

WE DON'T NEGOTIATE!

By Ben Gillman

*The President of the United States is at his desk.*

GENERAL: Mister President, we have an urgent phone call for you! It's urgent!

POTUS: Thank you, General Arminhammer. Put it through!

*The President of the United States picks up the phone.*

POTUS: Hello. This is the President.

*MAXIMILLIAN VILLAIN is on the other line.*

VILLAIN: Hello, Mr. President. It is an honor to be speaking with you.

GENERAL: You've got to find out who it is, Mr. President. You've got to find out who it is.

POTUS: Who is this?

VILLAIN: My name is Maximillian Villain, and I currently have a nuclear weapon hidden somewhere in one of your greatest cities.

*The President covers the phone and confers with The General.*

POTUS: It's an evil terrorist, General. What do I do?

GENERAL: You've got to stand firm, sir. You've got to stand firm.

POTUS: Got it. *(into the phone)* Look here, Mr. Villain. I don't know who you think you're talking to, but I'm the President. No one threatens me.

GENERAL: Great job, Mr. President. Great job!

POTUS: Why do you do that?

GENERAL: Do what, sir? Do what?

POTUS: You always repeat everything you say. It's really distracting.

GENERAL: As a General I always need to make maximum impact. Now get back to that call, Mr. President. Get back to that call.

VILLAIN: I must say, Mister President Man. You are very bold with the lives of your peoples. I will detonate if you don't meet my demands.

POTUS: That's never going to happen. We do not negotiate with terrorists!

GENERAL: That is exactly the U.S. policy, Mr. President. That is...

POTUS: ... Exactly the U.S. policy. I know, I know.

VILLAIN: I'm very sorry to hear you say that, Mr. President. I guess I'll just have to go ahead and detonate in... 3... 2... 1...

POTUS: Wait, wait, wait! Just out of curiosity. What are your demands?

VILLAIN: I thought you might listen to reason.

GENERAL: Mr. President, it doesn't matter what his demands are. You cannot negotiate with terrorists. You cannot negotiate with terrorists.

POTUS: Yeah, I know! But we're talking about a nuclear bomb here. Shouldn't we at least here him out. (*into the phone*) Go ahead, Mr. Villain. What are your demands?

VILLAIN: To stop me from detonating my bomb, I demand that you pay me one American dollar entirely in American nickels!

POTUS: Wait a second, I didn't catch that. Did you say one dollar?

VILLAIN: Yes, one dollar. Entirely in nickels.

POTUS: Well, that doesn't sound unreasonable.

GENERAL: No, Mr. President. The United States does not negotiate with terrorists! We do not negotiate.

POTUS: Would you stop it! I heard you the first time! But we're talking about a dollar in change. I could get that out of the Vice President's couch.

GENERAL: But it's the principle of the thing!

POTUS: It's only a dollar.

GENERAL: It's the principle of the...

POTUS: Alright, alright! (*into the phone*) Mr. Villain, no deal! I will not negotiate with terrorists.

VILLAIN: In that case, say good-bye to one of your great capital. In 3... 2... 1...

POTUS: Wait, wait, wait! Maybe we can work something out!

GENERAL: No, Mr. President! No!

POTUS: Mr. Villain, what about if I gave you 75 cents and it's all in pennies.

VILLAIN: Hmmmm... I'm listening.

GENERAL: Mr. President, I cannot let you do this! You cannot do this!

POTUS: *(to General)* I know, but listen, they're pennies they're basically worthless.

GENERAL: Pennies are the ideal around which this entire nation is built. They cost more to produce than they are actually worth. It's the American standard. The American standard.

POTUS: Damnit, you're right!

VILLAIN: I have decided to accept your offer for the pennies!

POTUS: I rescind my offer, Mr. Villain. I will not let you blackmail this country.

VILLAIN: Are you really willing to live with your decision, Mr. President?

*The President looks to the General. The General nods his head.*

POTUS: I refuse to negotiate with terrorists.

VILLAIN: I'm warning you, I've hidden the bomb in your capital city.

GENERAL: You've got to stick to your guns, Mr. President. You've got to stick to your guns.

POTUS: You really are an idiot.

VILLAIN: I will detonate in 3...

POTUS: General, are we sure about this?

GENERAL: Yes, sir. Yes.

VILLAIN: 2...

POTUS: It's only 75 cents!

GENERAL: It's the dignity of America! It's dignity!

VILLAIN: 1... Say good-bye to the great city of Tripoli!

POTUS & GENERAL: Tripoli!

POTUS: We don't have a great city of Tripoli.

VILLAIN: You don't? Am I talking to President Muammar Gaddafi?

POTUS: No, this is the President of the United States.

VILLAIN: Oh... Oops, I must have dialed the wrong number. My mistake.

GENERAL: Well, we really dodged a bullet there. We really dodged a...

POTUS: Oh, shut up!

THE END