commercial vehicle came by with loud speakers and some annoying music. They kept shouting the following again and again: "GET YOUR FREE MONEY NOW! UP TO 100,000 DOLLARS! JUST GIVE US YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND IT IS INSTANTLY YOURS. AND WE HAVE FREE DAYCARE TOO WHILE YOU ARE WAITING. FOLLOW ME TO FINANCIAL FREEDOM! NO LONG WAITS FOR ANYONE! THERE'S PLENTY OF CASH FOR EVERYONE!"

"Suddenly the place was transformed and instantly everyone became smitten with free money fever. They all raced towards their cars and took off."

"Free money? That sounds worth checking out. Do you have any idea where they went?"

"That's easy. They threw some flyers out the window of their vehicle. I just finished cleaning up the mess since no one else should be coming here today. The word must have gotten out and the road has been constantly filled with people this morning flying by going there. You can find them all by visiting the old Gilbert manufacturing plant. That's just one mile straight down the road. The plant is a big ugly red building. Simply follow the trail of fallen flyers and the flood of cars. Here is one of the flyers if that helps."

"Thanks. We love great coffee. Especially your Dione Dream. Those Saturn Moons always have the best beans."

"I see that you know your coffees quite well. But if you like that one, next time please try our Olberian Wonder. It is the same idea but a richer more but rewarding taste. Here, have a sample."

After sipping, Diana and Judy had thought they had died and gone to refreshment heaven. They were coming back to this place again. There was no doubt about that.

They thanked the barista and went down the road to the Gilbert plant. It was pure bedlam. People were driving from all over for the promise of instant free money. Fortunately, the plant had plenty of parking. As they walked towards the entrance, they ran into thousands of people that were just beaming with joy or crying with happiness. This was no doubt that after having just barely holding things financially together,

now these people had more money than they knew how to use. These people were well on the way of achieving desires and dreams of a lifetime. Each one of them also carried a huge bust of the Goddess Hera.

The two women entered the building. What had been a factory had been transformed into a makeshift bank. The room was filled of hundreds of teller windows. It also had a large inviting daycare center. No one had to wait more than ten minutes in line. Some serious planning and logistics had gone into this setup. And there were lots of funds available just to give away free money. It just doesn't make sense. They walked up to a window and there was a friendly young gentleman that greeted them.

"It's time for you to live your dreams. Welcome to Mansfield Financial Trust. How may I help you?"

Judy began to play a part. "Why hello there, Mr. Handsome. My name is Stacey Bell and with me is my sister Gracey Bell. We heard there was some free money to be had here."

The gentleman smiled and laughed. "Why yes we can give you free money. No loans here at Mansfield Financial Trust. We just need your name, address, the amount, and your signature. The minimum is \$1000 and the limit is \$100,000. How much shall it be?"

Stacey and Gracey smiled "Oh my. Oh my. That's a lot of money. Could we take a little now and come back for more?"

The gentlemen's tone changed. He began to pressure them. "We are only open today and about to close soon. What is your answer?"

Stacey grinned "Oh my. There is no need for you to be such a frowny boy. I don't see anyone behind us. We'll take \$5000."

The gentleman became more demanding "That seems so little and we still have lots to give away. Could you take at least another \$5000?"

Gracey countered "Well I don't know if we need that much to start our vehicle rental store. By the way, why is there so much money to give away anyway?"

The gentlemen turned white and started to hiss. "Mr. Stanton Mansfield is a generous man and wanted people to live their dreams. Now are you going to take another \$5000 or not?"

Stacey authoritatively said "No thanks. \$5000 is enough for us."

The gentleman muttered under his breath. "This is not good. I won't get my bonus." Then he publicly said "Well then, \$5000 for each of you. Please take a bust of Hera near the exhibit and place it in your house. This is part of your agreement in taking the money. And without waiting for a response, he dramatically slammed his teller window shut with a resounding bang.

The two ladies started to leave. But a large intimidating female guard blocked their way and said. "You MUST take a bust of Hera before you leave and place it in your house. Do not throw it out or you will have to return the money. Thank you."

