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Period 8
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Intellegence

It all started in the interesting city of New York. The smog ridden streets were filled with people. On a quiet little street corner, there was a small shop owned by Harvey Goldstein. Mr. Goldstein was a well-to-do merchant. He traded in all sorts of imports, and was generally a moral man. He did not buy goods from sweatshops nor did he ever cheat a customer. At 1:31 P.M. on May 15, 1996, he stepped out of his shop on the Upper East Side of Manhattan to meet a man who dealt in Asian silk screens downtown. He had been listening to traffic radio AM 530 and, deciding that traffic was too heavy, planned to take the subway. Goldstein was a smart man, very smart, who had built his store and his fortune out of blood, toil, tears, and sweat. Goldstein was also an upstanding member of the Jewish community whom everybody loved, but he never did anything extra, out of the ordinary, for anyone but himself.

On the other side of town there was a new arrival to the city. This man's name was Running Bear. He was an American Indian who had gone to New York to seek his fortune; however, he soon fell upon hard times. He had lived a life of monetary deprivation on the plains of Colorado, and had proceeded to New York by Amtrak with only a dollar and a dream. Things did not go as planned, though; he could not find a job and had taken to panhandling and sleeping in the streets. His dreams, no doubt influenced by the fumes coming up from the sewer, were of money. A good man who only wanted to work and make a decent living, he had gone to the welfare office a few blocks north of Goldstein's shop. He was sent to the employment office downtown, and decided to take the subway. No doubt, the welfare officials and social workers sent him away with a sad shrug and a sigh. They knew he was a simple man.

The two men saw each other waiting for the same train downtown. Interestingly enough, they were the only two waiting for the subway car, as a terrorist group had threatened to bomb a train and New Yorkers had generally taken the threat seriously. They looked at each other briefly, sized one another up, and got on the train. While on the train, Running Bear began fiddling with a hatchet; tossing it up in the air over and over again in boredom. Mr. Goldstein was staring at a quarter moving around on the ground debating whether or not he should pick it up. Just as Mr. Goldstein reached down to pick up the quarter, Running Bear dropped his hatchet on the ground. Both of them took a glance at the other; just then an explosion rocked the tracks. The Islamic militants had not been bluffing this time. Each man died without knowing exactly what had happened to him and both of the men's thoughts had been of money. Goldstein was thinking about refinancing his mortgage and taking a loan out on the equity in his car in order to purchase new inventory and make a solid profit. Running Bear had been thinking of how nice it would be to find a suitcase full of hundred-dollar bills.

The men both arrived at the gates of heaven. St. Peter, following his superiors' orders, knew that he needed these men to fill the quotas for the new affirmative-action plan put into place; what better than a Native American and a Jew to place into spots that would have previously been occupied by only Christians. St. Peter knew that these men weren't actually qualified for entrance into heaven, but he devised a plan to help.

"Running Bear" he said, "you were a hard-working guy, and you never did anything wrong. However, you never did anything right either. I think, however, that this fault was due to the fact that you had no money. Therefore, I am going

to send you back to Earth to live for five years. There, you will have a chance to show me how you would act without worrying about material corruption. See, I'm granting you one wish before you return, and I am sure you will use this wish to remedy your former problems."

"I wish for a million dollars." said Running Bear without thinking.

"So be it." said St. Peter, and Running Bear returned to Earth with his suitcase of cash. Next, he pulled Goldstein's file.

"Well, Mr. Goldstein," he said, "you were certainly a moral man. However, you never did anything out of the ordinary. You were always straightforward, but you never gave anything back. You never saved anybody's life or did community service. Therefore, I am going to send you back to Earth for five years to attempt to correct these circumstances. You, of course, have one wish as well."

Goldstein thought for a while. Running Bear had gotten the money the easy way and had abandoned any sense of work ethic. Goldstein thought that he would teach him a lesson and help out the community at the same time. Thus he would gain his salvation. "Give me the knowledge to earn a million dollars." With this wish Goldstein could earn a million dollars a million times over instead of only having a set amount.

"A very wise wish," exclaimed St. Peter, and he granted the wish.

Goldstein then proceeded back to Earth. There he decided to teach running bear his lesson. Mr. Goldstein used his knowledge on Running Bear; he got him extremely drunk and was able to swindle away the Native American's money. The next morning Running Bear Realized what had happened and went to reclaim his money.

"You will end up in hell for this," Said Running Bear. "And I will no longer be accepted because I will have to go work or beg again and will not have time to serve."

Goldstein smiled. "You should have been more wise in your decision. All is not lost. You, see, I'm not pocketing your money. I'm going to invest it in a social service center on the Upper East side to help people train and find employment."

"You'll still go to hell for casting me out on the street." said the Indian.

"Not so fast," Goldstein said. "I have plans for you. You say you need a little money, and don't mind working, yes? But at the same time you need to perform some good deeds to achieve salvation. Here's what I'll do. You'll be the head social worker at the new institution. That way, you'll get a small salary and a big chance to help people with whom you've shared a common plight. Both of our problems will be solved. I'm sorry I didn't ask you for the money, but you wouldn't have given it to me; instead you would have let someone else swindle you and you would have gone to hell. So I decided to use the most powerful weapon in the world."

"You are very wise, sir," said Running Bear "but what is the most powerful weapon in the world? Knives? Guns?"

"No. Intelligence."

Intelligence can be the most powerful and benevolent force in the world when used correctly.

