

**THE ANDERSON FILE**

A SHORT FILM

Written by

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INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA. DAY.

In a small corporate office, SID (late 20s) snatches a page from a printer and adds it to a thick stack. He trudges tiredly through the office, stuffing the file into a manila folder.

**SUPER: TUESDAY.**

INT. RICK'S OFFICE. CONTINUOUS.

Sid knocks as he enters his boss's office. RICK (early 30s) sits at his desk.

SID  
Peterson file.

RICK  
Already? That's not due til  
tomorrow.

Sid shrugs humbly and plops the folder onto Rick's desk. Rick thumbs through it.

RICK (CONT'D)  
This is the finest work I've ever  
seen.

SID  
Thanks.

RICK  
With you, in fact, Sid, every file  
is finer than the last. Which is  
why you're just the man for this.

Rick pulls a huge folder off a rack on the desk. It bulges with so many papers that Rick has trouble getting it out, but he finally manages to shimmy it free. He holds it out for Sid, who reluctantly takes it.

SID  
What is it?

RICK  
The Anderson file. Due Friday, one  
o'clock.

Sid opens the folder, examining the paperwork.

SID

Rick, this is twice as big as the Peterson file, and that took me an entire week.

RICK

I know, it's a lot. And if I didn't need you, I wouldn't ask.

SID

I just don't think there are enough hours in the day.

RICK

Look, just take a crack at it. If you need an extension, I'm sure it can be arranged. Alright?

SID

I don't know.

RICK

You know, Sid, rumor has it that when I get my promotion, they're gonna give you my job.

SID

Really?

RICK

Really. Mr. Stine, he asked me how you churn out reports so quickly. He said you must stay up all night.

SID

Sometimes I do.

RICK

I said you do cocaine!

Rick laughs. Sid does too, albeit nervously.

SID

You didn't really say that, right?

RICK

(beat)

No.

INT. OFFICE. KITCHEN. LATER.

The kitchen is small and empty. A couple tables, a microwave, a refrigerator. Sid shuffles to the fridge.

It's a typically crammed communal fridge, with no regard to organization. Sid casually moves a couple things around, looking for his lunch. It's not there.

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA.

Sid approaches a desk. It belongs to HERMAN (40s). He's on the phone.

SID  
Hi, Herman. Have you seen my lunch?

HERMAN  
(into the phone)  
Hold on a sec, Bill.

Herman lowers the phone and shoots Sid a disapproving look.

HERMAN (CONT'D)  
I'm on an important call.

SID  
I know. I apologize. Can I just--

HERMAN  
I'm on a call.

He stares at Sid until it's uncomfortable. Nodding, Sid backs away. Herman watches him go, then returns to his phone call.

HERMAN (CONT'D)  
Sorry, Bill. How long do we have to come up with the team name?

MOMENTS LATER: Sid is at the next desk. PEARL (late 20s) is playing Hearts on her computer. Sid explains the situation to her. All the while, she shakes her head no, seemingly growing more annoyed with each word Sid says.

SID  
--ham and cheese on a Kaiser, with tomato and onions, and purple grapes, and a bag of pretzels and a sweet tea. Yes?

PEARL  
No!

Sid thinks she's talking to him, but when he leaves, we see on her monitor that Pauline, one of the default Hearts computer players, has "shot the moon."

PEARL (CONT'D)  
Damn it, Pauline!

EXT./INT. DELI. LATER.

Sid stands in the small bodega. Aside from him, it's empty. MOE (40s) stands behind the counter. He wears a sideways baseball cap in an attempt to appear younger and hipper than he really is. He hands Sid a wrapped hoagie.

MOE  
I'm serious, man. Next time someone steals your shit, you can't just sit back and take it. You gotta crush 'em.

SID  
I'm sure it was an accident.

MOE  
Thievery ain't no accident. This shit's been in the works for weeks.

SID  
I doubt that.

