

***Sammy*:** "Hello, gentlemen. What shall we pour this splendid evening?" Sammy's wide pink face was set off by his bright white dentures, white hair, and white chest-high apron. "I'm recommending Negronis."

***Eric*:** "A plate of oysters, too, if you don't mind, Sammy. We're expecting company. Digs will give you the nod when he walks in. I forget what he looks like."

***Sammy*:** "Very well," Sammy replied,

***Digby*:** and gave me a nod, and a smile, as though he and I were now partners in crime.

***Eric*:** "Look, Digby, I have him down for a unit in the Gold Town deal, and I'm pretty sure this dinner is his way of passing on it before he flies out tonight. I'm not about to let him off the hook though."

***Digby*:** "What should I do?"

***Eric*:** "No offense, Digs," ***Digby*:** Eric said as he patted me on the shoulder,

***Eric*:** "but don't do a thing. Especially if there's a long and uncomfortable pause, don't make a peep."

***Digby*:** "I can do that," I said. My pride was more than a little pricked, but all I knew of the Gold Town deal came from some smeared napkin sketches and one fast meeting with the idea man, a crazed Kiwi promoter who had banged on the door of every adventurous bank on both coasts before his discovery by--or was it of?-- Schroeder.

The idea was to build a theme park in the boonies, the Gold Rush reenacted for all the suburbanites who missed the first one. But with log flume rides, corndogs, and plenty of restrooms this time around. Twenty-five units at one million per, and only one unit left – according to Schroeder.

***Sammy*:** Sammy returned with the oysters and Negronis.

***Digby*:** I took a sip before it had time to settle. It was icy and smoothly bitter.

***Eric*:** "Shit," Schroeder said, "a prospect bearing gifts."

***Digby*:** Sammy and I followed Eric's gaze to Martinez at the door.

***Sammy*:** "Parting gifts," Sammy said. "Never a good omen for a deal, gentlemen."