They left and headed to the car. They put the busts in the car. Judy wrote Diana a note. "I bet the busts are bugged. Let's go to the "hospital" and check them out. I hope the video that we both took with our purse cameras is helpful."

The catch-up work would have to wait. DCRI was on the clock.

Chapter 2: DCRI

Before going further with this case, it would be helpful in understanding the makeup of the universe at the time and a little about DCRI.

Judy's and Diana's world was not always the friendliest. It had all started some time back when various medium-sized companies grew into large Consortiums. With the politicians focused elsewhere, the power vacuum was quickly filled by the Consortiums. They could pretty much do anything as long as they weren't caught. Their major opponent was a loose group of planets that were called the Cooperative. The Cooperative was more focused on commerce rather than power. However, the Cooperative had demonstrated that had no fear in taking on and swallowing up an occasional Consortium if it served their best interests. Both of these organizations were also kept in check by the nonaligned planets that acted both as watchdogs and judges for the galaxies.

Another check against the Consortiums was the "corporate bounty firms" or CBFs that was licensed to track improper corporate behavior. DCRI was one of the few CBFs that existed. The reason for this was the extraordinarily high licensing fees and stringent acceptance requirements. Also CBF behavior was watched carefully by a government agency -- The Bureau of Non-Official Corporate Inquiries (or BNOCI).

DCRI was formed by Judy's father Lee Duty after retiring a rich entrepreneur. He passionately wanted to combat the unfair Consortium practices such as the forced corporate separation from his parents. This happened because his parents failed to make loan payments. The result was years of unpleasant experiences being raised at the Loan Default Official Orphanage. Along the way, he made DCRI into a feared investigatory body. He actively supported a company's right to make a profit but had no tolerance for those companies where greed and harming their employees, customers and the universe were the only motives. Lee's wife unexpectedly died and he had the task of raising his daughter alone. He reared her the only way that he knew how -- by having her actively take part in DCRI activities. His real focus was to give his child, Judith Ann Duty the best education and appropriate knowledge to eventually run DCRI. Then one evening he passed away and Judy in early twenties became the sole overseer of DCRI's operations. She took it all on her shoulders and exceeded beyond everyone's expectations.

The stunning headquarters of DCRI was on the cliffs overlooking the Many Miles River. "The Castle" had fifteen meeting rooms on three floors.

Diana had started as a Junior Investigator straight out of college. At the time, Judy had a difficult case where she was looking for bright young talent that could think out of the box in difficult situations. She liked Diana but wasn't sure about her. Diana gave her a challenge -- try her out for two days and see if she could keep up. She more than passed the test by impressing Judy with her intelligence and thinking

on her feet. She saw some clues that some newer members of her team had missed. So Diana was hired and eventually was made the head of Research.

In addition to "the Castle", DCRI had a number of fully operational satellite offices in case they needed to work in secret. And then there was the crown jewel -- "The Hospital." Here DCRI staffed their wonder lab in a secure location. It could find clues analyzing any objects that other forensic labs may miss. Judy placed the Hera busts under the analysis machine and Diana gasped, "This is bad. Very bad." What they had discovered is the busts were indeed bugged --with microphones, cameras, motion, and emotion detectors. Judy sighed, "It was as I suspected. The Red and West Consortium are pulling their tricks on home planet. Fortunately, they can't get anything back from us here."

Judy continued, "The Red and the West Consortiums are among the worst of them. They will do anything that they can to oppress their inhabitants. The Consortiums will keep at it, till it becomes obviously far over the line. But once caught, they calm down and then bide their time again. So far they stayed away from Home Planet because it isn't their territory. But that wouldn't stop them making a profit, creating slaves that are heavily encouraged to emigrate, and create instability on the home planet. It is called the Tarini gambit after the man that created it some time back. "

"Here's how it works. You go into some area and destabilize it by flooding the market with free money. This reduces the number of people going to banks which in turn drives smaller banks out of business or forces them to sell off or merge. Then you do the same game with the middle-sized banks and after a couple mergers or sell offs, the result is that you own over half of the market. Then you sell the whole thing to a larger company at a great profit."