MOE  
My boy Freddy, he stole cars. Never once was it an accident.

SID  
That's not really the same.

MOE  
Fuck you it ain't the same. It's exactly the same. Your lunch is a car, man. It's edible, and it can't drive nowhere, but it's the engine that gets you through the day.

SID  
Right. Okay, Moe. Thanks.

Sid starts to leave.

MOE  
And one more thing.

Sid turns.

MOE (CONT'D)

If my boss only gave me three days  
to finish some damn Anderson file,  
I'd poison his ass.

Sid nods and leaves.

INT. SID'S APARTMENT. SID'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Sid works late into the night on the Anderson file. Papers and binders spill all over his desk. It's a mess, but Sid works diligently, super focused.

Time passes. The work is piled higher, the desk messier. Sid is obviously tired, but still he presses on. He takes a long swig from a large paper cup of coffee. He tips it vertically, finishing the dregs, and slams it down next to another already empty cup.

INT. SID'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. LATER.

More time has passed. Sid sits on the toilet. Discarded coffee cups surround him. Still, he works, laptop on his lap and using the toilet paper dispenser to prop up his papers. Suddenly, he squints his eyes as he FOCUSES ON SHITTING.

INT. SID'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

Slumped on the toilet seat, surrounded by documents, empty cups and toilet paper, Sid snaps awake.

**SUPER: WEDNESDAY.**

INT. SID'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

Sid, exhausted, chops vegetables and assembles a sandwich. He wraps it in foil and places it in a BAG MARKED SID.

INT. OFFICE. KITCHEN. DAY.

Sid stares into the refrigerator, dismayed. There is no sign of his lunch.

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA.

BRENDA (50s) sits at her desk, gazing blankly at something across the room. Sid approaches.

SID  
Hey Brenda, I was wondering...

Sid trails off when he realizes Brenda isn't paying hi many attention. She's staring off, just past him.

SID (CONT'D)  
...um, if you've seen...

Sid clears his throat loudly.

SID (CONT'D)  
Brenda!

Brenda snaps into focus and looks at Sid like a confused child.

SID (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Uh... have you seen my lunch?

BRENDA  
Your lunch?

SID  
It's in a brown paper bag marked Sid.

Brenda doesn't respond. She's staring off again, looking peeved. Sid turns to see what she's looking at. He follows her gaze. She's looking at MARVIN (50s), who's eating a sandwich on the other side of the office. Sid realizes the sandwich is his.

INT. OFFICE. MARVIN'S DESK. MOMENTS LATER.

Sid approaches nervously. Laid out in front of Marvin on his desk is his lunch: a CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICH on a KAISER ROLL, PURPLE GRAPES, a bag of CRACKERS and a GINGER ALE.

SID  
Hi, Marvin.

Marvin looks up, startled.

MARVIN  
Sid.

Marvin takes a huge, sloppy bite of the sandwich. Chicken salad drips disgustingly own his chin, forming a sort of chicken salad goatee. He doesn't bother to wipe it. He just stares at Sid, chewing. Sid smiles.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
Something I can do for you?

SID  
I like your goatee.

Marvin just chews and stares.

SID (CONT'D)  
Where'd you get that?

MARVIN  
It's not a goatee. It's chicken  
salad.

He impatiently wipes the chicken salad with the back of his  
hand.

SID  
Yes, I know. I meant where did you  
get the chicken salad?

MARVIN  
From the refrigerator. Look, Sid,  
if you want to chit chat, I like  
the New York Jets--

Marvin points to a signed New York Jets football on his  
shelf.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
--and I like the Civil War.

He nods at a Civil War era replica musket mounted on the wall  
above his desk. Sid glances at it, unimpressed.

SID  
Neat.

MARVIN  
They mean the world to me.

SID  
That's great. Switching gears back  
to the original topic, though, I  
just think it's funny that you got  
chicken salad from the fridge,  
because I, too, had chicken salad  
in the fridge.

