

THE EMPLOYEE

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THE EMPLOYEE SHORT SCRIPT BY CHARLES HARDING

FADE IN

EXT. CREATE TECH COMPANY BUILDING DAY

A thirty story building with a distinct and monolithic look. It's an architect's wet dream. The building garners attention with its sharp design. The sun beams off its many freshly cleaned windows. Conservatively dressed people enter the premises evoking an astute professional manner.

A young black man of twenty six years old joins the crowd walking through the many double doors in front. This is ISAIAH. Observant eyes and an artistic flair about himself.

The company is a technological marvel. The front lobby is huge, with receptionists desks about twenty feet apart. Gold plated elevators taking people up and down. Walls full of pictures of lap tops and happy customers enjoying them.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE

Isaiah walks in taking in the scene. A few employees are lounging around. Talking. Playing cards. On their cell phones.

MARK, a young Jewish guy with glasses and a laid back demeanor comes over to Isaiah as he places his lunch in the refrigerator.

MARK

Hey man. Better hope your food is still in there by lunch time. Angie brought leftover gumbo the other day and somebody threw it out.

ISAIAH

This is Louisiana. Gumbo is a precious food source. They should get their asses kicked for that.

The two men laugh and shake hands.

MARK

Not everybody likes that stuff you know.

ISAIAH

I brought a meat loaf sandwich. Straight from my mom's kitchen.

MARK

(Sarcastically)

Yeah. That won't get eaten.

ISAIAH

Shut up. You still working on that Taylor account?

MARK

Bringing it home today. I mean it's not that hard. We're just selling lap tops you know? I mean it's 2030. Everybody is plugged in now more than ever with these new apps that are coming out.

ISAIAH

Yeah man. Tell me about it. On the way over here I barely saw anyone's face. Everybody was on their cell phones.

MARK

Man Create Tech is changing the world. One customer at a time. Pretty soon we'll have the world at our fingertips. Just watch.

ISAIAH

Well I'm putting in my two weeks notice today man.

Mark's face drops. He screws his eyes at Isaiah.

MARK

Why?

ISAIAH

I sold some of my paintings. Not much, but it's enough to where I could be looking at a big deal in the future. It looks things are looking up. I got a meeting with some people tomorrow who want to interview me for a job at Bright Arc. Man! It's finally happening.

MARK

Wow. That's great. Cool man.

Isaiah's excitement dies down.

Mark looks around the room with a frown on his face.

MARK

I'll see you later.

Mark hurries off.

Isaiah watches him go. Bewilderment on his face.

INT. WORK ROOM SIXTH FLOOR

The room is huge. Shiny floors and office type music humming overhead. Think of Jack Lemmon's work place in "The Apartment".

The room is full of people at small cubicles with head pieces on their domes and tapping at computer monitors. Everyone is lined up in nice little rows talking in rapid fire fashion.

EMPLOYEE

Yes! Welcome to Create Tech! We have the most advanced internet service in the world!

EMPLOYEE TWO

Yes sir! We can ship out three lap tops just in time for your wife's birthday! We guarantee delivery the next day!

EMPLOYEE THREE

Well thank you so much! We are truly happy that you are enjoying your service. Yes that high definition is incredible I agree! Oh really! Well reading can be a little boring to be honest.

Isaiah sits at his desk and puts on his headset.

Right across from him is CHRISTINE, mid twenties. Black woman with curly hair and a talkative nature.

CHRISTINE

(On the phone)

Well yes Create Tech is the number one technology company in the world. That's all thanks to our customers. Thank you so much and have a nice day.

She disconnects.

ISAIAH

I see you laying it on thick like always.

CHRISTINE

Got to pay the bills sir.

ISAIAH

Guess what? I sold three paintings.

CHRISTINE

Oh my God! Are you serious? Congratulations!

ISAIAH

Yeah. I'm putting in my two weeks notice today.
Christine's smile fades.

CHRISTINE

You sure you want to do that?

ISAIAH

Yeah. I got an interview tomorrow at Bright Arc.

