LOOSE LIPS

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Cast of Characters

Pete	Mid-30 near-do-well with designs of hitting it big in the commercial real estate market. He is nicely dressed but somewhat disheveled from too much drinking. His eagerness to be successful makes him vulnerable and somewhat naïve. He is social but has difficulty forming real friendships.
Lucas	Early 40s reserved with the appearance of seriousness. He plays close to the vest and communicates sparingly. He is cordial with a mysteriousness that makes his friendship compelling.
Brendan	Bartender, late 20s confident, trusted, unobtrusive but aware.

Setting

Wooden L-shaped bar.
Local watering hole on a quiet city street

Time

Early evening midweek

Run Time: ~ 10 minutes

At Rise: Pete is sitting at the bar in the far corner with a drink and four empty shot glasses in front of him. Lucas enters discreetly. Pete is initially unaware of Lucas's entrance. Lucas signals to Brendan who is working the bar. Brendan moves to speak privately with Lucas.

Brendan

Evening Mr. Marletto.

Lucas

(Lucas nods to Brendan)

Brendan. (Beat) Is he here?

Brendan

(Brendan tips his head toward the corner of the bar)

In the corner. Been here a couple of hours.

Lucas

Vicki?

Brendan

She was with him, just like you said.

Lucas

And, Did she tell him?

Brendan

'bout a half hour ago. She told him it was over then walked out. (Beat) She's a solid player boss.

Lucas

(Lucas ignores Brendan's comment)

How did he take it?

Brendan

Just like all the others, begged a little, then started with the double Scotches.

Lucas

Good. The plan is working.

Brendan

Always does, Mr. M.

Lucas

Thanks Brendan. You're a good soldier. Keep it up.

(Lucas discreetly hands Brendan some bills which he quickly stuffs into his pants pocket)

Brendan

Yes sir.

(Lucas moves to the center of the isle. Pete looks up and sees him approaching)

Pete

Lucas, over here!

Lucas

(Lucas makes his way over to the bar, grabs the stool next to Pete.)

I see you started without me.

Pete

Hey buddy, glad you could join me. How's it going?

Lucas

It's going. How about you?

Pete

Pretty good actually. I closed that deal you set up. (Laughs) Cash on delivery. Join me…

(Pete signals to the Bartender)

Hit me again, and one for my friend here, we're celebrating.

Lucas

Those buildings were worthless pieces of shit.

Pete

On the inside, yes. However, to the untrained eye, the exteriors looked like the Taj Mahal – and I don't mean Atlantic City! Let's say it took a little sleight of hand to get the bank to approve a loan without collateral, (Laughs) at least temporarily. (Beat) Besides, with that phony letter of credit, I got the buildings insured for a mint, they have nothing to lose.

Lucas

Interesting. They must really trust you. I mean, we only met – three, four weeks ago, and I can trust you, can't I Pete?

Pete

Yeah sure. I have that kind of face. Everybody I talk to says the same thing. "Pete, you got a trustworthy face."

Lucas

(Lucas eyes Pete suspiciously)

Everybody?

Pete

Well, you know people – prospects, investors, marks. (Smirks) These deals can get complex so they trust me to "explain" the investment. It's about the relationship.

Lucas

Speaking of which, how's it working out with *Vicki*?

Pete

(Pete squirms in his seat, looks away from Lucas and shoots his drink)

(Reluctantly) Uh, let's just say we're taking a break.

(Pete finished his drink and signal for another.)

I know she's your friend…and I appreciate the introduction. God knows she was a master of the mattress. Best sex I ever had…she did this think with her tongue…

(Lucas sits up straight and leans in towards Pete intimidating)

(Sheepishly) Sorry. Too much information, right?

(Lucas nods and relaxes a little and sits back)

Pete (continues)

She was getting too pushy. (Beat) You know, I'm still doing *me*. I don't need a backseat driver when it comes to business relationships…too much of her trying to tell me how to do my job.

Lucas

I get it; your business is your business.

Pete

Still, thanks for setting me up with her. (Beat) What a coincidence – I meet her in the coffee shop by my office… 'cause she can't find her purse… so I lend a couple of bucks – Then she shows up at the bar on the same day you invite me here…it was like fate or something.

Lucas

You know what they say – coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous.