MARVIN  
That's quite a sense of humor  
you've got, to think that's funny.



SID

Well, where the humor really  
shoehorns its way in is that I also  
had all these other things.  
Crackers, grapes, ginger ale.

MARVIN

Fascinating.

SID

The thing is, when I went to take  
them out of the fridge, they were  
all gone.

MARVIN

(beat)

What are you saying?

SID

I'm not saying anything. I just--

MARVIN

Are you saying I stole your lunch?

SID

No. I don't know. Maybe? It's  
probably a coincidence. It just  
seems like a far fetched  
coincidence, is all. I mean, the  
exact same assortment of items?

MARVIN

I didn't steal it.

SID

I didn't say you did.

MARVIN

I'm not stupid. You're clearly  
implying it.

SID

I'm not implying anything, Marvin.  
It's just, to put it in terms of  
things you like, let's say during  
the Civil War there was this  
soldier who had a musket and a  
bayonet and a picture of his  
family. And one morning he woke up  
and all that stuff was gone. And  
later, he came across another  
soldier who had that same musket  
and that same bayonet and that same  
picture of his family. You know?

Marvin stares, fuming.

INT. DELI. DAY.

Sid waits for his sandwich.

MOE  
Poison the sandwich.

SID  
Why does all your advice involve  
poison?

MOE  
Classic solution. If this dude  
dies, you know he stole it.

SID  
Oh, come on, Moe.

MOE  
I ain't playing. You know what I  
did when I thought my boy Freddy  
was eating my Ruffles? I poisoned  
the chips. And let me tell you  
something. Freddy don't eat no more  
Ruffles.

An awkward pause.

MOE (CONT'D)  
Freddy's dead.

SID  
That's a bit drastic.

MOE  
After it was done, I thought that  
same thing. I thought yeah, maybe,  
maybe I went too far. But, you  
know, that feeling fades.

SID  
Look, I don't want to poison  
anyone, okay? There have to be  
other ways of finding out who took  
my lunch without poisoning my  
sandwich.

Moe thinks about this for a moment. Then his face lights up.

MOE  
Poison the grapes.

INT. SID'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM. MORNING.

Sid, having again fallen asleep on the toilet surrounded by paperwork, jolts awake. He's disoriented and clearly exhausted.

**SUPER: THURSDAY.**

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA. DAY.

Sid tries to work but is having trouble focusing. He keeps glancing up suspiciously at Marvin, who's working on the other side of the office.

Rick saunters by, but before he passes him, he looks up, as if he's surprised to see Sid.

RICK  
Oh, hey, Sid.

SID  
Hi.

RICK  
I was wondering. How's the Anderson file coming along? Still good for tomorrow's deadline?

SID  
Actually, I think I'm going to need that extension.

RICK  
The thing about the extension is I can't get you an extension.

SID  
What? You said it could be arranged.

RICK  
I did. I did. But I spoke to Mr. Stine this morning, and I kind of told him you were already done.

SID  
You told him--

RICK  
I told him you were done.

SID  
Why would you tell him that, Rick?!

RICK

Okay, last night I had this dream. We were here in the office, and you came up to me and said, "The Anderson file is done." So I called up Mr. Stine and told him. Except the part where I called up Mr. Stine and told him wasn't in the dream. It was later.

(then)

When I was awake.

SID

You can't tell the difference between a dream and reality?

RICK

It was a very realistic dream.

SID

So Mr. Stine is expecting the report right now?

RICK

Aha. Here's the good news. He's not in today, so you have until tomorrow. Which, when you think about it, is kind of like an extension.

SID

That's not kind of like an extension. It was due tomorrow in the first place!

Out of the corner of his eye, Sid notices Marvin leaving his desk. Sid frantically gets up.

SID (CONT'D)

I gotta go.

INT. OFFICE. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.

