

Scene from the RABBIT TRAP by J.P. Miller

SPELLMAN:

Eddie, come here. Let em show you. The old crumb wouldn't accept our dimensions.
Can you beat that? Every time I try to save a buck---! He's got all the money in the world. Why should he worry? Look at this Eddie. (Eddie hangs back) Starting at column 32---let's see.

EDDIE:

Could I tell you something?

SPELLMAN:

Here's 32---now, all the way across to ---What?

EDDIE:

I have to tell you something.

SPELLMAN:

(Studying the print) Well, tell me.

EDDIE:

It's pretty important.

SPELLMAN:

(Looking up) More important than this?

EDDIE:

I think so.

SPELLMAN:

I don't think so. But say it.

EDDIE:

I'm going back to Vermont.

SPELLMAN:

You're what?

EDDIE:

This morning.

SPELLMAN:

You're not going anywhere

EDDIE:

I just came by to explain.

SPELLMAN:

Explain! Explain! Did you see that man that just walked out of here? He cut my throat from ear to ear! Campbell-Cherokee is bleeding me to death! Did you hear what I just told you? He didn't accept our dimensions! Do you know what that means? It means I don't want explanations about anything from you or anybody else! I want drawings! Not explanations! Drawings! And fast! No kidding, Eddie sometimes I wonder about you.

EDDIE:

My wife is waiting for me. I—

SPELLMAN:

She'll have to wait. I've got a \$250,000 job waiting for you.

EDDIE:

If you'll let me explain---I promised---

SPELLMAN:

You came in here yesterday with some screwball talk about a rabbit. Is this the same deal? If it is, don't worry about it. I told you I'd take care of it.

EDDIE:

But I have to explain---

SPELLMAN:

(Indicating prints) Do you see this? Wrong! See this? Wrong! This! Wrong!! Wrong!!! Wrong!!! At six o'clock this morning, while you were still stuck in your warm little bed, I was standing at the airport, waiting for Corcoran to land and tell me all this stuff is wrong! And you want to talk about rabbits!

EDDIE:

I wanted to try to explain before I left.

SPELLMAN:

Well, let me explain something to you: if you walk out on me in the middle of this job—

EDDIE:

I wasn't planning to do that.

SPELLMAN:

That's what it sounded like.

EDDIE:

I know somebody who could take my place temporarily.

SPELLMAN:
For nothing?

EDDIE:
No.

SPELLMAN:
You want me to accept a stranger in the middle of a crucial job, and pay two salaries to get him? Did you forget I'm paying you a salary?

EDDIE:
No.

SPELLMAN:
Well, don't. Because if I have to hire somebody to take your place, it won't be on a temporary basis. (He begins to study the print again), ignoring Eddie, who tries to steal himself for the next move).

EDDIE:
If you----mean that---

SPELLMAN:
And I do.

EDDIE:
If you mean that, I---think you should make an effort to see my point of view.

SPELLMAN:
Why?

EDDIE:
Because I'm a person!

(Spellman ponders this a moment, then looks up from the blueprint with a new thought that is difficult for him.)

SPELLMAN:
I haven't been giving you credit for that, have I?

EDDIE:
Not all the time.

SPELLMAN:
I could of listened to you to start with, and we'd be done with it. Go ahead, Eddie. What's your problem?

EDDIE:
Thanks. Well---

SPELLMAN:
But try to make it fast, huh?

EDDIE:
It's complicated. A lot of things enter to it. For one thing, Abby has always felt that I haven't had enough vacation time, and I----

SPELLMAN:
We'll get back to that.

EDDIE:
For that matter, I agree with her.

SPELLMAN:
Let's get to the main problem.

EDDIE:
This is all tied in. It's hard to nail down to one thing. I guess the main thing--- I know you're going to laugh at this, but I hope I can make you understand--- the main thing is the rabbit trap.

SPELLMAN:
We went through this.

EDDIE:
I didn't make it clear yesterday. You see, it's not a matter of a rabbit so much as it's a matter of what Abby and Duncan think of me. I think if I want Duncan to grow up with any kind of principles, I have to set the example. I can't make a promise to him and then break it.

SPELLMAN:
Eddie, one of the things I've always liked about you is, you're sentimental. I'm sentimental myself, about my own family. But, take my word for it, Eddie, kids don't know or care anything about principles. Give a boy a bag of marbles and he'll forget the biggest broken promise in the world. I know. I didn't raise two kids without learning a few things.

EDDIE:
He thinks a rabbit is starving to death in that trap. I don't think he'd forget that.

SPELLMAN:
He'll forget it. You'll take him something.

EDDIE:

I don't think I'd want him to forget it. I don't think I'd forget it. I know it's only a rabbit, but---

SPELLMAN:

(Grabs the phone) Peter--- wait a minute ---(to Eddie) Eddie---look---were you finished with your explanation? Is there anything else? I mean I don't want to stop you. Pete can wait a minute.

EDDIE:

I think that's all. Well, Abby enters into it, too. She said a few things--- her attitude toward our relationship was--- one of the things that led me to--- make a decision. She seemed to feel that--- well, never mind--- that's the main thing--- the rabbit trap.

SPELLMAN:

I see. (Into the phone) Pete---sorry. Listen, Corcoran was here, and he wouldn't accept our dimensions on the new stuff. Yeah. He's afraid we'll make a dollar on the deal. We've got to start on a line from--- (Looks at plans) column 32 ---over to the elevator shaft and resize the whole thing, so you and Garry can't lay that out. I want you to send Matty in here to help Garry and Eddie.

(Eddie has assumed Spellman's attitude meant agreement. The mention of his name shocks him.)

SPELLMAN:

Yeah Garry and Eddie are going to need him.

(Eddie points to himself and shakes his head "No," but Spellman looks through him).

SPELLMAN:

Corcoran is on his way out there. Be nice to him. Maybe you'll get a chance to push him off the roof. (He hangs up.)

EDDIE:

I thought you understood what I said!

SPELLMAN:

I did.

EDDIE:

But you told him I'd be there!

SPELLMAN:

You will.

EDDIE:
I told you---

SPELLMAN:

(Harshly) Look Eddie, let's quit kidding each other, shall we? You're not going anywhere, and you know it. You knew it when you came in here. Your wife put you up to this, and your heart wasn't in it from the start. I'm not dumb enough to be taken in by a sob gag like that. There's money at stake. Big money. You know and I know you're not going to walk out on a job you've been in for eight years, just to get a lousy rabbit out of a lousy trap. I'm a man of principle, too, up to a point, but a man's got to be realistic.

Tell your wife--- going back to Vermont would cost you your job, and tell her if she doesn't believe it to call me and I'll confirm it. That ought to patch things up at home for you. Now here--- take these and start sizing them up to standard--- from 32 over to the shafts.

(Eddie takes the drawings.)

SPELLMAN:
Okay, boy?

EDDIE:
Okay.