Pete

It's hard to be anonymous with a babe like Vicki on your arm. I mean what a looker right? A beauty like her – made me look like the *richest guy* in the room. (Slight laugh)

Lucas

Speaking of which, now that the deal is done…

Pete

(Interrupts) Not to worry my friend, I didn't forget you. Hey, if I hadn't bumped into you outside the real estate office, I wouldn't have even know about this scheme –
Another coincidence!

Lucas

There's always room for another coincidence.

Pete

And another drink!
(To Bartender) Bartender, keep them coming.

Lucas

Not for me thanks. You sure you can handle *another* drink.

Pete

(Laughs) Hey, I gave up drugs by drinking. (Beat) Come on Luke, *as a rule*, I don't trust a guy who doesn't drink with me.

Lucas

Trust is hard to come by. If you keep to your word, you won't need any rules.

Pete

(Laughs) I get it, more action, less words. That's what Vicki said! She's a lot like you, you know that? Except for sex of course, she wasn't very chatty either…just asked me about business… while I'm trying to do my business, you know what I'm saying…(Laughs wildly) I shot my mouth off…

Lucas

(Interrupts) Why don't you put *my money* where your mouth is.

Pete

Sure thing. What's fair is fair. Ten grand when the deal closed, and the *big* payoff when the *ship comes in*…that *is* our agreement, right?

(Pete hands Lucas an envelope stuffed with cash. Lucas discreetly slips the envelope into his jacket pocket.)

Lucas

Good doing business with you.

Pete

How about another round?

Lucas

Brendan, set up another round for my friend with the trustworthy face.

Brendan

(Brendan refill the glasses and wipes down the bar)

Yes sir, Mr. Marletto

Pete

Geez, everybody here know you don't they?

Lucas

Not really. I just have that kind of face.

Brendan

(Brendan brings Pete another double, wink at Lucas)

Here you go partner, will there be anything else?

Pete

(Laughs) Just keep that bottle handy and the glasses clean.

(Brendan nods and wipes the inside of Pete's empty glasses, places the Scotch bottle on an antique hand mirror on the bar near Pete. Pete turns towards Lucas)

We *do* make good partners. You set them up and I knock them down. Cheers!

(Pete clink Lucas' empty glasses and shoots the drink. Pete signals for the Bartender to pour another)

So, any chance of other opportunities floating in the wind?

(Lucas doesn't respond and keeps drinking)

Where'd you find those guys anyway? I tell you, they weren't the most talkative bunch. I mean listen, as long as the money is green, who am I to judge? I'm just saying, usually I can read people, you know. But these guys…let just say played it close to the vest as they say. Didn't ask any questions about the buildings. All they wanted to know was about the insurance coverage. I offered to show them more or explain any of the details…

Lucas

(Interrupts) Maybe you should have said a little less.

(Pete laughs, puts his finger up to his lips and shushes Lucas)

Pete

Bartender!

(Lucas shoots a look at Brendan indicating Pete had reached his limit)

Lucas

I think you should close it down friend.

Brendan

I'm afraid I'm going to have to cut you off sir.

Pete

(Pete slurred speech is getting more pronounce, louder and obvious, he pushed Brendan away from his glass)

Nonsense! We're celebrating. Our team won today.

(Slaps Lucas on the breast pocket)

You know what I mean – ha

Lucas

(Lucas signals for Brendan to walk away)

You need to be more careful with that mouth.

Pete

(Pete gets annoyed, reaches over the bar to pick up the hand mirror from under the Scotch bottle, and contorts his face to look at his mouth)

(Agitated) What's the problem with my mouth? It an important part of this trustworthy face.

Lucas

Some people take exception to their business being shared…in public.

Pete

Like with Vicki.

Lucas

Yeah, like with Vicki.

Pete

(Angrily) Well, fuck Vicki. And fuck those morons with all their fucking money. Who the hell do they think they are anyway. If it wasn't for my magic, they'd be…

Lucas

(Shouts to cut Pete off) ENOUGH! Shut up already.

Pete

And fuck you too then.

(Lucas does not respond, angrily looks away)

(Blubbering) Dude, I'm sorry, really I'm sorry dude…I know I got a big mouth…when I drink shit pours out of my pie hole.

(Pete falls over onto Lucas putting his arm around his shoulder)

Is that why Vicki dumped me, is it? You've know her a long time Lucas. You could talk to her for me. I can change. Tell her, please…

Lucas

Okay. Sit up.

