

QUICK'n READY

SCENE:

An office with a desk and several chairs. PERNELL sits at the desk reading a newspaper when the phone RINGS. He picks it up.

PERNELL

What is it?

(Listens - then)

Oh, yeah. Send him in.

(A few beats and the door opens. ART peeks in.)

ART

Pernell?

PERNELL

Come in. I've been waiting for you. You always late?  
(ART glances at his watch.)

ART

It's only one minute after ten. My appointment was for ...

PERNELL

...ten. Ten a.m. I hate it when people aren't on time.

ART

Well, if one minute is ...

PERNELL

A lot of one minutes adds up to time. And time is only one of the two things we have going. Time and imagination. Everything else is meaningless.

ART

That's good. Very good.

PERNELL

Let's get down to business. You know why you're here?

ART

My message said that you had something interesting going on that might need some of my advertising expertise.

PERNELL

You're here because my wife knows your wife, that's why. I don't know if we ought to go much beyond that. You know what I do?

ART

The pharmaceutical business.

PERNELL

We make pharmaceuticals here. Pharmaceuticals for animals ... domestic animals. Dogs, cats, cows, sheep ... whatever else there is.

ART

Not too much more.

PERNELL

Birds ... birds are big ... very big. Do you know how many people have birds? Millions. Canaries, parakeets, pigeons, cockatoos, myna birds, parrots ... more people than have cows. The fact is, it's the only market that's been keeping us above water.

ART

Is that so.

PERNELL

If it wasn't for birds I wouldn't be here talking to you. Anyway ... meat!

ART

Meat?

PERNELL

Meat! That's our big problem.

ART

Meat?

PERNELL

Meat. That's what I said. People are eating less meat ... a lot less and that's costing me money.

ART

No kidding? How's that?

PERNELL

People eat less meat - you don't need so many cattle. The less cattle there are the less cattle need my pharmaceuticals.

(Almost shouting)

And that hurts my bottom line. Get it?

ART

I never would have thought of that. Just shows you how smart women are.

PERNELL

What the hell has women got to do with it?

ART

You said my wife and your wife ...

PERNELL

Oh, yeah, yeah ... Louella ... she knows a good thing when she sees it. And she saw it ...

(chuckles - it's a private joke)

But that's the general drift. I had to do something about it. Change horses mid stream. And that a very dangerous gambit. Because if you fall off you get washed away. Millions gone. Right down the old crapper. Got it?

ART

Makes sense to me. Selling this business and going into something else?

PERNELL

Now why the hell would I do something as dumb as that? After all the years I've put into this business. Built it up from a table and a work bench in my garage to a two hundred million dollar company ... and I own it all. No partners, no stockholders. No one. Now that would be dumb don't you think?

ART

Well .. You just said that you might ...

(Interrupting)

PERNELL

You're not listening. You're coming to conclusions.

ART

Oh ...