



By John Blowers

Two days later I walked into GE and was notified my job was being eliminated! Apparently, not everyone was pleased with the novel's content! While neither of these events was completely unforeseen, it's moments like this that cause one to reaffirm whether the current path is the right path.

A similar situation emerged during film development. After some test screenings of test footage with a test cast (detailed in the January and February issues of **Poker Pro**), I was now ready to take the market research and begin raising capital to move the project forward. However, another distraction presented itself. The largest economic development project in the history of New York was landing ten minutes from my front door and that company wanted me to be their first hire and top HR person in the area.

I was torn between staying focused on the dream and a comfortable way to support the two households I was now responsible for. When they offered me a package 50 percent more lucrative than my former executive job at GE, I decided to accept – for all the wrong reasons.

Eleven weeks later I was speaking to a sixth-grade class about careers. During the Q&A, the inevitable question about my salary came up. "Do what you love and the money will follow," was my diplomatic response. As I drove the six miles to my office, I chastised myself, while looking in the rearview mirror.

"You hypocrite, you don't love what you're doing and no amount of money will make up for that."

I resigned the next day.

THE UPSIDE

Fortunately, things started to click on

the movie project soon after. I had been consulting with a municipality and met a venture capitalist who was a fan of *Life on Tilt*. He agreed to put out some feelers about the film and, within two weeks, we had six production companies interested in the project. I agreed to take a meeting with one group, mostly because they were from New Orleans and I had heard how the film industry had grown dramatically in that area during the five years since Katrina. Unfortunately, the meeting was a disaster. I told the guy who set it up that we needed to move on.

Two hours later he surprised me by calling and requesting another meeting in one hour with some people connected to this same group. I was busy prepping my place for a poker event and in no mood to waste more time with this group, but he pressed me and sent an IMDB page of one of the participants. When I discovered he had worked on several nine-figure (no decimal point) productions, I made myself available.

After a great meeting, we decided to start moving forward. This producer had just finished a horror movie remake with Shannon Elizabeth, a person I thought would be helpful for the project. We discussed her potential involvement and he agreed to reach out to her. While she expressed initial interest, she was playing at the 2009 World Series of Poker and wouldn't be able to get the book for a couple of weeks. When I learned of this, I immediately contacted one of my poker friends in Vegas and he was kind enough to deliver a copy of the book to her at the Rio's Amazon Room. After flipping through the book between hands she contacted the producer, saying she'd like to meet.

FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS CAN BE A LONELY PATH

Suddenly I find myself in Las Vegas, hanging out at McFadden's at the Rio. The manager, Tim, is the brother of one of the actresses from our test cast and has assured me of privacy for my meeting with Shannon. Before I have too much time to ponder what Shannon will be like, she strolls in right on time flashing that great smile of hers. I am immediately impressed with how down to earth she is. Sure, she's strikingly beautiful, but she has an easygoing nature and conversation flows easily. I'm a bit embarrassed as she speaks highly of the book and its potential for a feature film.

We have a free-flowing exchange, during which I discover Shannon is a gracious person who thinks more deeply about things than I originally had given her credit for. I'm not sure if it's because she's a woman, an actress or a poker player – maybe all three – but she has a fresh perspective on the story line and how it should be delivered.

After about 90 minutes, we part company. She's off to Mexico and I've decided to play in Ante Up for Africa the next day. ♠

Next issue...Ante Up for Africa and other WSOP adventures.