Pete

Got it, I'm up

Lucas

(Annoyed) No, you're not.

(Lucas pushes Pete upright. Pete nearly falls off the barstool in the other direction)

Pete

Now, am I up now?

(Lucas pulls Pete up onto the seat)

Lucas

Fine. Stay.

(Lucas and Pete sit quietly for few moments)

Pete

(Thinks he's whispering but speaks loudly)

You know what, I think those guys plan on torching that building… shush!
Vicki said I was crazy…shush, but they get millions from insurance claims on worthless those properties.

Lucas

(Lucas spills his drink purposely on his lap and jumps back from the bar. Pete doesn't notice the spill)

Lucas

Oh shit, sorry. I've got to go clean up.

(Lucas head towards the men's room)

Pete

(Shouts) HEY Luke, where you going? I was just shooting the shit. I don't really know about any plans, I was just bullshitting. Come on man, I'm buying. Seriously it's cool.

(After a few minutes, Lucas hasn't returned. Pete talks to the Bartender)

Pete

(To Brendan) You see my friend I was sitting here with… I think he's pissed at me…He's my business partner, you know? We make a good team, him and me. He sets them up and I knock them down – haha

Brendan

(Disinterested) Really. Good for you.

Pete

You're damn right it's good for me, and for him too. (Beat) Who is he to tell me to shut up? I'm the one talking everybody into the deal. It's my face they trust. Wait till he gets back here, he's going to listen to this mouth. I got a thing or two to say…

Brendan

I don't think he's coming back mister. I seen him walk past the window about five minutes ago. Maybe he's meeting you outside…

Pete

(Cut him off) You're shitting me.

(Pete shoots down the last of his drink, slides off the stool and stumbles through the bar and out the door looking for Lucas. He shouts up and down the street)

LUCAS! LUCAS! Lucas you son of a bitch. Don't run away on me you bastard… (Beat) Come on Lucas, don't be that way. We're a team remember. The bank, the building, the money, the fire!

(Pete spots a figure in the shadows between the buildings and heads towards the figure thinking it's Lucas)

There you are – haha. Remember me, your bud with the trustworthy face?

Lucas

(Steps out from the shadow)

(Softly but very serious) It's a shame Pete. You were starting to grow on me.

Pete

(Laughs) Lukey. Lucky Lukey, there you are. Why'd you run off man.

Lucas

I don't like sharing my business Pete. I thought we were simpatico on that.

Pete

Yeah sure. My biz is my biz.

Lucas

I believe you Pete. (Beat) But, I have choice. My biz is my biz too.

Pete

It's true, look at this face.

Lucas

In my business, I have to be able to trust more than just the face. The brain and mouth have to be on board too.

Pete

(Sobering up) It's the booze Luke. The booze makes me…share…a little more than I should. But I can fix that Luke I can.

Lucas

It's a shame. A damn shame.

Pete

We're just getting started Luke. Think about all the deals out there waiting for schemers like us. We can make millions in no time.

Lucas

You don't get it do you? I'm not a schemer Pete, I'm a cleaner.

Pete

No. I get it Luke. I do. Loose lips sink ships. I fucked up. I get it.

Lucas

It's my job.

Pete

Our job man, we can do this together. Hey, hey, here's an idea. We can buy buildings ourselves. Yeah, then we get some lame ass banker to underwrite the credit, we keep it all…

Lucas

It's too late.

Pete

No, it's the perfect time. We parlay off the deal we just closed. Then we insure the thing you know for mega bucks… (Slyly) before the "lightening hits"…

(Lucas stands quietly watching Pete rant)

Is it Vicki? Is that what's got you upset. Did she say something about me?
(Beat) We can make her a partner… she can help us reel in the marks…

Lucas

She's already my partner.

Pete

(Confused) Okay. Well then, we're already the three amigos, a team!

(Pete moves towards Lucas open-armed)

Come on, bring it in…

(Pete wraps his arms around Lucas and hugs him)

Lucas

It's over my friend. The ship has sunk.

(Lucas takes a switchblade from his pocked and stabs Pete)

(Silently Pete slides to the ground dead, Lucas smoothes his coat and walks back into the bar, nodding to Brendan)

Brendan

(Picks up the phone)

Hello, 911, I think a man's been stabbed outside the bar…"see anybody"? No, I think somebody ran towards the subway.

END OF PLAY