

AN ENCOUNTER WITH HARRY COX

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FADE IN:

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

A simple, nondescript ice cream parlor. The neon sign over the front door reads: "Cox Creamery".

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

We see a CROWD gathered out front. Fifty folks of all ages, races, and cultures happily waiting for the doors to open.

ADAM, 18, stands amongst the crowd. Plain features. Dressed business casual. His neutral demeanor is a stark contrast to the giddy expressions around him.

Behind him -- we see a Prius pull into an empty parking spot.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

DALE is behind the wheel. A woman named PEARL is seated next to him. Both mid-50's. Clad in expensive tennis clothes.

DALE

I tell ya sis, only in a town this sad and pathetic would folks be this stoked over an ice cream parlor debuting a new flavor.

PEARL

You said it. If there were anywhere else to get a sherbet cone served by minimum wage help, that's where we'd be.

Dale nods in agreement.

DALE

What's your opinion of Harry Cox?

PEARL

No thanks. I prefer a man's bulge be clean-shaven.

DALE

I was referring to the man who runs this place.

PEARL

Oh. I don't know much about him.

DALE

He is a wonder to behold. Handsome.
Well-dressed. Exceptional beard. A
real man's man.

PEARL

When'd you met him?

DALE

I haven't. Just read his Facebook
page. Turns out he's quite the
businessman. He's just opened that
new steakhouse over in Longwood.

Pearl's face turns flush red. Clearly aroused.

PEARL

He sounds so impressive.

DALE

I love it when you all hot and
puckered.

They look at one another with burning lust in their eyes.

PEARL

You thinking what I'm thinking?

DALE

Fornication and cocaine?

Pearl grins, pulling a short straw out of her cleavage.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Adam checks his digital watch. The time changes to 10:00 AM.

Somewhere in the distance -- a church bell starts RINGING.

The crowd instantly goes silent. Everyone stares at the front
door of Cox Creamery. No one moves or speaks. The air thick
with anticipation.

Adam looks around, puzzled. The only one not entranced.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

SLOW MOTION -- The front door opens. HARRY, 45, emerges from
inside. Stocky build. Bald head. Huge beard. Two-piece suit.
Big, glistening smile. An aura of power and success.

He admires the crowd for a beat, then speaks to them:

HARRY

Ladies and gentlemen! Welcome! The name is Harry and I thank you for coming out to my Creamery on this most glorious of days! I now invite you all to come inside and try my latest creation, the Double Fudge Delight! A taste that only Cox can provide!

The crowd erupts into an over-to-top celebration.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

We see various incidents within the raucous crowd:

- An ELDERLY MAN and ELDERLY WOMAN embrace one another.
- A group of NUNS and ORPHAN KIDS perform a Scottish jig.
- A hulking BODYBUILDER angrily tears off his shirt.
- Two FRAT BOYS take turns slapping each other's butts.
- An EMO TEENAGER hysterically sobs as he rips his hair out.
- A tearful MOTHER holds her sleeping baby high in the air.

MOTHER

Take my baby, Harry! Raise him! Let him suckle from your wise bosom!

Adam stands amongst the madness. Jaw-dropped and befuddled.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

Harry watches the chaos with a pleased expression.

FADE TO:

INT. COX CREAMERY - DINING ROOM - DAY

Calm has been restored. Customers enjoy frozen treats served by the smiling EMPLOYEES. Harry walks about, shaking hands and conversing.

Adam is seated at a table, sipping on a vanilla milkshake.

HARRY (O.S.)

How is it?

Adam looks up. Harry is standing there, smiling.

ADAM
I'm sorry?

HARRY
Your milkshake. How is it?

ADAM
Oh. It's good.

Harry sits down at the table, concerned.

HARRY
"Good"? What's the issue?

ADAM
There isn't one. I was paying it a compliment.

HARRY
As kind as your feedback aims to be, "good" doesn't cut the cheese around here. After all, this is the best ice cream parlor in town.

ADAM
Isn't it the only one in town?

HARRY
Indeed. Which makes it the best.

ADAM
By default.

HARRY
Still the top dog no matter how you slice it.

ADAM
True. But wouldn't that same logic mean it's the worst one as well?

Harry's left eye starts twitching. His smile strains.

ADAM
Are you okay?

Harry takes a breath. His eye stops twitching and his jovial demeanor returns.