Sid bursts into the kitchen expecting to catch Marvin in the act. He's disappointed to only see Brenda, who's making tea. He goes to the fridge and searches for his lunch. It's not where he left it. He yanks items out and tosses them to the floor. Before long, the fridge is empty and the floor is completely covered with everyone's stuff.

SID

(exasperated)

Damn it!

Brenda notices Sid seemingly for the first time.

BRENDA  
Sidney? Everything okay?

SID  
Do you know where Marvin is?

BRENDA  
(sighing)  
Now why would I know a thing like that?

SID  
I don't know. You two are friendly.

BRENDA  
What does that even mean anymore?  
Friendly?

SID  
You get along.

BRENDA  
I thought we did. I thought a lot of things. Now? I'm not so sure.

SID  
(impatiently)  
So you don't know where he is?

BRENDA  
Emotionally? I have no idea,  
Sidney.

SID  
How about physically?

Brenda sighs, staring off. Sid watches her a moment before realizing he's lost her again. The teapot whistles. Brenda doesn't react.

SID (CONT'D)  
Tea's ready.

But Brenda still doesn't move. She just keep staring blankly at nothing. Sid nods and quietly exits.

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA. CONTINUOUS.

Sid walks through the office, looking for Marvin. He passes Pearl.

SID  
Have you seen Marvin?

Pearl angrily slams a fist on her desk.

PEARL  
Damn it! No!

SID  
Jesus. Sorry.

Sid walks away and we see that Pearl was referring to having just been killed on the first person shooter game she's playing on her computer.

Sid approaches Herman, who's on the phone.

SID (CONT'D)  
Marvin. You seen him?

HERMAN  
(into the phone)  
Can you hold on please?

Herman lowers the phone and shoots Sid a disapproving look.

SID  
Right. Important call.

Herman watches him go, then raises his phone. His tone is concerned.

HERMAN  
A malignant tumor?

INT. OFFICE. BATHROOM.

Sid bursts into the bathroom. There are three urinals. Marvin is using the one on the left. Sid takes a deep breath and coolly saunters up to the middle one. He looks over at Marvin, smiles.

SID  
Heya Marvin.

Marvin nods uncomfortably at Sid's decision to use the directly adjacent urinal.

SID (CONT'D)  
How's it going?

MARVIN  
Uh, fine.

SID  
Having a nice pissar?

MARVIN  
What do you want, Sid?

SID  
Me? I don't want anything. Can't  
two men have a conversation without  
one of them wanting something?

MARVIN  
Not when they're both peeing.

SID  
Oh, I'm not peeing.

MARVIN  
(beat)  
You're just hanging out at the  
urinal?

SID  
Just hanging out at the urinal.

Marvin rolls his eyes, finishes, flushes the toilet and walks to the sink to wash his hands. Sid immediately flushes too and follows him, pretending to wash his hands in the sink, going through the motions but not using any water. He stares at Marvin as he does this.

MARVIN  
What are you doing?

SID  
Glad you asked. I was working on  
the Anderson file, which the  
likelihood of completing by  
tomorrow, by the way, is less than  
the likelihood of discovering that  
two men who work in the same office  
have allegedly concocted the same  
exact midday meal--

While Sid talks, Marvin dries his hands under the blower. Sid simultaneously does the same, and their hands awkwardly fiddle together beneath it.

SID (CONT'D)  
--as each other.  
(re: the blower)  
Stop hogging.

Marvin, annoyed, takes a step aside.

MARVIN

For Christ's sake. I make my lunch every night after dinner. Why would I steal yours?

SID

I'm not saying you did.

MARVIN

It could not be more obvious that you are.

SID

Well, I'm not.

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA. SHORT TIME LATER.

Marvin works at his desk. Sid abruptly pops up over the side of the cubicle.

SID

But isn't it possible that in your haste to eat, you simply grabbed the wrong bag? Three times?

MARVIN

What, Sid, do you think I'm blind? Do you think I stand at the fridge with my eyes closed and snatch whichever bag I happen to touch?

