

DANNY, THE BARTENDER'S GRANDSON

Danny teaches them how to execute the GLIM DROPPER.

DANNY

OK, I think I get this. So one person is going to say they've lost a penguin and offer a thousand dollar reward for it. Then two other people are going to say they found it, and if it works, that bartender is going to offer you less money for it thinking he'll call the number later and get the big reward, but when he calls, it'll be all 'doo-doo-doo!' (*The sound of a non-working phone number.*) So we need to make up a sob story about this penguin, like...

Danny makes up a story about why the penguin figurine has enormous sentimental value.

DANNY

OK, so who wants to go to the bartender and tell that tale?

Someone volunteers.

DANNY

OK, now we need a person who's going to turn in the penguin. Who wants to do it?

Someone volunteers.

DANNY

OK, so here's how this'll go. You go outside and watch for my signal. When I scratch my nose with two fingers right here, that means that it's time to go talk to the bartender. Watch for me to scratch my nose with two fingers right here. But if I scratch my nose with my thumb right *here*, don't do anything because that just means I really have an itch, that part of my nose is sometimes itchy. Now, when I go like this (*he brushes his hair back*), it means that it's time for you to go turn in the penguin.

Ready? Remember: *Tell it like you own it.* Off you go.

JACK, THE LIFEGUARD'S GRANDSON

JACK

Hey, hello, hi, hey, I'm Jack. Wow you're here...just like he said. I got this package in the mail from this guy Ben and it had all these instructions and he said for me to be here today, and that you'd be here today, and oh wow, ok, this is really happening. It's on. So, I gather my grandfather was a lifeguard here, and he knew this guy Ben. Ben's instructions said to show you this.

Jack passes around a picture and reads from a letter.

JACK

Here's a snap of your granddad, Pete. He was the lifeguard from 1960-1966. You may not know it, kid, but your granddad was quite the ladies man.

Jack high fives everyone.

JACK

Gramps! What's up! Gramps was getting it! Gross!
Okay, okay.

Jack goes back to reading the letter.

JACK

He would just lay around the pool sunning himself and they'd flock to him. One day I was walking by the poolside rooms to your left, and through the window I spied...with my little eye...him getting it on with a lady. A lady, let's say, of a certain age. A married lady.

JACK

Gramps! Dog!

Jack goes back to reading the letter.

JACK

I'd seen her around the hotel with her husband, but when he was off doing business during the day, she was doing business with your old granddad.

As a practitioner of the art of the con, this presented itself as an opportunity to try my hand at some 'BLACKMAIL.'

GRADY, THE BELLHOP'S GRANDSON

He reads the letter left for him.

GRADY

(Reading) Dear Grady, outside of conning, music was one of the greatest gifts I've been given, and it was all thanks to your grandfather, my teacher. I hope he did ok down in Atlantic City.

(To us) Nope! He did not. He didn't. He was a loser! Truth is I barely knew him. Met him twice, I think. When I was seven he gave me a Playboy. I was like "Too soon, granddad." He gave me another when I was 22, and I was like "Too late, missed your window." I didn't even know he ever worked here, to be honest. He was never around for my grandmother, back and forth to Atlantic City all the time, trying to make it as a musician. But. He always won her over with the way he could play. Talk about a con man. I mean, he got her to put him up in that retirement home just because he could win her over with his playing. He'd play, and he could get away with anything. And from that, I learned a priceless lesson.

He sits down at the piano and rocks a ragtime jam like a virtuoso.

ELOISE, THE NANNY'S GRANDDAUGHTER

ELOISE

OK, so listen. I've been rehearsing this script that Ben sent me all week but there's no way I can do this, 'cause I am a really terrible liar. Like, laughably bad. I have this thing, it's like a twitch or a tick that I always do when I'm not telling the truth, everyone knows it about me. I just start tugging at my hair and blinking. It's ever since I was a kid. Like this one time when I was ten my friend Amanda got me to steal a pack of gum and when I saw my mom I just started tugging and blinking and tugging and blinking like a crazy person and she knew immediately something was up and in two seconds I confessed.

I mean, it's so obvious. Like watch, let's try. I'll see if I can lie about something totally easy.

She thinks.

ELOISE

Ok. What time is it?

AUDIENCE

2:30.

ELOISE

Ok now ask me if I have the time.

AUDIENCE

Do you have the time?

ELOISE

Quarter-past ten.

She tugs and blinks.

ELOISE

SEE????! I SUCK! There's just no way. I can't even lie to you about the time, much less about some big investment. I'll blow this whole thing, I'm sure of it.

WENDY, THE CHAMBERMAID'S GRANDDAUGHTER

Come on in, check out this room, it's so cool. It's like the whole history of the hotel in one room. It's not actually open to the guests, but I've been in here before, because my grandmother and mother were both chambermaids here, and when I was a kid, my mother would bring me and my brother to the hotel on weekends, because my dad was working all day and we didn't have a sitter or anything, and the hotel was nice enough to let us hang around. So the very first day I'm here, Ben came up to us, and he was like "you wanna see something cool?" and I was like "STRANGER DANGER, no thanks creepy old dude who's lived his whole life in a hotel, I'm gonna take a hard pass on that invitation. I need an adult...I need an adult..." But he didn't mean it like that at all. He took me here and showed me this room and he knew everything about everything in here. I mean he was here as long as the hotel's been here, so he had stories about every single item.