HARRY

Never better! Forgive me for not introducing myself. The name is Harry Cox. Owner. Founder. Manager.

They shake hands.

ADAM

Adam Reynolds.

HARRY

Adam Reynolds. I know that name.

ADAM

I have an interview for the open cashier's spot. With you actually.

HARRY

That's right! I confess, running two restaurants is an all-consuming task. Yes. Thank you for coming in.

ADAM

I appreciate the opportunity.

(beat)

Can I ask you something?

HARRY

Of course.

ADAM

I'm new around here so maybe it's the norm, but do folks always act like that when you debut a new item? Got a little crazy out there.

HARRY

Indeed. There ain't much else for them to get excited about. Last year's economic collapse crippled the town. That's when I swooped in with this temple of frozen delights and restored their sense of hope. As expected, folks here worship me.

ADAM

I see.

HARRY

Not to mention this town was the perfect place to set up shop. Year-round warm weather and a lack of day cares made it a no-brainer.

ADAM

What's the problem with day cares?

HARRY

I can't be within 500 feet of them.
Or any Chuck E Cheese.

ADAM

Wait...what?

HARRY

Enough about me. Let's turn the
spotlight to you. What made you
wanna apply here?

ADAM

I need to make some money before I
start my freshman year at State.
Golf scholarships don't cover much.

HARRY

Golf? Figured you'd be more into
theater. Given your history.

ADAM

My history?

HARRY

Ya know, as a Chippendale's dancer.
Clearly the stage beckons you.

ADAM

I'm sorry, Chippendale's dancer?

HARRY

The sizzle reel you attached to
your application was a nice touch.
It really helped you stand out.

ADAM

I think you got me confused with
someone el --

HARRY

Why you'd give up the salary of an
exotic dancer is beyond me.

ADAM

I've never --

HARRY

But your reasons for giving up paid
pelvic gyration are your business.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

With that said, I do have one more informal question before we start the interview proper.

ADAM

(exasperated)

I...okay...sure.

HARRY

In all of your travels, did you ever cross paths with a perverted party clown named Gizmo?

Adam laughs, but stops when he sees Harry intense glare. It's a serious question.

ADAM

Uh...no. I've never met a party clown. Much less a perverted one.

Harry exhales, relieved.

ADAM

I take it you're no fan of this Gizmo character?

HARRY

He ruined my Super Bowl party a few years back. Without getting into too detail, let's just say he whipped out his uncircumcised penis and proceeded to twirl it around like a propeller blade. It reeked of bad cabbage and taco meat.

ADAM

That was quite vivid.

Harry shutters, then regroups himself.

HARRY

Let's get down to business then shall we? What kind of hours --

Harry's cell phone RINGS. He clicks a button, silencing it.

HARRY

Sorry about that. As I was --

His phone RINGS again. He silences it once more.

HARRY

They'll call back if it's urgent.

ADAM
Seems like it is. That's twice in
ten seconds.

A loud GRUMBLE is heard. Adam grimaces.

HARRY
Was that your stomach?

ADAM
Yeah. I have Crohn's Disease.

HARRY
Well, that is a risk you take when
you don't wear a condom.

ADAM
What?

Harry points at a door in the corner of the dining room.

HARRY
Restroom's right over there. The
only unisex bathroom in town.

ADAM
Unisex? Don't see many of those
anymore.

HARRY
I'm a firm believer that everyone
should have equal rights regardless
of their gender. And until women
have the right to vote, all of my
facilities will be shared by both
sexes equally. As a sign of unity.

Adam shakes his head in disbelief.

ADAM
You serious?

HARRY
Of course. I'm a proud supporter of
women's suffering.

ADAM
You mean suffrage?

HARRY
Same thing.

ADAM
You realize women can vote, right?

HARRY
Poppycock. Since when?

ADAM
Since a hundred years ago when they
ratified the 19th Amendment.

Harry chuckles, embarrassed.

HARRY
Goodness. Guess my lack of a
diploma really showed there, eh?

ADAM
You didn't graduate high school?

HARRY
Nope. Got expelled when I was 16. I
had anger issues. Plus I got caught
sleeping with one of my teachers.

Adam opens a pack of antacids and pops two in his mouth.

HARRY
It's okay though. Never liked home
schooling anyways.

