

LAST CHANCE VENTURE CAPITALIST

Seymour Fanning always seemed a little odd to his classmates in high school. That oddity led him to his eventual career. While not high on the popularity scale, he ranked very high when it came to working with numbers. With numerous financial successes, he managed to amass a substantial fortune. He did have one early, complete business disaster, and it haunted him. He vowed to never let a lack of capital be the source of entrepreneurial failure again. He did not limit his vow to his own efforts, as he extended it to other aspiring profit-makers too. Thus, Last Chance Venture Capitalist was born.

I am pleased to say that Mr. Fanning allowed me to sit in on a typical day with applicants for financial funding in his office. At 9:00 am, Justin McDougal sat down in front of Seymour's desk.

“Good morning, Mr. McDougal,” said Seymour. “Mr. Thornton, here, will be sitting in on our

interview today. I trust you will not have a problem with that?”

“No, no, it’s perfectly alright,” replied Mr. McDougal.

“Okay, your application says you want to open a restaurant,” said Seymour. “Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Mr. McDougal. “I’m going to call it McDougal’s.”

“What type of cuisine were you going to offer?”

“Primarily, hamburgers, chicken nuggets, and French fries,” said Mr. McDougal.

“I see,” said Seymour. “There are already quite a few hamburger restaurants out there. What would make yours different?”

“Our specialty hamburger would be multiple layers with a special sauce, and we would call it a Big MacD.”

“Mr. McDougal, that sounds an awful lot like McDonald’s. Are you aware of the restaurant chain with that name?”

“Oh, sure, but that’s McDonald’s and we would be McDougal’s. Our hero would be a clown

with a blue nose and floppy blue shoes. They have golden arches, and we would have golden corn cobs. Plus, we would only serve lettuce and tomatoes grown in California, as well as only potatoes grown in Idaho.”

“And you figure those would be the selling points?” asked Seymour.

“Oh, absolutely,” answered Mr. McDougal.

“I see,” said Seymour. “Well ... it appears as though all your paperwork is in order, and we will give your application due consideration. You should receive a reply in 7 to 10 business days.”

“Oh ... uh ... okay,” said Mr. McDougal. “Uh ... thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

“Miss Jones, could you please send in the next applicant.”

“Yes, sir,” answered Miss Jones. “Mr. Atherton is on his way.”

“Welcome, Mr. Atherton. Please have a seat.”

“Thank you,” replied Mr. Atherton.

“Okay, it says here that you want to open an apple orchard in South Florida. Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Mr. Atherton.

“Where have you lived most of your life, Mr. Atherton?” inquired Seymour.

“Fergus Falls, Minnesota.”

“I’ve heard it can get rather cold there and, of course, South Florida is a tropical climate. That would be quite a change. What made you decide on this particular northern crop for a hot, humid tropical locale like South Florida?”

“It was actually my brother-in-law’s idea. He recently returned from a vacation in South Florida, and he has been churning out ideas left and right since then.”

“Oh, what does your brother-in-law do for a living?” asked Seymour.

“He’s a taxidermist.”

“And you trust your brother-in-law in such matters?”

“Yes, sir,” said Mr. Atherton. “It has been amazing what he has come up with on his return. There have been things that I never would have thought possible before.”

“Did something happen while he was in Florida?” asked Seymour.

“Yes, sir. He has had tremendous revelation since the incident.”

“The incident?”

“Yes. On the last day of his South Florida vacation, he was walking under a coconut palm and a coconut fell on his head.”

“So, he has gotten all kinds of good ideas, including an apple orchard in South Florida, since the coconut fell on his head?”

“Oh, yes, sir,” answered Mr. Atherton.

“I see,” said Seymour. “Well ... it appears as though all your paperwork is in order, and we will give your application due consideration. You should receive a reply in 7 to 10 business days.”

“Oh ... uh ... okay,” said Mr. Atherton. “Uh ... thank you.”

“Well, I think we have time for one more interview before lunch,” said Seymour. “Miss Jones, could you please send in the next applicant.”

“Ah, good morning, Mr. Frazier,” said Seymour.

“Good morning, sir.”

“Okay, I see that you want to open a weed farm. Is that correct?”

“Yes, sir.”

“By weed, are you referring to marijuana?” asked Seymour.

“Oh, no, sir,” answered Mr. Frazier. “I mean all kinds of weeds. You know, like what grow in lawns and landscape beds.”

“I see,” said Seymour. “And you feel there would be a big demand for weeds?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Mr. Frazier. “I have done a great deal of research on the matter. I believe it is all a matter of supply and demand.”

“Correct me if I’m wrong, sir,” said Seymour. “But aren’t weeds something that most people want to get rid of rather than purchase?”

“That’s the beauty of it,” said Mr. Frazier. “I can’t find any other weed supplier out there. So, I would have a virtual monopoly on the market. Now, since the herbicide market is quite lucrative and if all the herbicides work as well as they advertise them, then pretty soon all the weeds will be killed. If all the weeds are dead, then the herbicide manufacturers won’t have a market for their weed killers. So, in order to keep selling herbicides, they will have to have more weeds.”

“And, being the only weed farm out there, they will have to come to you,” stated Seymour.

“Exactly.”

“Well, I can certainly see the rationale for such an endeavor, Mr. Frazier. I will give your application to our staff horticulturist to review. We will give your application due consideration and you should receive a reply in 7 to 10 business days.”

“Oh ... uh ... thank you,” said Mr. Frazier.
“Thank you.”

“It is lunchtime, Mr. Thornton, and I am hungry,” said Seymour. “I have a powerful hankering for a Big Mac at McDonald’s. Would you care to join me?”

“I appreciate the offer, Mr. Fanning, but I heard they serve lettuce there from Florida. Thank you for allowing me to bear witness to some future entrepreneurs.”

“You are quite welcome, Mr. Thornton. Did you find this session enlightening?”

“Quite,” I replied. “Quite.”