

Preface

Adam Peterson was one of the richest and most powerful men in the United States, but because he craved anonymity, he was not well known outside his circle of close associates. He lived in a modest home in Palo Alto and drove his five-year-old Ford to his office in San Jose every day. Adam was forty-three years old and spent most of the last twenty years building his business empire. He was six feet tall, balding, and at least twenty pounds overweight. He felt his personal appearance was unimportant, so he always wore jeans and polo shirts to work. When he wasn't busy, which was rare, he thought about his personal life and realized he never spent much time building relationships. He never married, and never had a serious relationship with a woman.

When he was twenty, he started a software company that produced games for handheld devices. But his games were different. They were fun to play and never became so difficult that they became frustrating. He charged a dollar a month for access to all of his games. After six months, he had over a million subscribers, and by the end of his third year that number had risen to more than twenty million. Then he convinced two of the major cell phone service providers to include his games on all their cell phones. He paid them a dime for each dollar he received from their users, and just a year later, Peterson Gaming was pulling in almost a hundred million dollars a month. It was the largest privately held company in the United States.

Adam began buying other companies, including a controlling interest in several smaller cell phone providers. Ten years after he started his company, he owned or controlled more than thirty companies with combined annual sales of more than fifteen billion dollars.

He dreamed about using his wealth to buy political influence, and when he had the money, that's exactly what he did. Because he wanted to remain anonymous, he employed a group of operatives to spread his wealth around, never contacting any politicians directly. He discovered it was fairly easy to influence politicians with cash, and at the age of thirty-seven, he had the ability to control the California legislature. He decided to extend his reach to the federal government as well. It was a little more expensive to influence members of the House and Senate, but not substantially so.

Now he had achieved his dream. But he still wasn't happy. He had always been liberal, and despite the fact that capitalism allowed him to realize his dream, he believed socialism was a superior form of government. His party lost the presidential election four years earlier and the republicans regained control of the House and Senate. Two years later, the democrats regained many of the seats they lost in the previous election, but the

republicans had maintained a slim majority in both the Senate and the House. He was sure the country was turning more liberal, and was positive with sufficient financial backing, a socialist could win in the next election.

He used his influence to get Cathy Mitchell, the socialist senator recently elected in a special election in Oregon, to be the Democrat's nominee for president. He spent more than three hundred million dollars to promote her to the American electorate, but she lost in a landslide. She only won five states, California, New York, Illinois, Oregon, and Washington. To make matters even worse, the Democrats lost all of their gains from the previous election. In the House, the Republicans now held a forty-seat majority, and controlled sixty-three seats in the Senate.

The election was ten days earlier and he had been thinking about what action he could take that would help the situation. He decided there was only one possible course of action. He called his assistant, Ellen Miller, and told her to set up a meeting with all of his political operatives within the next forty-eight hours. The meeting was scheduled for the following Monday, at 10:00 AM.

He arrived at the meeting room at precisely 10:00, walked in, and received a standing ovation from his employees. He smiled and walked to the podium in the front of the room.

“Good morning. To get right to the point I, like all of you, am very upset about the election results. I’ve been thinking about what course of action we could possibly take that would help with our situation. I realized late last week that there is only one thing we can do. That is to secede from the United States. We will become our own country, with our own laws, and more importantly, our own government. California’s economy is the fifth largest in the world. There’s no reason we couldn’t make it on our own.”

Adam paused to wait for a reaction. For a few seconds everyone was silent. Then someone stood and began to applaud. Moments later everyone in the meeting room was standing and applauding as well.

Adam smiled and nodded indicating for them to sit. When the room became quiet, he continued. “Obviously, we must plan this very carefully. The United States government is not going to sit idly by when they find out what we plan to do. We must be prepared to fight for what we believe in. We don’t have an army, but we do have the ability to put an economic stranglehold on the United States Government. I want each of you to contact the politicians you work with and ask them how they feel about the idea. Feel free to threaten them if necessary. While you’re working on that, I’ll put together an economic plan to bring those assholes in DC to their knees.”

Everyone stood up and began to applaud again. Adam smiled, then left the podium and walked out of the room.

I The Plan

After the meeting, Adam went back to his office. As he passed Ellen's desk, he asked her to come with him. She wasn't at the meeting, but she knew what Adam wanted to do. She told him bluntly that his plan would never work, but she would help him anyway.

Ellen joined Peterson Gaming shortly after Adam formed the company. She was twenty-three at the time and had just graduated from U.C. Davis with a degree in computer engineering. She started her career as a programmer, but Adam quickly realized she had some great ideas for marketing. So, when he formed a marketing department, he put Ellen in charge.

Two years later, Adam promoted her and she became Vice-President, and his assistant. That was almost fifteen years ago, and he knew he needed her. She was a voice of reason and had the ability to calm him down when he lost his temper, which was a fairly frequent occurrence.