Adam suddenly starts choking. Harry SMACKS him on the back,
expelling the antacids. Adam COUGHS, regaining his breath.

HARRY
Shocking, ain't it? All of this
success and no formal education.

Harry's cell phone RINGS again.

HARRY
You go handle your bowels while I
answer this. We'll reconvene and
start your paperwork. Congrats!
You're hired!

Harry departs the table. Adam takes a sip of water and clears
his throat.

ADAM
No way I'm working for that guy.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - MOMENTS LATER

Harry answers his phone as he exits the ice cream parlor.

HARRY
 (into phone)
 Hello?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
 (from phone)
 This is Captain Burns with the
 Longwood Fire Department. Am I
 speaking to Harry?

INT. COX CREAMERY - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adam enters the single-occupant bathroom and locks the door.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

Harry is still on the phone. Relaxed and cheerful.

HARRY
 (into phone)
 Indeed you are. How can I help you?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
 (from phone)
 I'm sorry to have to tell you this
 but your steakhouse is on fire.

Harry smiles, not comprehending the news.

HARRY
 Why are you sorry, kind sir? Your
 praise is both generous and earned.
 Reviews have been stellar. Sales
 are through the roof!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
 What? No. I'm saying it's on fire.
 Literal fire. The only thing going
 through the roof are the flames my
 crews are battling.

Harry's smile fades. Reality starts creeping in.

HARRY
 Who'd you say this was?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
 Captain Burns of the Longwood Fire
 Department.

Harry puts it all together. His eyes widen. Panic takes hold.

HARRY

No! No! This can't be happening! I just opened that place! You have to save her!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

We're doing everything we can to but the structure appears to be a total loss.

HARRY

Are you using the white water?!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

The...white water?

HARRY

You know! The good water! Reserved for rich, wealthy Caucasians like me! It puts the fire out faster!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

There's no such thing as whi --

Harry's panic turns into madness and fury.

HARRY

Just do it!!!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

Look, we're doing the best we can. The good news is that everyone made it out of safely and your insurance should cover most of the damage.

HARRY

How is any of that good news?!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

Um...because no one died and you can rebuild your establishment.

HARRY

Rebuild?! With that?! Where am I gonna find lumber in this economy?! It doesn't grow on trees, ya know!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

I don't even know what to do with that statement.

HARRY

Well here's something you may know.
What'd the wicked witch say to the
monkeys?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

I --

HARRY

Fly, bitch!

Harry angrily chucks his phone towards the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The Prius is rocking back and forth. Fog covers the windows.

Suddenly, the phone flies into view and CRASHES through the windshield.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Dale and Pearl sit up in the back seat. Both are naked and sweaty. Their nostrils covered in white powder.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

Harry walks in circles, enraged, shouting at the ground:

HARRY

How does a steakhouse catch fire?!
There's nothing flammable there! No
doubt it was started intentionally.
The work of a mutinous employee.
Probably Willy. Yeah. I bet it was.
That's what you get Harry. That's
what happens when you hire a gay
Canadian chef. Good-for-nothing,
syrup-munching, knob-gobbling, pyro
monkey! I hate him! I hate him!!!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

Harry?

Harry stops, looks up. Every employee and patron are standing outside, staring at him in stunned disbelief.

HARRY

What are y'all staring at?! Can't a
man grieve in private?!

The lone FEMALE EMPLOYEE steps forward.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Harry. What's going on? Why are you acting like this?

HARRY

You don't ask the questions 'round here! I do! One more inquiry leaves your lips and you can use them to kiss your job goodbye!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Okay.

Beat.

HARRY

Knock, knock.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Um...who's there?

HARRY

You're fired!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

What?! But you --

HARRY

The decision is final! You've lost the privilege of serving peasants my one-of-a-kind ice cream!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

One-of-a-kind?

The Female Employee turns to the crowd.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

There's nothing special about the ice cream here. Harry buys store-brand flavors in bulk, renames them and then sells it to all of you at triple the price.

HARRY

Treachery of the highest! Those are trade secrets!

The Female Employee looks at her co-workers.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

They have two-for-one wings over at the titty club till noon. Who's in?

The other employees nod and walk towards their vehicles.

HARRY

Y'all can't quit! You're fired! All of are replaceable! In my office is a stack of applications as big as my pecs!