"Meantime those that take the free money suffer the most. As part of the conditions for taking the funds, they are given some object to monitor their activities. During the same time at the free daycare, the children are given a device to never take off which allows the devious business to spy on the parents. Someone gathers all this information either to blackmail the family or unknown to them, creates a situation that unexpectedly requires money. In either case, the former friendly bank finds the now financially stricken family. Then the bank makes an offer -- either they sign a long-term loan at a high interest rate that results in paying back triple the original amount or emigrate to a Red or West Consortium Planet of their choosing. Once there, the company continues to spy on them creating situations to force them and their children to borrow more. It's despicable what they do just to make a few dollars."

Diana asked "So Judy, how was this stopped in the past?"

Judy answered with fire in her eyes "They were caught in the act spying on people's activities and forcing loans or emigrations. We can do the same thing. We take one of the busts with us. We shield it from transmitting until we want it to. Let's quickly edit the purse films and review the flyer. And then meet with the authorities in the morning.

Chapter 3: Capturing the Quarry.

Diana and Judy worked late in the night to collate the evidence. The purse cameras showed the whole money exchange and the pressure to take the bust. It also showed the many cameras in the ceiling, the day

care attendants putting "pretty badges" on the children (no doubt containing a camera), and the collection of guards throughout the place. Everything at the bank was carefully planned.

The next morning, the female duo met with the planetary authorities and showed them the evidence. The police went to the manufacturing location visited by the DCRI ladies but it was deserted. Fortunately, the Gilbert plant had plenty of fingerprints to grab and artifacts to examine. The police also told authorities at other locations to be on the lookout for free money distribution points. This paid off handsomely with five distribution points being promptly closed down. But the free money scam leaders were still at large. What was even worse was they hadn't found the bank's large monitoring sites. So these sites were still gathering information on unsuspecting customers.

The planetary authorities had deputized Judy and Diana and authorized them to remove the shields on their Hera busts. They were to do this at previously closed free money distribution points. The information sent was tracked to three large information gathering points where mammoth computers were processing an unimaginable amount of data. Soon afterwards, one of the masterminds was soon captured. However two of the other leaders were still at large. Regardless, the free money organization was broken forever. Everyone in the world was on the outlook for this scam. And Judy and Diana were mentioned in the publicity of the arrest.

Judy added the logo of Mansfield Financial Trust to those "bagged" companies that hung on the Trophy Wall in the DCRI den during a brief company ceremony. Everyone at DCRI pitched in with extra hours during the week and soon the workload returned to normal.

It took a while for things to be set right. The smaller and medium banks were broken off if possible from the larger banks. Those forced to emigrate to a Red or West Consortium planets were given an option to return to home planet with their loans being paid off. All this paid for by the free money scam profits. There was still a lot left over. This was placed in a new company that offered low rate loans for those wanting to borrow up to \$50,000. Also, Judy and Diana were given 10 million dollars as a reward.

Judy took most of her reward money and poured it into DCRI since it was done on company time. She had allowed herself just one little self-indulgence. She ended up owning 25% of a certain coffee place in Confusion Corners. Her condition included free coffee for up to four of her friends and being immediately served whenever she visited, Right now, she was favoring the Neo-Italian roasts found in the Leybori asteroids.

Two weeks later, Diana took her share of the reward money and retired from DCRI. Instead of working, she became busy making and selling handmade pottery and lived a long and fulfilling life. But for Judy, there would be always the next unethical company to take down -- just as her Dad had successfully done before her.

Chapter 4: Sample from Corporate Intent #1: Missing Employees.