SID

You don't have to get defensive.

MARVIN

You've repeatedly accused me of stealing your lunch.

SID

Because it's repeatedly gone missing. To put it in terms of things you like, it'd be as if there was this player on the Jets--

Sid picks up the signed Jets football and tosses it in the air to himself.

SID (CONT'D)

--and you kept stealing his lunch.

MARVIN

Don't touch that!



Marvin grabs the football mid-air before Sid can catch it.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

(angrily)

Do you know how valuable this is?

SID

The Jets suck.

MARVIN

You suck!

SID

Oh yeah?

MARVIN

Yeah!

During this exchange, their faces have gotten closer and closer to each other, to the point that their noses bump. The both immediately back away.

SID

I'll be watching you, Marvin!

Sid turns to storm away and suddenly becomes very aware that the entire office, including Rick, is watching him. He smiles sheepishly and gives a little wave.

INT. DELI. LATER.

Sid waits for Moe to make his sandwich.

MOE

Hell yeah, you watch him. You watch his ass like a hawk. A hungry, ass-watching hawk.

SID

What, like spy on him?

MOE

Dude says he makes his lunch every night after dinner. Maybe he does, maybe he doesn't. There's only one way to find out.

SID

I guess.

MOE

That's what I'm saying. You know what I did when I thought my boy Freddy was sleeping with my girl?

SID

Obviously this was before you murdered him over a bag of Ruffles.

MOE

First of all, it wasn't "a" bag of Ruffles. It was a series of bags of Ruffles. And second, those were different Freddys.

SID

And car hijacking Freddy?

MOE

A third Freddy.

SID

How many Freddys do you know?

MOE

Like seven. Anyway, I staked out in his closet.

SID

What did you see?

MOE

I saw some steamy fucking sex, that's what I saw.

SID

You watched him have sex with your girlfriend?

MOE

Nah. Turns out it was just Freddy's girlfriend.

SID

So you watched Freddy have sex with his own girlfriend?

MOE

Nah. It was the girlfriend of a different Freddy.

INT. MARVIN'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Sid hides in the pantry, staring out through the slats at the door. Marvin, dressed in a nice sports coat, talks to Brenda. A center island is adorned with a fancy cloth covering and is lined with candles. It's romantic.

BRENDA

Where's the corkscrew?

MARVIN

In the pantry, I think.

Brenda starts walking toward the pantry. Sid is completely crammed inside; there's nowhere to hide. Spotting the corkscrew on a shelf, and not knowing what else to do, he grabs it and holds it like a weapon. Before she gets to the pantry, though, Brenda turns around.

BRENDA

I'm glad we talked. I couldn't stand you being mad at me.

MARVIN

I shouldn't have yelled at you. We just have to be more careful.

BRENDA

I know. It's becoming harder to hold back, though.

MARVIN

It must be tough, me being so irresistible. But you can't just waltz up to me and kiss me.

BRENDA

Oh, I can't?

MARVIN

Not at the--

Brenda waltzes up to Marvin and kisses him passionately. They fall back against the pantry door. Sid looks disgusted. Finally, Brenda pulls away from Marvin. He smiles.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

--office.

BRENDA

Noted. Anyway, it wasn't a waltz. It was a foxtrot.

MARVIN  
I'll foxtrot you. Where's that  
wine?

BRENDA  
Coming right up.

Brenda opens the pantry. Sid holds out the corkscrew.

SID  
Corkscrew?

Startled, Brenda screams and stumbles backward. She loses her footing and trips, falling and striking her head hard on the island.

MARVIN  
Brenda!

Sid watches in horror as Brenda crumples to the floor, unconscious. She falls in such a way that her body drags the cloth with her. The candles topple off the island and all land on her face, covering her in hot wax and fire. One of the flames catches on her blouse and ignites the material, setting her aflame. Blood from her head wound trickles steadily into a pool around her.