Harry flexes his arms. He then turns back towards the crowd, fuming. He spots the orphan kids huddled behind the nuns.

HARRY

Newsflash you little orphan bastards! Santa ain't real, the Tooth Fairy hates kids and the Easter Bunny's fluffy carcass is mounted to my wall!

The kids start sobbing and the nuns hurry them away. The crowd's demeanor turns from shock to anger.

A red-headed MIDGET steps forward.

MIDGET

The hell did you do that for?! Those are just kids! Orphans for that matter!

HARRY

Back off you soulless Pygmy! It's right time they learned the world ain't all sunshine and dildos! It's a flaming Canadian a-hole that burns down your mecca of meat! It's a smelly-crotch clown at a Super Bowl party! It's a kick in the balls when you least suspect --

Out of nowhere, the Midget kicks Harry in the balls.

HARRY

Ow! My huge cock!

Harry drops the ground, writhing. The crowd shake their heads in disgust and disperse towards their cars.

HARRY

That's right! Walk away! Return to your warehouses and bingo halls!

Harry gets to his feet, clutching his groin.

DALE (O.S.)
You son of a bitch!

Harry turns around. Dale is standing there in his boxers, enraged, holding Harry's broken cell phone.

DALE
You damaged my Prius and halted my coitus. You've chosen war.

HARRY
Do you know who I am?!

DALE
Indeed I do. And when the history books are written, they will know it was I who beat Harry Cox!

Both men sneer, ready to brawl. Harry puts his fists up. Dale lathers opens a bottle of baby oil and lathers his chest.

INT. COX CREAMERY - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Adam casually whistles as he dries his hands off.

INT. COX CREAMERY - DINING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Adam exits the bathroom. He pauses upon seeing the empty dining room.

ADAM
Okay. What'd I miss?

Harry and Dale suddenly CRASH through the front door and wrestle each other to the ground.

Dale climbs on top of Harry and sits on his face. Harry flails hysterically, his cries muffled by boxers and taint.

Adam shakes his head, then reluctantly speaks up:

ADAM (CONT'D)
I think he's had enough.

Startled, Dale looks up and notices Adam.

DALE
A witness!

Dale quickly covers his nipples and flees the premises. Harry staggers to his feet.

HARRY
Where...where'd he go?

ADAM
He left.

HARRY
You let him escape?!

ADAM
Tackling half-naked men covered in baby oil really ain't my thing.

HARRY
It should be if you're gonna live here in Florida!

The wall-mounted phone RINGS. Harry hobbles over to it and presses the speakerphone button.

HARRY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
We're closed!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
(from phone)
Harry! It's Captain Burns. We spoke earlier. I tried your cell but it went to voicemail. Anyways, I have great news. Your steakhouse isn't on fire!

HARRY
Come again?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Turns out the steakhouse across the street from yours is also run by a guy named Harry. In all of the chaos, we got the two of you mixed up and I called you by mistake.

HARRY
So what are you saying?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Your restaurant is fine. There's no reason for alarm. Isn't that great?

Shellshocked, Harry unplugs the phone. He falls to his knees, looking at the deserted ruins of his once-thriving business.

HARRY

My creamery. My reputation. I'm ruined. This day can't possibly get any worse. I --

Harry suddenly pauses. His nostrils flare, sniffing the air.

ADAM

What are you doing?

HARRY

Something reeks of bad cabbage.

Harry's eyes widen. Terror grips him.

HARRY (CONT'D)

And taco meat.

Offscreen -- we hear GIGGLING. Harry and Adam glance towards the front door.

THEIR POV: Standing there is a obese clown, GIZMO. Sweaty face paint. Creepy grin. No shirt. Stain-covered jeans.

Harry trembles. Unable to move. Paralyzed with fear.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Gizmo...

Adam rolls his eyes, fed up with this day.

ADAM

Of course it is.

Gizmo licks his lips, eyes locked on Harry.

GIZMO

I just hear someone is having the worst day ever. No worries! Your old pal Gizmo knows just the thing to cheer you up!

Gizmo unbuttons his jeans.

HARRY

No! No!!!

ADAM

Think I'm gonna leave now.

Adam exits. Harry watches in horror as Gizmo's jeans drop to the floor.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

Adam walks away. In the background -- we see Gizmo vigorously gyrate his hips as Harry's SCREAMS OF HORROR fill the air.

THE END