

GEM MINT

Written by

Joshua Collins

INT. JOHNNY'S OFFICE - NOON

A cramped and poorly organized office. Behind the single wooden desk is a small sports collection, positioned to create a frame around the man behind the desk.

And who is our man behind the desk? JOHNNY.

He's 23, wears fake jewelry and a colorful tattoo sleeve on his left arm.

Johnny's cellphone lies beside him on his desk. It buzzes an incoming call from "CHRISTOPHER" but Johnny quickly declines the call. Johnny's phone buzzes again with a text message from Christopher reading "WHERE IS MY MONEY" and Johnny again silences his phone.

Sitting in front of Johnny's desk is a CLIENT. In the Client's lap lies a small storage box of trading cards.

JOHNNY

So, yeah. It's a consignment business. You give me your cards, I sell them for you and keep a piece of the pie. And your cards are 100% insured, I guarantee it.

CLIENT

(hesitant)

What percentage do you get of the sale again?

JOHNNY

25, but that's not important right now. Lemme see what ya got.

Client places the box on Johnny's desk. Johnny opens the box, pulls out a single slabbed card, and makes a strange face.

CLIENT

Is something wrong, Johnny?

Johnny looks closely at the card, then back at Client.

JOHNNY

Ja Morant cards. Seriously? Nobody is buying his cards right now. And this isn't even a PSA 10, it's a 9. This is mint, not gem mint. It says it on the top right here.

CLIENT

You asked me if I had any liquid cards.

JOHNNY

Ja Morant cards are not liquid.  
They printed way more of his cards  
that year than they did other draft  
classes. I can't move this.

Johnny sighs and digs around some more before pulling out  
another card - a Topps Rajon Rondo rookie card.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Y-you're messing with me, right?  
You thought you could throw in a  
Chris Paul rookie like I wouldn't  
notice? This is five dollars on a  
good day.

CLIENT

Just package it with some of  
the other cards. Come on,  
man.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Like, why are you fucking  
with me here? Why are you  
fucking with me? **Why are you**  
**fucking with me?**

CLIENT (CONT'D)

N-No...I just-

JOHNNY

(pissed)  
Just get outta here! This is for  
high-end cards only!

Johnny slides the box of cards back to the client, who  
quickly takes the box and leaves the office.

BRODIE, 26, Johnny's partner, opens the door for the client  
before approaching Johnny.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

(to Brodie)  
Hey man, next time, could you  
please just do some background  
checks on these clients' before  
they meet with me? Like...please? I  
don't have time for meetings like  
this.

BRODIE

Okay, got it.

There is a knock at the door.

JOHNNY

(to Brodie)  
Go get the door. I got a surprise I  
want to show ya.

Brodie walks over to the door, signs for a package, and hands it to Johnny.

BRODIE  
What did you order?

JOHNNY  
See for yourself.

Johnny carefully opens the package and slowly holds up a Topps 1952 Mickey Mantle baseball card.

BRODIE  
What..?

Beat.

JOHNNY  
Yeah.

BRODIE  
Johnny...How did you...

JOHNNY  
(shaking his head)  
You don't want to know.

The card seems to have a mystical effect on Johnny. He turns it and admires every edge and corner. Brodie quickly snaps out of it.

BRODIE  
(confused)  
Wait, just wait a minute, how much was this card?

Johnny doesn't answer.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
How much was the card?

Johnny still doesn't answer.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
Johnny.

JOHNNY  
(quickly)  
Look, we got a good deal.  
It's a really good deal. Just trust me.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
Jesus, Johnny!

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

We're gonna send this to PSA today so that when it comes back a 10, we'll flip it so we can buy back the cards I moved and keep the profit.

BRODIE

(frightened)

Johnny, how much was this card?

JOHNNY

Why do you always want to know the specifics? Why can't you just trust me?

BRODIE (CONT'D)

Don't lie to me, Johnny. Just be honest with me.

BRODIE (CONT'D)

How much?

There is a knock at the door. Johnny and Brodie turn their heads at the same time.

Brodie opens the door - it's Client again.

BRODIE (CONT'D)

(to Client)

What's up?

CLIENT

(stammering)

Hey..uh..listen, I-I think I left some of my cards here. Can I look for them real quick?

Brodie looks back to Johnny.

JOHNNY

(cautious)

Yeah...sure, go for it.

Client comes in and pretends to look for his slabs around the desk and on the floor. Brodie and Johnny try to help him look, but they can't find anything.

BRODIE

(to Client)

Hey, man, I don't really see anything-

Before Johnny can say anything, he hears a voice that takes him by surprise.

CHRISTOPHER (O.S.)

Where's my \$50k, Johnny?

Johnny swings his head back to the open door.

With the door still open, in comes CHRISTOPHER, 30, a rough-around-the-edges man whose money should not be touched. He has four other men, HECTOR, 40, ADAM, 50, RUSS, 25, and SAM, 50, with him as well. Client quickly slips out, slamming the door shut.

Johnny quickly puts the Mantle card in his desk and greets Christopher.

JOHNNY  
What's up, Chris?

CHRISTOPHER  
We got a problem, buddy.

Christopher, Hector, and Adam approach Johnny. Sam and Russ stay with Brodie. Hector grabs Johnny by his shirt with both hands. He brings Johnny close to Christopher's face.

Sam and Russ point guns at Brodie, point blank.

BRODIE  
Whoa!

SAM  
Shut up!

RUSS  
Man, shut up!

JOHNNY  
Whoa, whoa, whoa, let's take it easy, alright? Let's chill out. Let's all just chill out here.

CHRISTOPHER  
(irritated)  
It's been three weeks over. Where's my \$50K?

