

CHAPTER 22

The Free Prize Pitch

- 1 **ROBERT (Con):** You'll remember that we had told you earlier in the year that because of some of your past failings and disappointments we were going to put you in for a final cash award for the Labor Day weekend. And should you be contacted on it, that it would mean anywhere from 10,000 to a quarter of a million dollars to you. And what has happened for you, is you don't got a quarter of a million coming, but you did better than ten grand. You think that Tuesday morning, you could use, well not Tuesday morning, Tuesday afternoon, do you think you could use a \$50,000 cashiers check to straighten some things up?
- 2 **DARLENE** (Investigator posing as a victim): What does it cost me?
- 3 **ROBERT:** OK, that's all you have to say, ma'am?
- 4 **DARLENE:** Huh?
- 5 **ROBERT:** Is that all you have to say?
- 6 **DARLENE:** Yes. *(There is TV noise in the background.)*
- 7 **ROBERT:** You know something, boy, ma'am, would you like your award? It's \$50,000. Do you want it? Yes or no?
- 8 **DARLENE:** Of course.
- 9 **ROBERT:** OK. Then here's my suggestion to you, OK, I'm not some punk kid that's calling you because I need a water bill paid, OK. I'm the guy that allocates these awards, and if I hang up the phone with you, it means that Tuesday afternoon the second alternate choice is going to get your \$50,000. So if you want it, be courteous and kind with me, as I'm certainly set out to do with you. So let's start all over again, OK?
- 10 **DARLENE:** Alright.
- 11 **ROBERT:** OK. My name, again, is Robert Banks. You had been promised that you were going to be put in for a cash drawing.

You were drawn to receive \$50,000. It will be in your physical possession, if you cooperate, Tuesday afternoon. Congratulations to you!

12 DARLENE: Thank you! What do I have to do?

13 ROBERT: OK, you simply have to be as courteous with me as I am certainly being with you, and we won't have any problems, OK?

14 DARLENE: Right.

15 ROBERT: Alright. The bottom line on this is that, from what I see here, you've spent a lot of money and received none of the big cash awards yet, have you?

16 DARLENE: No.

17 ROBERT: OK. This is your first opportunity to walk away a winner. In order to walk away a winner, you are going to have to do the same thing as every other winner in this drawing is responsible to do whether they get 10,000; 50,000; 100,000 or the top grand award of a quarter of a million dollars in cash. A lot of money, isn't it?

18 DARLENE: Yes it is.

19 ROBERT: OK. We are able to cover taxes for you. We are able to cover all charges other than bonding, insurance, and registration. That is a \$500 bonding fee which is paid directly to the chief of accounting. As soon as we show that this is completed, it must be done, by the way, by midnight tonight. If you are not able to comply with this by midnight tonight we are again going with the second alternate and that second alternate will receive, instead of \$10,000, your \$50,000. Now, I show here that you are some kind of a credit card holder. You can relax. I am not going to ask you personally for the number. Based on what I have told you, first of all, is \$500 knowing that you have \$50,000 as a result, going to be any problem for you.

20 DARLENE: Yes, because I don't have \$500.

21 ROBERT: OK, if you're... Miss Parker.

22 DARLENE: Yes.

23 ROBERT: What are you crying?

24 DARLENE: Yes.

25 ROBERT: Why are you crying?

26 DARLENE: Because I don't have \$500.

- 27 **ROBERT:** OK. If you don't have \$500 ma'am, that doesn't mean that I am going to disqualify you. OK, are you still a valid credit card holder? Either Visa or Master Card? Just answer me, yes or no.
- 28 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 29 **ROBERT:** Are any of those cards in good standing at all.
- 30 **DARLENE:** I think my master card is, but I'm not sure.
- 31 **ROBERT:** But you don't have \$500 on it. OK, so relax. I have a little surprise for you. Not everybody that calls you on the phone is a bad person, OK. I want you to get your \$50,000 that's why I'm here on a Saturday night, when I should be with my family, calling you, to make sure that you receive your award ma'am. So, please relax and understand that I'm on your side. This is what I'm paid for. And I don't need to lie to you, I make too good of a living telling the truth, OK. So what I am telling you right now is all the truth. Can you handle half of the \$500, knowing that you'll have the \$50,000 Tuesday, I will accept half of it now, and the other half after you receive the cash.
- 32 **DARLENE:** Yes, I can do that.
- 33 **ROBERT:** OK. Then, see, it's not such a big deal or a bad deal after all, is it honey? OK. Are you able to drive?
- 34 **DARLENE:** Beg your pardon.
- 35 **ROBERT:** Do you drive?
- 36 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 37 **ROBERT:** OK. I want you to stay by your phone. I'm going to call, I need to make a call, just get some information in (city) for you. And when I have that information I will call you back. I promise to be back with you within roughly 5 minutes, OK.
- 38 **DARLENE:** Alright.
- 39 **ROBERT:** Stay by your phone.
- 40 **DARLENE:** Alright.
- 41 **ROBERT:** OK, sweetheart. And listen, we love you. You just relax. I'm going to take care of you, OK?
- 42 **DARLENE:** Alright.
- 43 **ROBERT:** OK, bye-bye.