Ellen walked in and said dryly, "I'm sure they were all thrilled with your idea."

"Yes, it appeared that way. Now, if I could only convince you that it's a good idea, I would be a happy man."

"Sorry to burst your bubble; you know how I feel about it."

"Yes, I do. Anyway, I want you to compile a list of California based companies that have large federal contracts to supply goods and services. I'm specifically interested in companies that are the sole supplier of the products they sell."

"Are you going to ask them to stop selling to the feds?"

"No, I want them to continue to supply their products, but at substantially increased prices. Then we'll take the increased profits from them to fund our new country."

"What will you do if they refuse?"

Adam smiled and said, "That's easy. We'll take control of the company. I'll make that abundantly clear when I meet with them."

"So, you're going to give up your precious anonymity?"

"I have no choice. How long do you think it will take to compile the list?"

"Give me a week."

“Okay, but not a day longer.”

Ellen wanted to say, “Do it yourself. I quit!”, but instead she said, “Yes, sir.”

During the next few days, all of his political operatives called to give him a report about how things went with the legislators. Almost all liked the idea, but the general consensus was that they wanted to have a detailed plan before they would consider supporting it publicly.

Ellen had the list completed right on time. It was sitting on Adam’s desk when he arrived at his office on Monday, November 25th. He quickly read through the list. There were seventy-three companies listed. Most of them supplied parts for the military. The companies varied in size from as few as twenty-five employees to an electronics company with over thirty thousand.

Next, he had to figure out how to approach them. He decided to start with the smaller companies. He selected Becker Aerospace for his first contact. The company had fifty-seven employees. They manufactured several key components for jet fighters used by all of the branches of the military.

He spent the next several hours researching the company. Their sales in the previous year were almost two hundred fifty million dollars, and all of their sales were to the federal government. His research revealed that the sole owner of the company was Harold Becker. He graduated from UCLA with a degree in mechanical engineering. After he graduated, he joined the Air Force. During his four-year stint in the Air Force, he spent his time managing aircraft maintenance people. When he left the Air Force, he borrowed money to start Becker Aerospace. Somehow, Harold Becker managed to acquire the rights to the products they were currently manufacturing, and his company was the sole supplier of those aircraft components.

Adam began to have second thoughts about contacting Becker Aerospace because he was concerned Harold Becker might be a conservative. However, he decided that if he could convince Becker to support secession, he could probably convince anyone.

He called Becker Aerospace. When the receptionist answered the phone, he asked to speak with Harold Becker. The receptionist asked who was calling, and then she put the call through. The next thing Adam heard was a man saying, “This is Harold Becker. How can I assist you, Mr. Peterson?”

Adam replied, “Thank you for taking my call, Mr. Becker. I have a matter of some urgency I would like to discuss with you in person. Could I stop by your office tomorrow morning?”

“I believe you are the owner of Peterson Gaming. Is that correct?”

“Yes, it is. However, this matter has nothing to do with my company. I need your help with something that I don’t feel comfortable discussing over the phone.”

“Okay, how about 10:00?”

“That’ll be perfect. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Peterson Gaming owned a small business jet and Adam was a licensed pilot. He arrived at the San Jose Airport a few minutes after six, filed a flight plan to go to the Burbank Airport, and left shortly before seven. After landing, he rented a car and drove to Becker Aerospace. He was standing at the receptionist’s desk at five minutes to ten. He gave the woman at the desk his card and said he had an appointment with Mr. Becker.

Adam was wearing a blue business suit instead of his usual attire. He was pleased when, a few minutes later, a tall, thin man, dressed in jeans and a polo shirt, walked into the reception area. He smiled at Adam and said, “Good morning, Mr. Peterson. I’m Harold Becker. Please come in.”

Adam stood, shook hands with Harold and said, “I’m pleased to meet you. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.”

“I must tell you that I’m really curious why you wanted to meet with me. I don’t believe we have common interests.”

“I’ll explain everything. Can we meet somewhere private?”

“Sure, the conference room is empty. Would you like some coffee?”

“No, thank you.”

They walked to the conference room and sat on opposite sides of the table. Then Adam put his briefcase on the table and removed a device that looked like a cell phone. He turned it on, waved it around a little, and put it back into his briefcase. Harold smiled and said, “There’s no reason to check for bugs.”

“Mr. Becker, I need your assurance that the information I’m about to discuss with you will remain confidential.”

“You have it. So, tell me, why are you here?”

“I represent a group of people who were devastated with the results of the election. We believe some action must be taken in order to be sure we maintain our goals for California.”

“I’m sorry to inform you that I’m not the least bit upset with the results of the election.”

“You are, of course, entitled to your opinion. However, because your company is based in California, you will be affected by the actions we are about to take. We plan to secede from the United States and form our own country.”

