

Reaching his own bank, he nodded to a familiar face and was shown down a side corridor. His eye took in the deep pile carpeted corridor leading in hallelujah ceremony to the adjoining salubrious boardroom built for more audacious days. Entering a stripped down office with plain beige carpet, pine desk and two standard plastic chairs, he felt his throat squeezing vice-like and took a deep breath. The tools of an interrogator, he mused. Enter Tim Dineen. A wiry, twitchy sort who fiddled incessantly with pages in what ought to be a paperless office. No small-talking, soft-featured, blustery bubble-banker here.

“Brian.”

“Tim.”

*Problem? Or am I imagining it?*

“Soft out.”

“Yera, not bad.”

“Carry an umbrella and you’ll be grand.” *Small talk. Not good. Here goes.*

“We’ve come to a decision Brian.” His face acquired the look of a lonesome donkey – long and unconvinced.

“We’ve decided not to sanction this draw-down.”

The donkey stiffened his resolve with an opening and closing of his hands and nodded in anticipation of a reply. For the briefest of moments, Brian considered mounting an attack, a retort, a case for the accused, but then something changed. Shifting his weight to the front of the chair as the pithy words of banking parlance sank in, his breathing fell into time with the regular tick of the clock on the wall behind him. His hands in turn fell easily into his lap and as he touched his tongue off the top of his mouth, it occurred to him that the sum of his parts had conflated into a meditative poise. Deep breath.

“The numbers just don’t hack it. The way things are we’d have to secure a lot more collateral. If you – ”

“– Ok, ok. I get it. Look, I need some air.”

With that, he rose from the prisoner’s chair and with as much dignity as he could muster, marched to the exit. His walk did not let him down but his heart was anchored at the bottom of the lake.