Next conversation.

- 44 **DARLENE:** Whose this please?

- 45 **ROBERT:** OK. This is Robert Banks calling.
- 46 **DARLENE:** Oh yes.
- 47 **ROBERT:** Hi Darlene.
- 48 **DARLENE:** Hi.
- 49 **ROBERT:** Honey, did you forget my voice that fast?
- 50 **DARLENE:** *laughs.*
- 51 **ROBERT:** People tell me I have a pretty distinctive voice. I guess I'm going to have to tell them all to go jump in the lake next time they tell me.
- 52 **DARLENE:** Well no, it is. It is.
- 53 **ROBERT:** Alright. Now let me tell you what your situation is. It's very simple. Are you familiar with American Express Money Gram?
- 54 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 55 **ROBERT:** OK. You know that it's the simplest thing in the world to get this accomplished, then. We have to show that it's done before midnight. So what I have done is I have called American Express Money Gram and asked them if they have locations in (city) that are open past 9pm. I had, the guy gave me one. Are you near (town), by chance?
- 56 **DARLENE:** No.
- 57 **ROBERT:** OK. That's far away from you.
- 58 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 59 **ROBERT:** Alright, I want you to write down this number then, doll. The phone number is 1-800-9__ - ___ 0.
- 60 **DARLENE:** Just a minute.
- 61 **ROBERT:** OK, I'm sorry.
- 62 **DARLENE:** 1-800...
- 63 **ROBERT:** 9__ - ___ 0.
- 64 **DARLENE:** 9__ - ___ 0.
- 65 **ROBERT:** That is correct. When you call that 800 number, as soon as the recording starts to tell you to push buttons, push zero. Wait for it to start talking and push zero again. That will automatically put you on with a live operator. Now you may have to hold a little bit, because it is Labor Day Weekend, and they are very busy. Be patient and wait for that live operator. The reason is because they have a lot of American Express Moneygrams. That some are open til 10; some that are open til 11, some that are

open all night. Keep in mind that I'm on my own time right now, doing this out of respect for fellow human being because of the amount of money that you've won. And I don't want to have to sit here all night waiting for confirmation. And also, it's, you know, I don't want you staying up all night, either. You know that's not healthy. So, the bottom line is that I need you to call that 800 number. I need you to find the closest American Express office that's open for you to go to. You must take your credit card with you. They accept Visa, Master Card, or even Discover. You do know for a fact that the \$250 will hold on your Master Card, correct?

66 DARLENE: I think it would, but I'm not sure.

67 ROBERT: OK, do you have your, uh, most recent statement then Darlene?

68 DARLENE: No.

69 ROBERT: OK. You know, in your own, unless you're kind of being evasive. I'm not trying to rob you or find out, you know, what you do or what you have. Be honest with me, do you feel that your card will cover this.

70 DARLENE: No, I don't.

71 ROBERT: You really don't, do you?

72 DARLENE: But I can, I can send you a check.

73 ROBERT: No, ma'am, you can't. OK, the de— boy, I swear to God, this is just crazy. Somebody spends all this money and wins \$50,000 and you tell them what they have to do and they don't do it. How much cash do you have available Darlene?