MARVIN (CONT'D)	SID
Oh my god oh my god oh my god!	Oh my god!

Marvin and Sid both hurry over. Marvin lightly slaps her face.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
Brenda, wake up. Wake up!

Sid picks up an arm. It falls as soon as he lets go: dead weight.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
What are you doing here?! Look what  
you've done!

SID  
There's no time for that. We have  
to put out the flames. Where's your  
fire extinguisher?

MARVIN  
I don't have one.

SID  
You don't have a fire extinguisher?

MARVIN

Who has a fire extinguisher?

SID

I don't know. Firemen?

MARVIN

Do I look like a fireman? What the hell are you doing here?

SID

Fuck. Okay. Use your jacket.

MARVIN

(beat)

This is a good jacket.

Sid eyes him like "are you serious?", which shames Marvin into taking off his jacket and trying to smother the flames. Instead, the jacket catches on fire, and the fire gets bigger. Marvin yelps and tosses the jacket aside.

SID

Okay, plan B. I'll get some water.

MARVIN

That should have been plan A!

Sid races around the island to the sink and reaches for something to fill water with. He opens the nearest cabinet. Just plates. He frantically opens another one. Canned goods.

SID

Where are the cups? I need cups or a bowl!

Marvin doesn't answer. He's staring at the burning Brenda, checking her pulse, tearing up. Sid opens another cabinet. Paper towels.

SID (CONT'D)

Who organized these cabinets?!

(then)

Marvin!

Marvin looks.

SID (CONT'D)

A bowl! A big one!

Marvin just stares.

SID (CONT'D)

Do you have one!

Marvin snaps out of it.

MARVIN  
Check over there!

Marvin points to a cabinet on the other side of the kitchen.  
Sid sprints to it.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
I can't feel a pulse!

SID  
Fuck!

Sid rips open the cabinet and grabs a huge bowl, then races back to the sink. He slams the faucet on and... the water trickles out. The water pressure is terrible. Sid waits, visibly growing exponentially more impatient as the bowl very slowly fills.

INT. MARVIN'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. MOMENTS LATER.

Sid douses Brenda with a bowl of water. Sid and Marvin look down solemnly at her charred and bloodied body. Then they look at each other.

EXT. WOODS. NIGHT.

Sid and Marvin look at each other exactly the way they were at the end of the previous scene. It's pitch black behind them, minus the faint red from a car's taillights. Crickets chirp loudly. For a few moments, neither speaks.

MARVIN  
Did you forget to close the trunk?

REVEAL: The trunk of Marvin's car is open. There's no sign of Brenda's body. We see that Sid and Marvin have driven to a large clearing in the woods.

SID  
I thought you were gonna do it.

MARVIN  
Why would I do it?

SID  
It's your car!

MARVIN  
So? Just because it's my car I have to close the trunk?

SID

Yes, usually the guy whose car it is closes the trunk!

MARVIN

What do you mean usually? How often do you dump bodies in the woods?

SID

I don't need to have dumped a body in the woods to know the rules about the trunk!

MARVIN

There aren't any rules about the trunk!

SID

Says the guy who left the trunk open.

Marvin looks like he's about to explode.

EXT./INT. SUV. HIGHWAY. NIGHT.

Marvin speeds down the highway.

MARVIN

We should have called the police. Why didn't we call the police?

SID

Because the police, Marvin, would have arrested us.

MARVIN

It was an accident.

SID

Police don't believe in accidents.

MARVIN

Police do too believe in accidents!

SID

We would have been convicted. We would have been sent to the slammer.

MARVIN

No we wouldn't have!

SID  
You'd be raped. I'd be raped.

MARVIN  
We wouldn't be raped!

SID  
We'd rape each other!

Marvin slams on the brakes. A car beeps, swerves around them.

MARVIN  
What's the matter with you?

SID  
I'm sorry. I haven't gotten a lot  
of sleep lately. I've been working  
on the Anderson f--

Sid's face turns pale as he remembers the Anderson file.