JOHNNY  
(frantic)  
I don't know what you're talking about, you psycho!

CHRISTOPHER  
What did I tell you was gonna happen, Johnny?

JOHNNY  
(frantic)  
You didn't tell me anything, I swear! L-look, I got some cards right here. Take 'em!

Johnny scrambles and hands Christopher a couple random PSA slabs from his desk.

CHRISTOPHER

(to Johnny)

I don't want those cards. I want my money back. Now. Today.

(quietly)

That's all I need, and then we'll be done with each other. You won't have to see me, I won't have to see you. But you're done. No more playing with me or any of my guys, okay? You've got until the end of today to pay me in-full in-cash or then it won't be about money anymore and there won't be any collecting.

JOHNNY

Can I speak now? You gonna let me speak now?

CHRISTOPHER

I just want a yes or a no. That's all. I just want to hear you say it.

JOHNNY

I'll get your money, I'll get your money...

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

...In a week because I have a big deal about to go down, just trust me, Chris!

CHRISTOPHER

Motherfucker!

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I don't have time for your games, Johnny. We're past that now.

JOHNNY

Okay, okay, let's all just chill out, okay?

BRODIE

Johnny, just give him what he wants, man!

SAM

Shut up!

RUSS

What did I just tell you?

CHRISTOPHER

I'm not playing, Johnny.

JOHNNY

I'll go grab your money - I will, I promise you - but I need a few more days. Just a few more days, that's it.

Beat.

CHRISTOPHER

(dumbfounded)

Are you serious right now?  
You're joking, right? Tell me  
you're joking.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Just give me until next week!  
You know I'm good for it!

Christopher nods to Hector, who lets go of Johnny.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(to Johnny)

I ain't leaving empty handed.

(to Hector and Adam)

Check him.

Hector and Adam reach into Johnny's pockets. They pull out a wad of hundred dollar bills.

JOHNNY

Hey, c'mon, that's my last thousand  
for the month. I'm paying bills  
with that money.

CHRISTOPHER

(to Hector)

The watch too.

JOHNNY

C'mon now, not the watch, fellas.  
You don't have to do all that. This  
is unnecessary, you know it.

Hector begins taking off Johnny's watch.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

It was a graduation gift from my  
mom, c'mon now!

Hector hands the watch to Christopher, who puts it in his pocket with the money.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

There. You happy now?

Christopher and his men back off. Adam takes another stack of cash off the desk.



CHRISTOPHER  
 (pointing at Johnny)  
 I'm coming back later for the rest.

Brodie closes the door as the posse leaves before giving Johnny his undivided attention.

BRODIE  
 Is there anybody you DON'T owe money to?

JOHNNY  
 (thinking to himself)  
 Not really, no.

BRODIE  
 So you were AWARE of this and you STILL took everybody's money?

JOHNNY  
 Brodie, what part of THIRTY MILLION DOLLARS do you not understand?

JOHNNY (CONT'D)  
 THIRTY MILLION!

BRODIE  
IT'S NOT YOUR MONEY!

Johnny backs off.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
 It's not your money, John. We need to sell this card back today!

JOHNNY  
 (pleading)  
 But it could gem!

BRODIE  
 It doesn't matter! We shouldn't have it!

Johnny quickly opens his desk and gives the Mantle to Brodie.

JOHNNY  
 (frantic)  
 Look, if we sell everything - like, EVERYTHING - we can make our money back in no time. Like, three weeks, tops. That's literally nothing.

BRODIE  
No!

JOHNNY  
 What?

BRODIE  
That's stupid! That's a stupid idea  
and you know it!

Beat.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
We are losing money left and right,  
John. We've got customers  
threatening to kill us now, and  
instead of paying them back, you're  
taking risks we have absolutely no  
room to take! Think logic -  
logically this doesn't make any  
sense! Where's the vision? It  
doesn't make sense! You asked me to  
help you with the business, and you  
continue to make these decisions  
without even letting me know. You  
are running us into the fucking  
ground!

Brodie's right hand is in a very tight fist. Johnny notices  
the fist, and darts his eyes back up to Brodie.

JOHNNY  
Is that all you got?

Johnny's phone rings. He turns around to answer it.

Defeated, Brodie looks at the card closely and turns it over.  
His paranoia slowly turns into grave concern.

BRODIE  
Johnny, wait a second.

Johnny continues on the phone.

BRODIE (CONT'D)  
John-

JOHNNY  
WHAT?!

Beat.

BRODIE  
(slowly)  
The Mantle is fake.

JOHNNY  
(confused)  
What?

BRODIE

The Mantle. The card. It says  
'reprint' right here on the back.  
You didn't catch this?

Brodie hands Johnny the Mantle. Sure enough, it clearly says  
'reprint' near the bottom corner of the card. Johnny sinks  
into his chair, defeated.

BRODIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Johnny. I just caught it  
right now.

JOHNNY

(to himself)  
They're gonna kill me.

BRODIE

(reassuring himself)  
I-I mean, I think I'll be alright.

JOHNNY

(to Brodie)  
What are you taking about? You're  
not gonna be okay. You're fucked.

BRODIE

No, you're fucked. I didn't buy a  
fake card.

JOHNNY

You are fucked.

BRODIE

You're...totally fucked.

JOHNNY

You're very fucked.

BRODIE

Well, my hands are technically  
clean, so...good luck with that.

Johnny doesn't say anything. He zones out as Brodie grows  
concerned.

BRODIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Uh...Johnny?

Johnny's eyes dart around the room. He takes one deep breath  
before looking over at Brodie.

CUT TO BLACK.