Harold stared at Adam for several seconds before saying, “You’re serious, aren’t you?”

“Yes, I’m absolutely serious. This is going to happen. The legislature will vote on the plan within the next month.”

Again, Harold paused before he replied, “Aside from the fact that I think that’s a really awful idea, do you really believe the United States government is going to let you do that?”

“Mr. Becker, your company is one of many that are the sole supplier for items the United States government needs. If they try to stop us, they will suddenly find themselves unable to purchase the goods and services they need. Additionally, we will not allow goods destined for the United States that arrive at our ports to move through our new country. We believe those two factors alone are sufficient to keep the United States military at bay. Of course, we’ll need a lot of money to make this plan a success, and the only way we can do that is to get it from the United States. So, we’re going to ask all of the companies based in California to raise their prices substantially and send the excess profit to the California treasury. That includes your company, Mr. Becker.”

“And if I refuse?”

“Then the California government will simply nationalize your company.”

“So, you plan to model our new country after Nazi Germany?”

“No, but I won’t allow anyone to stand in the way of our ultimate success. If you do as we ask, you will continue to operate Becker Aerospace as you see fit.”

“Until California makes additional demands. Then the threats will start again. Don’t you think you should at least allow people the opportunity to vote for or against secession? After all, they did that in England when they left the EU.”

“We don’t believe that’s necessary. The residents of California elected people to represent them in the legislature, and they have confidence in their ability to govern.”

“Mr. Peterson, I gave you my promise that I won’t discuss this with anyone, and I will abide by that. However, you have worn out your welcome. Please leave.”

“Okay, I’m leaving. But rest assured, we’ll be speaking again.”

Adam closed his briefcase, stood up, and left the conference room. The meeting went exactly as he suspected it would. He was positive that when the time came, Becker would acquiesce to the California government’s demands.

Over the next few days, Adam met with several more companies based in the bay area. In every case, the companies agreed to provide whatever assistance was needed to make the secession a reality.

Adam set up another meeting with his political operatives. The meeting was held in a large conference room at a nearby hotel. When everyone was seated, he asked each of them to give a report. The general consensus was that the legislature would do whatever Adam felt was needed. Then he told them about his meetings with the California based companies. So far, everything was moving along smoothly. Then he told them he wanted checkpoints built at every place a major highway crosses the California border.

Someone asked, “Won’t that give away our plan?”

Adam replied, ‘There’s nothing to give away. I guarantee you; the President is already aware of our plans. I’m sure that if I can buy legislators, the feds can buy them too. But that cannot deter us from our goal. They won’t do anything until we make our secession public, so we must be prepared to act decisively. The purpose of the checkpoints is to prevent goods from being shipped out of California by truck without the payment of fees. We will also be checking ships and planes before they will be allowed to leave. Additionally, any banking transaction that exceeds one hundred thousand dollars will have to be approved by a banking regulator.’

“Will we allow people to leave?”

Adam answered, “Of course, but we will limit what they can take with them.”

“So, if someone sells their house, they won’t be able to leave the state with the proceeds from the sale. Is that right?”

“Exactly. Real estate transactions for people leaving California will be heavily taxed. The same thing will apply to the sale of businesses. The whole idea is that money generated in California stays in California.”

“Don’t you think the United States will reciprocate and prevent us from buying the things we need from them?”

“That’s a definite possibility. So, if we need something we don’t make here, we’ll purchase it from countries other than the United States. However, I believe we can be largely self-sufficient. We can grow our own food, supply our own energy, and manufacture the things our people need. Initially there’ll probably be some shortages, but I feel confident they will be short term. Remember, the United States does not manufacture nearly what they used to. They import far more than they make.”

“Do you plan on us having our own currency?”

“No, we’ll continue to use the United States dollar. If they give us a hard time, we’ll switch to the Chinese yuan. It’s as widely accepted as the United States dollar.”

Adam paused for a few moments and then continued. “These laws I just spoke about, and much more, will be sent to each of you in the next ten days. I want you to make sure they’re submitted to the legislature and put into the proper format so they can be voted on immediately after secession. Also, if your contacts don’t feel comfortable with this move, feel free to apply whatever pressure is necessary to insure these measures pass.”

Someone asked, “After secession, who will be in charge? Will Governor Nelson assume control of our country?”

“There will be a special election within sixty days after secession to elect a president and vice-president. Governor Nelson will become interim president and retain that position until the results of the election can be determined.”

“Are you going to run for president?”

“I haven’t made that decision yet. If any of you have any questions or problems, please contact me. The next few months are going to be both hectic and very exciting. I’m sure there will be some roadblocks along the way, so it’s imperative that I’m informed about them as soon as possible. Thank you all for coming. This meeting is adjourned”