SID (CONT'D)  
Fuck!

MARVIN  
The Anderson fuck?

SID  
I've been so consumed by this  
stupid stakeout that I forgot all  
about the Anderson file!

MARVIN  
Maybe you shouldn't have been  
staking out in the first place!

SID  
Well, maybe I wouldn't have been if  
you hadn't been stealing my lunch!

MARVIN  
Oh, God. Is that what this is  
about? When will you give that a  
rest?

SID  
When you admit that you're a thief!

MARVIN  
I'm telling you, I did not take  
your lunch. Not even once.

(MORE)



MARVIN (CONT'D)

And frankly, I have never in my life been more infuriated than I am right now, considering all you care about is the fucking lunch when we've lost a corpse!

(then)

Jesus Christ. She could be anywhere.

A long beat.

SID

You should have closed the trunk.

They stare angrily at each other.

**SUPER: FRIDAY.**

INT. OFFICE. MAIN AREA. DAY.

Sid sleeps heavily with his head on his desk. Marvin, who looks like he hasn't slept at all, watches him. He looks at Brenda's desk; she's not there. He swallows nervously, shifts a little in his seat. He's very uncomfortable. He glances around the office. Everyone is peacefully doing their work. Ignorance is bliss. Marvin can barely take it. He begins to sweat, and then:

RICK (O.S.)

Anyone seen Brenda?

Marvin pounds a fist on his desk so forcefully that his computer monitor falls over.

MARVIN

*NO!*

The entire room, minus Sid who is still sleeping, looks at him. He instantly realizes he overreacted. He examines each of their faces; they look concerned and confused. He tries to coolly play it off by casually leaning back in his chair.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

I mean, nahhhh.

A long beat. The others look around at each other awkwardly.

RICK

(then)

Well, it's almost one o'clock.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Here I am.

Everyone shifts their gaze to the doorway where, to Marvin's shock, Brenda stands. She's disheveled, dirty and charred. Leaves and twigs protrude from her hair. Her face is plastered with dried blood. She looks terrible.

BRENDA (CONT'D)  
Sorry I'm late.

RICK  
You look very bad.

BRENDA  
It was a long night.

Brenda stares at Marvin, burning a hole in him with her bloodshot eyes. Everyone watches her, concerned, but she doesn't seem to realize that anyone else is even in the room. Eventually:

RICK  
Okay, well, uh. Everyone back to work.

As people reluctantly return to their business, Brenda slowly moves toward Marvin. Her fury is obvious. Marvin gulps. He looks frantically at Sid, who's still asleep, then back at Brenda, moving in what seems like slow motion. Marvin catches every frame of her approach: her narrowing eyebrows, her flaring nostrils, her spiteful snarl. With each step she takes, he cowers backward, sinking into his seat. Finally she's at his desk, looming over him like a giant. Terrified, he tries to smile.

MARVIN  
Hi.

Brenda wordlessly stretches her scratched arms toward him. Her bony fingers curl with rage. Marvin quivers with fright as her hands lunge toward his throat. He shrivels, blocking his neck.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
Wh-- what are you doing?

But Brenda doesn't reach for his neck. Without taking her eyes off him, she reaches past him, above him, to his Civil War musket. She dislodges it from its mount and draws it toward her. She sets it vertically on the floor and produces from her pocket a small pouch. She slowly, creepily begins loading the muzzle with gunpowder from the pouch, packing it in with a ramrod.

MARVIN (CONT'D)  
D-don't do that.

Brenda finishes loading the gun and lifts it to her shoulder, pointing the gun at him. By now the rest of the office has realized what is going on and watches in horror.

RICK

Brenda...

Without turning, Brenda swiftly raises a finger. Rick shuts up. Marvin bursts into tears.

