

THE JOB INTERVIEW

Written by

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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

We hear a man crying.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

We focus only on JOE (54). He's a rugged large man with receding grey hair and dressed in fire brigade attire. His name badge reads 'Captain Joe Dillon'.

He sits impatiently with empathy eyes, looking across his messy desk at an unknown man crying. Joe's not sure what to say. His mind ticks over for a beautiful quote, but nothing grabs him.

He jumps out of his chair and looks out the window at nothing in particular. The crying continues.

On the wall behind his chair, Joe focuses on framed awards and accolades with pride. There's many framed photos of Joe, in particular his first day as a firefighter. Fresh faced, slim, standing in front of a vintage fire engine. He smiles as to how far he's come. He sees a photo of himself with another firefighter. The smile runs away from his face.

JOE

(Still looking at the wall)

I've been a firefighter for 30 years. (Beat) 30 years! It hasn't been easy. Everybody thinks that firefighters have the best job and they always get the girls.

Joe sighs and turns around.

It's bullshit. There are days where I've left to go home and said to myself - you ain't coming back! You've had enough! And yet it drags me back.

Joe points to the photo.

JOE (CONT'D)

3 days before my 30th birthday, Rick and I were trapped on the 17th floor of an apartment block and there seemed no way out. We were surrounded by the devil. That's what it felt like.

Joe sits back down in his chair and puts his elbows on the desk and cradles his head in his hands for a few seconds.

The crying stops.

JOE (CONT'D)

Rick was my best pal. We grew up together. School. Football team. McDonalds. We did everything together. He always had my back. He never surrendered to the devil. Never!

Joe becomes emotional.

He rolls back in his chair, leans over to a bottom drawer and pulls out 2 tumblers and a half full bottle of Jack Daniels. He pours whiskey in both and hands one over to the unknown man.

JOE (CONT'D)

So Rick comes up with this idea that he's gonna charge through the fire and get to the stairs. He was such a fucking cowboy.

Joe takes a mouthful of whiskey.

JOE (CONT'D)

The idea was insane. Completely insane. I begged him to stay put because the boys weren't far away.

Joe leans back in his chair and looks at the ceiling.

JOE (CONT'D)

But Rick being Rick, couldn't help himself. Waiting for the others to come was a sign of weakness. A sign of surrendering to the devil.

Joe sits forward and looks the man in the eye.

JOE (CONT'D)

You know what that stupid asshole did? He charged through the fire. Whoosh! What a fucking asshole! We never saw him again. If he only waited another 3 minutes he would have been rescued. But no. Not Rick.

Joe shakes his head.

JOE (CONT'D)

I should've stopped him. Maybe tackled him to the ground of something. But I didn't think he'd do it.

Joe picks up the bottle and fills his glass up.

JOE (CONT'D)
Everyday I miss that asshole. Every
fucking day.

There's a pause as Joe stares into the distance, thinking
about Rick.

He finally snaps out of it.

JOE (CONT'D)
Anyway. Where were we?

He puts the drink down and opens up a file.

JOE (CONT'D)
As I said, your credentials are
okay. You've been a corn farmer, a
dancer, and even a professional
bird watcher.

Joe sits back in his chair, frustrated that he can't help
this man.

JOE (CONT'D)
The problem is. It takes a special
person to be a firefighter. You
need courage, heart and brains.
Rick had courage and heart but he
didn't fair too well in the brains
department. It cost him his life.

Joe picks up his whiskey and finishes the glass in one gulp.

JOE (CONT'D)
I need men that are built from a
different mould. I can't put anyone
into an inferno, eyeing off the
devil, knowing that they'll burn
under pressure.

Joe stands up to conclude the interview.

JOE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry but your dream of
becoming a firefighter is
officially over.

We now see the man as THE SCARECROW from *The Wizard of Oz*.

He starts crying again as Joe walks out of the room.

FADE OUT