

THE GOLDEN BILLION

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

The room is a small sitting area. There is a leather sofa, two leather armchairs, and a small glass table in front of them on the left side of the room.

The fire blazes in a high-quality electric fireplace framed with white stone on the right side.

Bookshelves adorn the walls.

Two bald, middle-aged men - LOUIS, a small man with brilliant and shifty eyes, and JACOB, a tall man dressed in garishly colored clothes - smoke cigars in their chairs.

The third one, apparently the host, SAM - a fat man in his 70s - sits on the sofa. He drinks his scotch and looks quite pleased.

SAM

Guys, we have to come up with a new project.

LOUIS

Are you short of money? Should I lend you any?

He LAUGHS.

JACOB

It's time; the Democrats are about to lose.

He leans in his armchair, exhaling rings of smoke into the air gleefully.

SAM

What ideas do you have?

JACOB

Business as usual?

SAM

Sure. It's still working, isn't it?

He smacks his lips.

JACOB  
National security, right?

LOUIS  
To launch an all-encompassing idea  
after the last pandemic... Hm...  
But I have a suggestion. Let's say  
to the people there will be a massive  
earthquake that threatens California.

He scratches his left palm.

JACOB  
Itchy palms! You're coming into  
money!

LOUIS  
I have no objection.

He LAUGHS again.

SAM  
The last fire in Hawaii shows that  
Congress is unwilling to allocate  
much money for such projects.

JACOB  
Okay. Another idea. We'll solve  
ecological problems.

SAM  
Which ones exactly?

JACOB  
Alaska. Bears. Ocean warming.  
Whales. Pick one that's closer to  
you.

SAM  
That's what people are sick of. Give  
me something fresh.

He pours himself scotch again.

LOUIS  
(excited)  
Let's play on the threat of aliens.

SAM  
How?

LOUIS  
We say we're not protected against  
the invasion of aliens.  
(MORE)

LOUIS (cont'd)  
So it's necessary to install a  
special space shield around the  
globe.

JACOB  
Ha ha! That's terrific!

He presses his lips together and blows tiny rings of smoke  
into the ceiling.

SAM  
Is that realistic?

LOUIS  
Hey, I can sell salt to a slug.  
(getting more and  
more excited)  
Do people believe in the happiness of  
gender reassignment? Trends like  
this don't come from anywhere; they  
must be put out and promoted to the  
masses accordingly! And  
cryptocurrency - who profits from it,  
eh? Ponzi would be proud of me!  
Furthermore, as you know, I can  
organize a revolution of any kind.  
I'm second to none at this!

He CHUCKLES again with an undertone.

LOUIS (cont'd)  
For good reason, people call us "the  
golden billion," although we are not  
more than a hundred.

His eyes sparkle like those of a maniac.

JACOB  
I like the idea. Panic in the media.  
People, taking placards: "Save us  
from the aliens!"

LOUIS  
And we come then to the Congress with  
proposals to solve the problem. They  
would have to allocate money! Then,  
we give orders to our companions to  
produce some space devices, and we  
manage the whole project.  
(in a changed voice)  
How many billions do you think we'll  
squeeze out of that?

SAM

But what comes in the end?

JACOB

Veni. Vidi. Vici.

LOUIS

Media's in our hands. We'll report  
we're now sufficiently protected from  
any invasion.

SAM

Is it not too risky?

JACOB

We've got the money!

LOUIS

Sure! If things go wrong, we have  
our lawyers! They will delay any  
court until the next election. After  
that, everything wrong can be blamed  
on the previous government.

He GIGGLES like a little child. Sam is pensive.

SAM

That's clear. That's our usual  
procedure. But I doubt whether  
people will "swallow" this.

LOUIS

People are so manipulable these days  
that they would swallow the theme  
with great pleasure! Look, some of  
them still believe that the Earth is  
flat.

He CHUCKLES cynically.

JACOB

Aliens are popular.

LOUIS

We'll "find" something in the  
archives, in the diggings. We can  
also make a few rounds in the sky so  
that everyone sees the aliens are  
already there. And we'll produce  
some new horror movies. What was  
that again - green men? They can be  
green! Not my taste, but what the  
hell.

He fidgets in his chair with impatience.

JACOB

Yes! Let's warm up this big theme!

SAM

Okay. I'm gonna have a think about it.

(after a pause, to  
Jacob)

Are you willing to invest in this?

JACOB

Only twenty-five percent.

LOUIS

He has invested heavily in the LGBT theme. It has not yet fully paid off, although we earned huge profits through gender-confirmation surgeries and the pharmaceutical industry. And we hope to see more.

SAM

(to Louis)

And you? Would you invest?

LOUIS

First, let's do a calculation. I'm fond of numbers. If the numbers work out for me, I'm ready for anything!

They are SILENT.

SAM

Louis, are you religious?

LOUIS

Religion is a fairy tale for small children.

SAM

And you, Jacob? Don't you ever have a guilty conscience?

JACOB

Something smells? Something is amiss?

SAM

I began to have nightmares a lot.

LOUIS

You shouldn't have a bedtime snack.

They are SILENT again.

JACOB

(to Sam)

Sam, how's your son?

SAM

He's a macho guy unlike me. Pregnant girls run after him, but he runs from them.

JACOB

Oh!

LOUIS

I'm glad I don't have kids. They're nothing but trouble.

JACOB

Women, too.

SAM

(to Jacob)

What are you going to do when you become a senile man?

JACOB

I've got the money!

Louis puts out his cigar in the ashtray and stands up.

LOUIS

I have to go! My wife is very jealous! Not because of me but because of my money! She thinks I meet women and is suspicious of any woman in my circle.

He GIGGLES sadly. Sam SIGHS.

JACOB

A marriage? Not for me! I see a wife sitting around, waiting for me to die.

He puts his already extinct cigar in the ashtray and gets up.

JACOB (cont'd)

But my dear kitty is waiting for me.

SAM

I'll walk you to the door.

He stands up, and all three men drag themselves out of the room, looking suddenly 20 years older.

FADE OUT.

THE END