74 DARLENE: You mean on my person?

75 ROBERT: Yes, ma'am.

76 DARLENE: Probably \$20.

77 ROBERT: OK. Would your card cover \$200?

78 DARLENE: I'm not sure.

79 ROBERT: OK. You're really...

80 DARLENE: I haven't gotten a statement.

81 ROBERT: You're really not going to tell me, are you?

82 DARLENE: I-I-I'm not sure. I'm telling you the truth. I am not sure.

83 ROBERT: OK. Will it cover \$100?

84 DARLENE: It probably would.

85 ROBERT: OK.

86 DARLENE: But, I cannot. I am 78 years old.

87 ROBERT: Yes, ma'am.

88 DARLENE: And it is dark!

89 ROBERT: So you're not going to go to the American Express anyway, are you?

90 DARLENE: I can't!

91 ROBERT: Uh-huh, see, why didn't you just tell me that before I went through all this trouble.

92 DARLENE: Oh...

93 ROBERT: Darlene, let me ask you something. I don't care if you're 78, or 88 or 100. You've got, I don't care what you've heard on the telephone. I don't care how badly you've been taken advantage. I don't care if you hate me. You've got \$50,000. That's the truth. I can go to bed living with the fact that I told you the truth and you were too stubborn or just refused to believe me, and I had to pick another name and give it to somebody else. If I have to give it to somebody else, I'm going to. But I need some cooperation from you. And if I don't get it, you're hurting yourself. This is enough money for you to set up anybody that you care about, and go to your grave knowing that you went and did the right thing and you can go and meet God with a clear conscience. Now what do you want to do? Do you want your winnings? Or do you want me to just go ahead and hang up the phone with you and forget that I ever saw your name.

94 DARLENE: Of course I want the winnings, but I...

95 ROBERT: So now you're going to start crying again and going off on me, right?

96 DARLENE: There's nothing I can do!

97 ROBERT: Yes, there is something you can do.

98 DARLENE: What?!

99 ROBERT: I'll have you call Western Union, and you can wire the money through Western Union by telephone. You wanna do it that way?

100 DARLENE: How much?

101 ROBERT: How about \$150?

102 DARLENE: Western Union?

- 103 **ROBERT:** Yeah, they'll take your credit card over the phone, so you don't have to drive anywhere.... I'd even settle for \$100, just to have you comply with this, so that I can send you your winnings. Cause if you don't send at least, the minimum I will accept is \$100. If you'll send \$100 to the bonding agent, so I can show cooperation, then I will go ahead and release your check. And you'll have, your cashier's check, and you'll have it Tuesday. Wednesday morning at the latest, you'll have it. And then you can pay me the balance after you cash the cashiers check. Is that good?
- 104 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 105 **ROBERT:** Yes or no.
- 106 **DARLENE:** Yes.
- 107 **ROBERT:** If you say yes, stick by it, and don't switch up me. If you say no, please let me hang up the phone.
- 108 **DARLENE:** Oh, oh.
- 109 **ROBERT:** You spent all these thousands of dollars and never got diddly-squat. Now I'm asking you to spend a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$250 to get \$50,000. Do you want your money, ma'am?
- 110 **DARLENE:** Of course I do! Of course I do!
- 111 **ROBERT:** Now, will you cooperate?
- 112 **DARLENE:** I'm trying to!
- 113 **ROBERT:** OK, will you answer my question then? Will you call Western Union and wire a minimum of \$100 and a maximum of \$250 to my bonding agent, so I can release your cashier's check. Yes or no?
- 114 **DARLENE:** Yes. What's the, who do I send it to you?
- 115 **ROBERT:** Boy, you're just going to keep crying and getting upset. Take a deep breath. I'm not beating you up or hurting you. I'm trying to give you your money. Please stop it.
- 116 **DARLENE:** I'm trying. You don't know what I've been through... beg your pardon.
- 117 **ROBERT:** I'm, I'm talking to uh, to my wife here. You're just having a real tough time with this. You know, I remember you. I went through this with you before when we tried to get you entered into this. And I got so, I got so frustrated with you that I just, I told you forget it, and I went ahead and instead of disqualifying you, I kept your name eligible for this anyway, even though you

didn't cooperate with me. And now, I've already, that's once you've already done this to me. And now here's twice where I'm giving you a second chance. And it's the same thing. This is why I got frustrated with you and let you go the first time, and I still didn't disqualify you.

118 DARLENE: What company is this?

119 ROBERT: If I, don't worry about all of that. I'll give you that information later, because it's obviously getting too confusing now. Here is the bottom line. Take and write down what I'm going to tell you and do this exactly as I tell you and don't switch up on me again, OK? Answer me, OK!?

120 DARLENE: I can send you a check.

121 ROBERT: You're going to your grave a loser. A big loser. I think you're terrible.