EDDIE 'THE HAMMER' HAMMERSMITH

The Hammer approaches the stage. He circles the painting, admiring it. And then—pulls it from the frame and crumbles it up. Tosses the Monet across the stage.

The characters gasp.

He turns to admonish the crowd.

THE HAMMER

You think I don't know what you're doing here? You people think you've been conning me all day? I know what's going on here. You think I don't know Pig In A Poke? You think I don't know a high yield investment scheme? I wrote the rules. I've been running these hoodwinks since you all were in diapers. You're not investors. You're not collectors. You're just a bunch of low-rent wanna-be con men who don't know the first thing about the game.

He whips around to the stage.

THE HAMMER

And you! *(To the nanny)* Tugging your hair and blinking. You're the worst liar I've ever seen, you've got a tell so obvious it'd be spotted by a blind deaf mute. A dead one.

He turns back to the crowd.

THE HAMMER

Well, this has all made for a very entertaining evening, so I'll thank you all for that. And now, I shall take my leave. Aidos, sayonara, arrivaderci, and fare thee well.

He takes his briefcase and storms out.

NARRATOR/HENCHMAN SIDE

At the front of the room is a large projection screen, scrolling through archival pics of the Town Hall Hotel and many of its storied guests.

After a few minutes, a buttoned up, well-dressed man, THE NARRATOR, takes his spot in front of the screen. The music fades.

The projected images will now reflect what he's discussing. The first pic is of a man in his 70's, alone, standing in an iconic Town Hall Hotel space.

NARRATOR

This is Ben. Ben wanted to throw you a party.
Ben loved parties.

He raises a glass.

NARRATOR

Let's have a toast to Ben. To Ben!

AUDIENCE

To Ben!

NARRATOR

Ben loved parties, but what he never knew was that it was at one of these extravagant lavish affairs, a regular occurrence here at the Town Hall Hotel in the 1950's, that Ben was conceived.

This is Ben's father.

Pic of Michael Caine, with the caption 'Michael Caine' underneath.

NARRATOR

He was one of the first guests at the hotel, and was a regular fixture here in its early years.
This is Ben's mother.

Pic of Marilyn Monroe with the caption 'Marilyn Monroe'.

NARRATOR

She began to frequent the hotel six months after opening, and would often stay for weeks at a time.

*A frame of the two in their movie posters.
Image of the front of the hotel.*

NARRATOR

Following the end of the war, the hotel was raised from the ashes of the Bethnal Green Town Hall which received heavy artillery during the Blitz. In the years that followed, it became a celebrated gathering spot, looked after by its owner, entrepreneur and man-about-town Larry Lowe. Lowe would host opulent fêtes in the most grand of his ballrooms, the De Montfort. Champagne

flowed with the most celebrated individuals of the day in attendance: socialites, celebrities, politicians and artists; all the tastemakers of the 1950's.

Image of Caine and Monroe.

NARRATOR

On August 24th, 1950, at one of Lowe's champagne-laden soirees, these two got it on in the bathroom.

Image of bathroom.

NARRATOR

This was a delightful coming together and it pleased Lowe and certainly Caine and possibly Marilyn, but of course that's not where it ended.

If it were known publicly that Marilyn Monroe was carrying Michael Caine's illegitimate child it would've killed their careers. This would have be their secret.

BEN

A sweet, kindly old man, BEN, speaks directly into the camera. He's in a bathrobe, lying in bed.

BEN

In 1962, I'm 12 years old. I'm sitting at the counter of the bar, and a guy two seats down orders a cheeseburger and a coke. Lloyd, the bartender at the time, tells him his charge is two bucks. The guy flashes a twenty, but when Lloyd glances away, I see this man swap that twenty for a single he'd hidden in his palm.

Ben expertly executes the money swap.

BEN

And wouldn't you know it, Lloyd swipes it up and brings the guy 18 bucks change. With a smile.

Now I don't breath a word of it to anyone. But. The next day, in the lobby, I corner this man, and tell him I'd seen the whole thing, and that I'm gonna shout about it unless he teaches me how he did it. So he starts to go — "Do you know who you're talking to? I could snap your neck like a twig with my bare hands." But then, he realizes he's talking to a twelve year old, and he calms down.

And he agrees.

So he teaches me. He teaches me what he did at the bar, and he teaches me more.

He moves on a few days later, but it sparks an interest in me that lasts my lifetime. I hone my craft, and over the years, this is how I entertain myself: conning the clientele. But it was always a game. I had no need for money, I live in a hotel for god's sakes. So as soon as I take a mark I give 'im everything back. It was a public service so people would know what to look out for. This was a shady neighborhood back then, there were vagrants everywhere. 'course, there are still vagrants, only now they call 'em 'surfers.'