

CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE FIRED

Written by

Matt Herold

4709 1/4 Fulton Ave.
Sherman Oaks, CA 91423
(818) 253-1895

INT. OFFICE - MORNING

MR. ERIC WHEATLEY, a mid-40s middle manager, sits at a desk in an otherwise empty office. He is leafing through a file folder when MARK - fresh-faced, well-dressed, early-30s - enters carrying a box of things for his new desk.

ERIC
(stands to greet Mark)
There he is! And early, no less.
Knew we hired the right guy.

MARK
Thank you, Mr. Wheatley.

Eric shakes Mark's hand and takes the box for him.

ERIC
Welcome to Company, Incorporated!
And welcome to your new office.

MARK
Thank you, sir. May I say what an honor it is getting to work at THE flagship location of Co. Inc.?

ERIC
(winks)
You may.
(laughs, pats Mark on the back)
Let's get started! Have a seat.

Eric sits. Mark sees no other chairs.

MARK
Um, I'll stand.

ERIC
That's the spirit!

During the following conversation, Eric starts removing office supplies one item at a time from Mark's box to "help" set up his desk for him.

ERIC (CONT'D)
So, today's orientation day, get'cha acquainted with what you'll be doing here. Now, there's a lot to this job so, as you can imagine, it was not an easy position to fill.

MARK

Oh, I know, sir. So many interviews! I actually had to take time off from my last job for all of 'em. And then those Union dues! Money's been tight but I think it'll be worth it.

ERIC

Oh, it will be! It will be! And you'll have definitely earned it. Over 400 applicants and you were the only one even remotely qualified for the job.

(emphasizes point by pulling framed diploma out of the box)

Impressive!

MARK

Thank you, sir.

ERIC

(displays diploma on desk)
We should be thanking YOU! And enough with the "sirs"! Please, call me "Eric".

MARK

Yes sir... Eric.

ERIC

Now, I...
(removes a small gift from the box)
What's this?

MARK

Oh, it's nothing. Just a little something for you.

Eric lifts the lid off the gift and is genuinely surprised.

ERIC

How did you...?

MARK

I asked around, heard you liked 'em. My wife actually made that for you.

ERIC

(touched)
Wow. Wow. Thank you.

MARK

Like I said, it's nothing.

Eric sets the present aside on the now fully-set-up desk.

ERIC

Mark, I'm really glad you're here. You could NOT have picked a better time to join our little family. Ever since Cable Corp. bought Co. Inc., we've been expanding. HUGE plans in the works.

MARK

I've heard. Can't wait to get started! Can I ask who's been doing all the work the past few months?

ERIC

Funniest thing!
(sotto voce)
 The janitors!
(off Mark's look)
 Yeah! We just expanded their duties to include your job BUT, because they weren't hired for that position, we just paid 'em their usual wages! Saved us a TON of money which, with The Expansion, really helped. Oh! And speaking of wages, your's'll be a step up from your last job. You can thank The Union for that.
(fires a finger gun)
 In fact, good news: thanks to the recent negotiations, you'll be getting a pay bump your first week!

Eric take a piece of paper from the folder and slides it over to Mark to show him his new wages.

MARK

Wow, this is great! My wife and I were thinking of having a baby and, with this, we might actually be able to afford a house.

ERIC

Fan-tastic! And that bad boy'll kick in when your first week starts, next month.

MARK

(beat)
I'm sorry, when?

ERIC

Your first week! Isn't that great?

MARK

No, I mean, when do I start?

ERIC

Next month.

MARK

Oh, I thought we WERE starting.

ERIC

This? Now? No, no. With The Expansion, we can barely afford all those janitors! But you'll be fine. Especially, with these new wages! You can thank the Union for that.

(fires a finger gun)

Now, let's talk about benefits! Health care! Gym membership!

(beat)

You won't be getting any of those. Not until you're full-time.

MARK

Wait, I'm NOT full-time?

ERIC

Unfortunately, no. Part-time.
(beat) Once a week. (beat) Tuesdays or Fridays. (beat) For a few hours.

MARK

(finally losing composure)
"Hours"? Are you kidding? Who's going to do all the extra work? The janitors?

(off Eric's look)

That's INSANE! They're not even qualified...

ERIC

Whoa, hold up. Just because they didn't go to some fancy school...

(picks up diploma)

doesn't mean they're not hard workers.

(puts diploma back in box)

MARK

I'm sorry but... but how am I supposed to make ends meet?

ERIC

(slowly starts refilling box in reverse order)
 Look, it'll be rough. I get it. In fact, I talked with the big wigs and, since you're fully available, we're thinking of arranging a system where you can call us every morning and, IF there've been enough company-wide absences, maybe we can afford to bring you in.

MARK

But I can't keep open availability, not if I have to work a second job!

ERIC

(sucks air through teeth, writes in folder)
 "Not fully available".
 (puts pen in box)

MARK

That's not fair!

ERIC

Whoa, not the kind of attitude we were looking for. Perhaps we should just cut to the part of orientation where we talk about all the things that can get you fired from here: Bad attitudes. Tardiness.
 (drums fingers on present)
Quid pro quo.

MARK

(coolly)
 I see.

ERIC

Besides, you really would've only had to struggle until the start of next quarter (beat) when the position ends.

MARK

WHAT?

ERIC

This is a seasonal position.

Mark is speechless.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 But don't worry! It'll be back next
 year. And you...
 (puts item in box)
 will be the first in line...
 (puts last item in box)
 to interview for it again.

Eric pushes the now-fully-refilled box across the empty desk
 towards Mark.

MARK
 I'm sorry I wasted your time, Eric.

ERIC
 "Sir".

MARK
 Sir.

Mark gets his box and starts to exit.

ERIC
 Hey, keep checking back, though. We
 ARE hiring in other departments.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 Let me guess.

ERIC/MARK
 Janitorial.

Eric fires a finger gun.

MARK
 (exiting)
 No, thanks.

Eric props his feet on the desk, pulls out a cell phone and
 speed-dials a number.

ERIC
 It's Wheatley, sir. I'm sorry. It
 doesn't look like the candidate'll
 be able to fulfill the position
 after all.

Eric picks up the small gift and grins.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 The janitors, sir? (beat) Excellent
 idea.