Once Upon A Time In An Elevator

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FADE IN:

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

The doors of the elevator close and it starts moving up.

Two strangers inside, BILL McKINTOSH, dishevelled, in a long coat, and PERDY ALLARD, suit and tie. Each has a professional black bag with the same MP logo on them.

Bill turns to Perdy and sizes him up.

BILL
I get a funny feeling when I see someone holding the same bag as mine. Do you ever?

Perdy shakes his head.

BILL
The elevator stops. We panic, leave the bags on the floor, pound on the buttons. The elevator starts moving, takes us to our floors. Each of us grabs the wrong bag and gets out.

PERDY
Oh my goodness.

BILL
Things happen.

PERDY
Yep. In movies.

Bill stays silent for a moment, eyeing Perdy with interest.

BILL
Which floor are you?

Perdy moves his head toward the elevator buttons. 21 and 24 are lit.

BILL
Oh, 24th. I was going there myself to that same meeting, but you know what I heard?

Perdy rolls his eyes.

BILL
The chief is going to be late anyway, his airplane was delayed.

(MORE)
BILL (CONT'D)
So, I learned there's lunch on the
21st with different MP peeps. A brunch
actually. ...They have caviar.

Perdy shrugs.

BILL
Not much of a talker, are you?

Meanwhile the elevator glides up. They pass the 15th floor.
Then, suddenly the elevator jumps and jerks.

BILL
You see that? I swear to God we are
stopping. Ever got stuck in an
elevator?

PERDY
No, never. And I'm not going too.

BILL
I do every time. It's like kismet
or something.

The elevator jukes again and stops before it reaches 21st.

BILL
Did we just stop? Why am I not
surprised.

Perdy puts his bag down on the floor, pounds on 24. Bill
approaches the doors, tries to pull them apart.

PERDY
Please don't do that. You'll break
something.

BILL
It's already broken.

Bill shrugs, steps away from the doors.

PERDY
(into the door crack)
Hey, is someone there?

There's no response. Perdy sounds nervous.

PERDY
I'm sure we'll start moving again
in a moment.

But the elevator doesn't move. Perdy swallows a bile.
Bill takes note of Perdy’s bag.

BILL
Look, you left the bag on the floor. One man met a wife this way. They had the same bags...

PERDY
You said that already! And no, I’m not going to take your bag.

Perdy tries the elevator help button but it doesn’t light up. He looks into the door crack. The floor is half way up.

PERDY
If we pull the doors apart I can climb out with your help and bring someone for you.

BILL
Oh, no. I think it stopped for a reason. We better sit it out.

PERDY
Are you gay? I’m straight and married so you know.

BILL
I’m not gay, I just accept things.

Bill plops onto the floor and takes a comfortable position.

PERDY
People spit in elevators.

BILL
Hmm. Never thought of that.

Perdy snorts, forms a bile and spits.

PERDY
Better start now.

BILL
Well, I have a coat. I always have it on when travelling. Once I was walking under a balcony and it started raining. Turns out it’s not the rain but soup. The man told his wife her soup sucks and she decided to throw it away. It didn’t suck, I scooped a bit off my hair, chicken and potatoes as I recall.

(MORE)
BILL (CONT'D)
So, I complimented the woman on her cooking.

Perdy heaves a sigh.

BILL
...They eventually got divorced. Kate is my girlfriend now, we are getting married next month.

PERDY
Help me before I go crazy here!

BILL
Oh, calm down. I’m Bill by the way.

Perdy takes a hold of himself.

BILL
Come on, tell me your name. I’ll keep asking--

PERDY
Perdy.

BILL
You don’t say?! My middle name is Perdy, can you believe it? Mom used to call me Birdy. Bill, Perdy – Birdy. You can call me that if you like.

PERDY
I’ll have to ask you to leave me alone, man. Seriously.

He nears the elevator doors and shouts.

PERDY
Help! I have drawings for a tender, my whole company depends on me. It’s important. Somebody...

BILL
Oh, you have drawings for the tender! ...Know what I’d do if I were you? I’d dress as a janitor, learn where the chief of the tender committee is going to stay, clog his toilet, pretend I am there to clean it and bam— I take out the drawings...

PERDY
What are you smoking, man?
BILL
Oh, I don’t, but I won’t refuse it
if you have something on you.

PERDY
Somebody! Please help!

Bill puckers his lips. Perdy reaches for his phone.

PERDY
I’m calling 911.

But before he dials--

--they hear a click, the elevator jukes again. They wait for
it to move but it stops. A long moment passes before--

It glides up like nothing happened. It moves past the 21
floor, towards the 24.

BILL
It’s okay, I’ll go down, no worries.
I’m sure it won’t stop anymore.

PERDY
I really don’t care.

The elevator stops on the 24th. The doors open.

Bill watches Perdy grab his bag and leave.

BILL
Have a nice day, Perdy! See you at
the meeting!

Perdy doesn’t give Bill another look. He leaves.

A burly guy walks in and nods to Bill. It’s MERRILL. The
elevator closes. Merrill presses 21st.

He takes Bill’s bag.

MERRILL
You got us worried, Mr. McKintosh,
the airplane delay, now this... Are
you going to your room?

BILL
Yep.

MERRILL
They won’t start the meeting
without you.
BILL
It’s okay, they’ll get to mingle
and that never hurts. People
stopped talking to each other –
that’s the problem. I met a guy
here in the elevator, he refused to
talk to me. By the way--

Bill examines the bad, opens it.

Meanwhile he elevator stops at 21st, the doors open. Bill
signals Merrill to wait for him as he checks the bag.

BILL
Nope, this one is mine. I thought
maybe we swapped bags with that
man. Wanted to see his drawings.
Well, maybe he’ll take my advice
and clog up my toilet after all.
It’s too bad people lost their
sense of adventure.

He sighs. The elevator stops and they get out.

The elevator closes.

FADE OUT.