MARVIN

I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to--

Brenda returns her hand to the gun and flips the safety. Marvin sobs harder. He covers his eyes with his shaking hands.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

Brenda. Please don't shoo--

Brenda fires. Pearl screams. Sid snaps awake, befuddled. Marvin peeks through the cracks of his fingers, amazed to be alive. The gun is still on Brenda's shoulder in firing position, smoking. It's not aimed at Marvin. It's aimed just off to his side. He follows it and gasps when he discovers that Brenda has shot his signed New York Jets football. It hisses as it deflates.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

*Noooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!*

Brenda lowers the musket, staring smugly at Marvin. Then, in one quick motion, she thrusts the weapon downward and breaks it in half over her knee.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

*NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!*

Brenda drops the pieces of the gun, slowly turns and exits the office. Marvin races around his cube and cradles the remnants of the musket as if they were his children. He cries uncontrollably.

The rest of the office is stunned as they watch this scene. On the other side of the office, Sid watches in dazed confusion. Rick stands over him.

SID

Was that Brenda?

RICK

Guess you'd know the answer to that if you hadn't been sleeping on the job.

SID  
I'm sorry. I'm really tired.

RICK  
(smugly)  
Up all night working on the  
Anderson file?

Sid nods, yawning, and produces the Anderson file from his top drawer. He sleepily hands it to Rick, who's completely taken aback that the file was actually finished. His smug look instantly vanishes and is replaced by fear.

RICK (CONT'D)  
You-- you finished?

SID  
Of course I finished. Though that  
was an absurd deadline. Three days  
for all that?

Rick is simply flabbergasted. He slowly sits down on Sid's desk, trying to make sense of this.

RICK  
Oh my God. Stine was right.  
(then)  
You're gonna get the promotion.

SID  
What?

RICK  
You're perfection, he said. Grade A  
management material. You could  
build Rome in an hour. An hour! To  
build the great city of Rome! In an  
hour I can't even build an  
omelette!

Rick starts crying.

SID  
Rick? Are you okay?

RICK  
I want that promotion, Sid. I  
really want it.  
(then)  
But now, despite my best efforts,  
it's gonna be you!

SID

(beat)

What do you mean?

RICK

I received the Anderson file three weeks ago.

SID

You *what*? Why didn't you--

RICK

I had to! Nothing else I've done has worked, Sid! I told Stine you're a raging coke head. He asked me to have you hook him up!

SID

You *did* say that?

RICK

I told him you developed an intricate type method of diverting company finances, like in that movie--

SID

*WHAT?*

RICK

--and he said finder's keepers! So what choice did I have? If you screwed up the Anderson file, I thought there'd be no way he'd promote you.

Rick produces a bag marked "SID" from seemingly nowhere and tosses it on the desk.

RICK (CONT'D)

I've even been stealing your lunch all week to distract you.

SID

That was *you*?

RICK

I'm sorry. Does this make me a bad person?

SID

Yes! Do you have any idea what I've been through over those lunches?

(MORE)

SID (CONT'D)  
There's been blood, there's been  
fire, there's been mean words  
exchanged, there's been--

As Sid talks, Rick casually takes a sandwich out from the lunch bag and begins unwrapping it. Sid eyes him.

SID (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

Rick begins eating the sandwich.

SID (CONT'D)  
You're eating it!

Rick takes huge, sloppy bites. He talks with his mouth full, swallowing chunks of meat between words.

SID (CONT'D)  
Right in front of me, you're eating  
the sandwich you stole!

Rick bursts into tears again. Spit and bits of meat fly out of his mouth onto the desk and a very enraged Sid.

RICK  
I'm sorry. It's really good.

SID  
(beat)  
Yeah, well. It's also poisoned.

Sid gets up and leaves in disgust. Rick stares blankly ahead, not knowing whether to believe him. He chews slower and slower until he finally stops.

On the other side of the office, Herman is on the phone.

HERMAN  
Because, Bill! "A Malignant Tumor"  
is a stupid name for a trivia team!

**THE END.**