

No Clowning Around

by

Jeffrey Dean Langham

j_langham@hotmail.com

(c) 2016. This work may not be used for any purpose without the expressed written permission of the author

FADE IN:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

RICHARD JOLLEY (30s), business suit with tie undone, peers down the street. He holds a phone to ear in one hand and a gym bag in the other.

RICHARD

I'll be there. I'm waiting for the taxi now.

He pulls the phone away from his ear, then sighs. Returns to phone.

RICHARD

Yes, yes I know. She's my daughter too. I said six, I mean six. I don't...

Richard looks at the phone display. Hung up.

RICHARD

Bitch.

As his head lifts, the taxi pulls up to the curb. He steps to the back door and opens it.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Richard tosses the bag into the back seat. He glares at the driver as he jumps in.

AMED SARMIN, (40S) turns around and smiles with his biggest grin.

AMED

Hello. Welcome to my cab. Where...

RICHARD

You're late.

Amed doesn't flinch. Teeth still show.

AMED

I'm sorry sir. Five o'clock traffic is bad today.

Richard settles in the seat and pulls the door shut.

RICHARD

I need you to go down Alma, then turn west on Ocotillo.

His head shakes in agreement, Amed turns back to drive.

AMED

Very good, sir. My name is Amed. What is yours?

Not in the mood to chit-chat, Richard pulls his tie off. Then, he starts to unbutton his shirt. He pulls his jacket off.

RICHARD
No offense, Mohammed, but I'm
having a bad day.

Amed quick glances back.

AMED
My name is Amed. I'm not Muslim.

Now Richard undoes his belt and next are the pants.

RICHARD
I need to be at fourteen twelve
Camelback Road by six. No later.

Amed doesn't turn this time.

AMED
No problem.

Richard now has nothing but underwear. He unzips the gym bag and yanks out a rainbow stripe clown suit.

RICHARD
(under his breath)
No problem. Right.

He slides in one leg, then the other into the costume. Pulls it up over his shoulders and buttons it up.

Amed checks the rear view mirror about the time Richard tosses the red clown wig on his head.

AMED
Woah! You're a clown.

Richard looks at him in the mirror.

RICHARD
No. I'm not a clown.

AMED
But...

RICHARD
It's for my daughter's birthday.

Relief on Amed's face then the smile returns.

AMED
Ah, yes. No that makes sense.

Richard begins to dab white powder to his face.

RICHARD

She's with my Ex. And she wanted a clown.

Amed keeps his eyes on the road, with only a couple of looks in the mirror.

AMED

You are a good father.

Richard stiffens.

RICHARD

Because I'm a clown for my daughter's birthday?

AMED

Yes. You do what it takes to make her happy.

Both are tossed forward as the brakes squeal. Richard's forehead taps the back of the front seat - leaves a white spot.

Richard quickly sits back in his seat. The spot missing on his forehead.

RICHARD

What the hell! Are you trying to kill me?

Amed is shaken, but recovers fast. His grin is slow but grows.

AMED

I'm so sorry, sir. That driver pulled right in front of me.

He looks in the mirror and notices Richard's makeup mishap.

AMED

Sir, you have spot missing.

RICHARD

What?

Amed circles a finger around his forehead.

AMED

Here.

Richard realizes what he means and fixes the mistake. Amed looks on.

AMED

Very good.

Richard pauses, closes his eyes, calms himself. He opens his eyes.

RICHARD

Thanks.

Richard pulls out a huge red nose from the bag and pops it on.

RICHARD

How do I look? Like a clown?

AMED

Like a professional clown.

Somehow, Richard manages a small smile.

RICHARD

Not much money in clown work, I imagine.

Amed glances and agrees.

AMED

No, I wouldn't think so. Any money in your job?

Richard's smile disappears.

RICHARD

It does, but it all goes to Ex-wife, kid's future tuition, car payments...

AMED

Doesn't leave much for you?

Richard reflects on that a moment.

RICHARD

No. It doesn't. And I'm tired of it.

He suddenly in a panic starts tearing through the clothes in the gym bag. Frantic, he looks in the seat as well.

RICHARD

Great.

Amed notices something's amiss.

AMED

Problem, sir?

Richard continues to hunt.

RICHARD

My wallet.

Clothes and jacket fly around the seat.

RICHARD
I can't find it.

He stops in revelation.

RICHARD
I left it on my desk when I ordered
the cab.

Amed looks at his passenger in the mirror.

