LEIF stands under a tree. He is wearing a raincoat and boots.
REED enters, wearing the same.

LEIF
You’re late.

REED
I had to cross at Puttyville and walk. With the bridge out, there’s no other way. How about you?

LEIF opens his raincoat, revealing a pair of Speedos.

LEIF
I swam.

REED
Damn. You could have drowned.

LEIF
I did. But I banged my head on a rock and came to at the last moment.

REED
I’m impressed, but also terrified. I look at you, there in your Speedo, and think now my chances of dying have risen exponentially.

LEIF
I wouldn’t say exponentially -- but definitely substantially. This is no small task. We are rescuing a Sector. We are rescuing a Region. We are rescuing a Company. We hold its fate in our talons. Now, if you are not up to that task, you can leave now, and resume your life of quiet desperation. Of sticky notes and cruising the Internet mindlessly until the next pointless
phone call comes in.

They stand and stare at each other.

REED
Who said anything about going anywhere?

LEIF
Good. Mackintosh should be here any minute.

REED
Amazing. And to think he is severely brain-damaged.

LEIF puts a finger to his lips.

LEIF
Shhhhh. He doesn’t know about that part -- if he did, I doubt I could have convinced him to escape from the locked ward at the hospital.

REED
Couldn’t we have just visited him?

LEIF
He insisted.

REED
I thought you insisted.

LEIF
Well, I insisted, too. We both insisted. Insistence was a strong theme in our discussion.

A man in a white hospital gown enters. This is MACKINTOSH.

MACKINTOSH
Hello.

LEIF
Mackintosh. Good of you to come.
REED
Hi.

LEIF
And how was the journey?

MACKINTOSH
Delightful once I got beyond the perimeter fence. It’s quite invigorating being hunted. And fun. They use live ammo!

LEIF
Good man. Let’s commence with the briefing.

MACKINTOSH
Let me draw you a picture.

MACKINTOSH takes a stick, and begins drawing in the mud.

MACKINTOSH
I apologize if this is a bit off, but my skull was crushed ever so slightly on the left side.

MACKINTOSH points at the various shapes he has drawn in the mud.

MACKINTOSH
These are the Japanese facilities. This is the bridge over the Ki-Cho-Wachee. And this is the Indian.

LEIF
The Indian.

MACKINTOSH
Chief Chief, I call him. The Chief Chief. He has a proper Indian name but I forgot it after my skull was crushed ever so slightly on the right side.

REED
You mean the left side.

MACKINTOSH
Well, actually both sides.

LEIF
What about this Indian?

MACKINTOSH
What about him? He’s key to this whole thing.

LEIF
Right, then. We’ll bribe him.

MACKINTOSH
He doesn’t want money. He wants love. He’s terribly lonely.

LEIF
A shopping bag full of cash can put love in a man’s heart. Rather quickly.

MACKINTOSH
He’s very sad. The river is flooded with his tears. It’s an attention-getting exercise.

LEIF
So, let me get this straight. Everything boils down to a depressed Indian?

MACKINTOSH
In a word, yes. The good news is that if you just hang with him, that can go a long way. Tell a few jokes. Hold his hand. Just show that you care. That’s what I was doing. Until I fell off the bridge and, you know, jiggled my brain.

REED
Wow. But you seem okay.
MACKINTOSH
I’m better than okay. I’m...

Several beats. He seems to have lost his train of thought.

MACKINTOSH
...Marvelous.

LEIF
Where can we find the Indian?

MACKINTOSH
That’s going to be tough. He’s quite private.

LEIF
But he wants companionship.

MACKINTOSH
Yes, but not anybody. He’s picky. He has high standards. He doesn’t just hang out with anybody.

LEIF
I can hang out with him.

MACKINTOSH
I don’t think so. You’re not his type. But, the tall fellow. He might hang out with you.

REED
Me?

MACKINTOSH
Yes, you. You have a kind face. And you’re quite tall. He’s partial to tall people.

LEIF
Fine. Take us to the Indian. Reed will soothe him with his kind face and gangly physique. I will wait outside.

MACKINTOSH
I can’t come. Chief Chief thinks I’m dead. That I died for him and that I run with the Ghost Buffalo now. It would be a shock and frankly an anti-climax for him to see me, alive, in a smock, covered with mud.

LEIF
Right. Tell us where to go.

MACKINTOSH draws a complicated diagram in the mud.

MACKINTOSH
And you want to go here. And then there. And then here. And then there, again. Do you follow?

REED
I think so...

MACKINTOSH
And following that, you want to go here, by way of there, and back to here.

LEIF
Great. We’re all set.

MACKINTOSH
One last thing. Chief Chief may not be an Indian.

LEIF
Who is an Indian these days?

MACKINTOSH
Precisely.

MACKINTOSH claws at his chest and collapses to the ground.

REED leans down, and MACKINTOSH whispers into his ear.

LEIF
What did he say?
REED
Something about it being Chili
Night at the hospital.

LEIF and REED stare down at MACKINTOSH, who is now stone still.

LEIF
Look at him. He’s extremely dead.

REED
Now he REALLY roams with the Ghost Buffalo.

LEIF
Running around outdoors at all hours in a drafty smock. He was asking for trouble.

REED
I feel bad. He’d be getting a rubdown now and watching cartoons if we hadn’t lured him out into this cruel, cold world.

LEIF
He died with his boots on. Or rather, his smock on. That’s all that matters. Now quick, let’s bury him before the hounds and helicopters arrive.

Sc. 6

REED and LEIF stand solemnly on either side of a large pile of leaves.

LEIF
Well, that will have to do. Who knew the water table was so high in these parts.

REED
It’s really kind of pretty. They should bury more people under leaves.
LEIF
I would like to say something.

REED
I don’t think that would be a good idea.

LEIF
Have a heart, man. This is Mackintosh’s sendoff. The only one he’ll ever get.

REED
Oh, I thought you meant say something to the authorities.

LEIF clears his throat.

LEIF
He was a good man and a loyal servant to our firm. He made Ambassador’s Club three times, and Golden Circle twice. He was current on all his credit cards. He loved his mother.

REED
Do you think?

LEIF
It’s a safe presumption.

REED
Amen.

LEIF
Do you wish to say something, as his successor?

REED
Mack, I wished I’d known you before you were brain-damaged. I’m sure you were much more coherent. I’ll try to do you proud. And I’ll work like hell to avoid your fate, running around the countryside in
a dirty hospital dress, foaming at the mouth, fleeing a vicious posse of...

LEIF
That’s enough. *Via con dios,*
Brother Mackintosh.

LEIF crosses himself.

LEIF
Okay, Eagle. Time to soar. Let’s go
catch us an Injun.

They exit.
Nicholas Platt, Jr. is a journalist by training who has spent the last two decades pursuing entrepreneurial ventures in media and now finance. He lives in Manhattan with his wife and family.