Both new employees experienced the strangeness and the intensity of Impenetrable Consulting (IC from the start. Both were picked up separately by a limousine but were unable to see the driver. The inside of the car was completely black except for a lone light. An overpowering voice started: “Welcome new employee to your first day at the greatest company in the world. Learn much, work hard, and don’t expect to have a personal life.” Then some tacky company theme about “making profits, fill our pockets” blasted until the theme stopped and the door opened. A light shining from somewhere pointed the way to a certain point in what seemed to be a large parking lot. Then it unexpectedly went out and the mysterious overpowering voice ordered: “Wait here.” Suddenly, they started to be lowered in some unseen lift into more darkness. Before they descended, they could see a barely lit corporate lobby. Finally, the lift stopped and they were on level ground again. The same powerful voice heard before commanded: “State your name” and suddenly each new employee in their own lit circle said their name. They had not been sensed or seen before then. Johnny quietly said “Thank you God” as a way to release stress. But the booming voice did not respond.

Shortly afterwards, the room was suffused with an overwhelming white light and some eerie attempt at Celtic-like music was heard. Everyone jumped at this new experience. Then a new voice spoke – one that was soothing and threatening at the same time.

“It’s Day 1 in your new lives. Welcome to Impenetrable Consulting. Day 1 is always full of potential. Everyone here is a good employee on Day 1. No one is fired on Day 1. From today on, you start producing or get thrown back into the street. If you leave our location early, good luck finding another job since there will be no proof that you worked here and there will be no references. False rumors might also be spread about you to hinder your job search. And we all know the market doesn’t like quitters.”

And the soothing voice transformed into a threatening one. The voice recited the following lines with a tone dripping full of aversion and arrogance:

Quitters after all are bad employees that can’t meet their goals.

Quitters are bad employees, who can’t generate their own share of revenue.

Quitters have only the street as their friend and spend the rest of their lives struggling to make a dollar.

Spontaneously, the rousing cry of “Good Employee Makes More Dollars. Good Employee...” was being screamed by the crowd at a feverish pitch. And then screaming became contagious and deafening. A rock band complete with fog machine came out of nowhere and started to scream:

Drive on New Employee

With the winds of success at your back

Looking only forward

Getting More and More

For My Company

Today.

This had all the wrappings of church service meets a cult group. Red flags with “Drive on New Employee” appeared out of nowhere. Red flags were going off in Johnny’s and Laura’s head. A small but steady voice in their head was crying out “Get out, get out NOW.” But both did not hesitate to stick around. There was a whole bunch of money at the end of the day and that was worth sticking around for.

The meeting went on for eleven more hours with few breaks. There were endless slides on sales, goals, and yes, on being a good employee. The next six days (going into Saturday) were the same thing. Non-stop their heads were filled with facts, techniques, and company information. On Sunday they were all sent home to study for a test about the whole experience. This was the first chance to eliminate the employees that couldn’t keep up. Only 40% were expected to pass. Both Laura and Johnny passed the test. They got two days off. It would be the last free time they would have for a long time.

The first real day of work came soon enough and they both learned the routine – arrive early, work late, don’t complain, limit your bathroom breaks, and keep contributing. The OR ELSE didn’t have to be said. Working weekends were encouraged. So there was no life to speak of which is why all employees were either very young or old. They all had to read the biography of the company executives – the Arcane brothers. It was a story of five egomaniacs. At the same time, they could feel the cameras and human eyes constantly on them. It was emotionally and physically draining and was a joy when they finally got home at 10 P.M. Then they both went to their drop points to leave information. (This was a mailbox outside an abandoned bank for Johnny and a newspaper vending box next to a closed laundry for Laura and each left their coded reports.)

Judy had those notes picked up at 1 A.M. the couriers (dressed as newspaper and postmen) came to the DCRI hidden entrance. She was excited but worried when she received the documents. This information had to be guarded like gold and forces outside and possibly inside her our company would stop at nothing to get it.

[DCRI has bagged one target. But the next investigation may be their toughest investigation yet! Don’t miss out on by reading further either Corporate Intent #1: Missing Employees? Or Corporate Intent #2: Missing Owner? To learn more about this and other writings from this author, please visit - <https://sites.google.com/site/hallettgermanfiction/>]