AMED
Don't worry. We can work something
out.

Richard loses it.

RICHARD
You don't get it. I'm getting
screwed! I owe everyone! I'm
tapped out. I can't even rub two
pennies together. I'll probably
even lose my apartment.

Amed tries to reassure.

AMED
Things could turn around.

RICHARD
Whatever.

AMED
No I'm serious. Your future can
change for the better.

RICHARD
Ok, that's enough of that crap. If
it's going to change, I'm going to
have to change it.

Richard sees Amed's puzzled look in the rear view mirror.

AMED
How do you mean?

Richard points to the right.

RICHARD
Pull in over there.

AMED
Where? The bank?

RICHARD
Yes.

EXT. BANK PARKING LOT - BANK

The cab pulls in to an empty slot.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Richard opens the back door. Pauses.

RICHARD

Keep it running. I'll be right back.

AMED

But sir, you don't have your...

Richard holds onto his clown hair and jumps out. The door slams shut.

AMED

Wallet.

INT. TAXI CAB - LATER

Amed hangs his head and breathes slow. His eyes are closed. Richard opens the back door. Amed jumps. Richard gets in and closes the door.

AMED

Holy cow!

RICHARD

Go, go, go. Now.

Amed recovers quick and puts it into gear. Richard holds a white bank bag. He looks all around.

Both bounce around inside as the cab leaves the lot and into the street. Amed tries his best to control the cab.

AMED

What happened?

Richard just stares at the bank bag. His face is emotionless.

RICHARD

I can't believe they just gave it to me.

Amed looks around as he weaves through traffic. He peers into the mirror.

AMED

Gave you what?

Richard doesn't look up, still in a trance.

RICHARD

I just said, "Give me twenty" and she did.

Amed's confused.

AMED

Who gave you twenty dollars?

Richard lifts his head. He pauses as his eyes meet Amed's.

RICHARD

Not twenty dollars, twenty thousand dollars.

AMED

What? Why would they give you that?

RICHARD

I was trying to figure out how much money I needed. So, I kept filling out the slip with higher numbers and just tearing them up. Then write another.

Amed tries to drive, but can't help his curiosity.

AMED

Ok. So what did you do?

Richard shakes his head.

RICHARD

I flipped over the slip and just wrote, "Give me twenty thousand dollars NOW!" And gave it to the teller.

Amed shows his disapproval.

AMED

That's not good.

Richard is now strangely calm.

RICHARD

No, that's the thing. The teller was a cute girl and smiling at me. When I gave her the note, she looks up at me, then around, and said, "I hate this job." She went, got a bag and put money in it. Then, I walked out.

Amed shakes his head side to side.

AMED

That's stealing. It's not right.

RICHARD

It's not stealing. I asked for it
and she gave it to me.

Amed doesn't back down.

AMED

Stealing is stealing. Same thing.

Richard's now agitated.

RICHARD

You know what? I've been getting
screwed! I'm tired of it. I'm now
ahead for once in my life.

Amed's gaze pauses in the mirror at Richard, then he looks
forward. Now an uncomfortable silence.

Amed concentrates on driving for a while, but can't help
himself.

AMED

Look, you're a good father. You
don't want your daughter to come
visit you in jail or prison.
You'll show your Ex-wife she was
right about you. Is this what you
want? Is that how you get back at
the world? I say no.

Now Richard sits quietly. His head droops. He looks at the
money bag. He pokes through some of the bills at the top.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The cab comes to a stop next to the curb in a neighborhood.

INT. TAXI CAB - DAY

Amed puts the car in gear. He twists around to face
Richard.

AMED

Sir. We're here. You can pay me
later. Just call my company and
I'll come over.

Richard reaches into the bag and pulls a one hundred dollar
bill. He leans over and hands it to Amed. Amed looks at
it.

AMED

No. I can't take that.

RICHARD

Please take it. I need to go. My
daughter is waiting.

Amed reluctantly takes the bill. Richard gathers his gym bag. He swings the rear door open.

AMED

Sir, please consider what I said.

Richard adjusts his clown nose and hair.

RICHARD

I just want...

DAUGHTER

(O.S)

Daddy!

Richard's face lights up and smiles. He hops out and shuts the door.

Amed watches and smiles as he views the exchange of hugs. He looks in the back seat and sees the bank bag. He's shocked, then happy.

He turns around, puts the cab in gear.

AMED

I guess I'm headed back to the bank.

FADE OUT