CHRISTINE

Oh yeah. I've heard of them. Nice company.
Isaiah notices her change in attitude.

ISAIAH

Yeah well it's what I've always wanted.

CHRISTINE

Yeah well maybe quitting is not a good idea. I mean
technology is where it's at.

ISAIAH

Why not? This job was always just a temporary thing. I've
only been here a month. I need to take advantage of this
opportunity while I can.

CHRISTINE

Leaving might not be all that easy. Look at Stacey over
there.

Isaiah looks over at a lady in her early forties hunched over her desk typing. She looks defeated and as if she's been crying.

ISAIAH

What about her?

CHRISTINE

She came up short with her monthly sales and they sent somebody to beat up her son.

Isaiah's face drops.

ISAIAH

Oh hell no! That can't be true!

CHRISTINE

Yes it is. She usually sold about fifty lap tops a month. They found out she came up short by twenty so they sent her a message. They said next time it would be worse for her son.

ISAIAH

That's crazy! They can't do that! All she has to do is call the police!

CHRISTINE

She tried but they said there was no proof this company was responsible. They said her son ran with a bad crowd, and just assumes he got in a fight with them.

The elevator doors open. A man in a wheelchair, with his neck in a brace, is pushed in by two large men in blue suits and sunglasses.

They wheel him over to his desk.

MAN IN CHAIR

For God's sake I'm hurt! I was in a car accident! Why can't you leave me alone?!

The man starts crying.

The two men head back down in the elevator.

All the employees continue working never looking up.

Christine shakes her head.

ISAIAH

Hey that's Ben! What happened to him?

CHRISTINE

He got in a fender bender the other night and tried to call off from work today. They went to his house and got him.

Isaiah looks at her like she's got worms coming out of her head.

ISAIAH

No! No! That's not real! Nobody can do that!

CHRISTINE

They did it. Look Isaiah this is a good job. Nine hundred and fifty dollars a week is not bad. There's room for being a manager. That's where I'm headed. All we're doing is selling lap tops. What's so hard about that?

ISAIAH

I'm an artist!

CHRISTINE

(Laughs)

We'll see about that. Being an artist is as dead as a cat in the road. People don't care about that stuff no more. There will always be future generations pushing that stuff away in favor of being plugged in. That's what it's all about. Think about that.

She clicks her headset.

CHRISTINE

Welcome to Create Tech. How may I help you on this beautiful morning?

Isaiah looks dumbfounded. He looks around the room at the other workers. Everyone is immersed in their own worlds. The sound of a heartbeat plays on the soundtrack.

He rises from his desk and heads towards the elevators.

CHRISTINE

Where are you going?

ISAIAH

Bathroom

CHRISTINE

Hurry back. I want to tell you about my date last night.

INT. BATHROOM

Isaiah paces back and forth lost in his head.

ISAIAH

(To Himself)

Just leave. Forget the two weeks notice. Just leave! Go!

The door opens and one of the men in the blue suit enters. He's quiet and menacing with his sunglasses.

Isaiah immediately begins washing his hands.

The man uses a stall, eyes locked on Isaiah.

He finishes and washes his hands at the sink as Isaiah dries his own.

MAN

You okay sir?

ISAIAH

Yeah man I'm good.

MAN

You've been in here for twenty minutes.

ISAIAH

I really had to go.

He gives the man a look and leaves.

INT. FRONT LOBBY DAY

The elevator doors open and Isaiah slowly enters. Bright sun rays streak through the windows hitting the floors like fingers. The secretaries are at their desks working.

A few people are seated in the waiting area. New applicants hoping for jobs.

A few of the men in blue suits are hanging around. Isaiah takes a deep breath and begins approaching the door. One of the men approaches him.

MAN

Excuse me sir. It's not lunch time yet.

ISAIAH

Yeah well I'm done. I quit.

MAN

Did you put in a two weeks notice?

ISAIAH

No man. Look! I'm leaving. Gone! I quit!

MAN

Okay sir enough of the jokes. Let's get back to work.

ISAIAH

I'm not going anywhere. I quit! Now get the hell out my way!

Isaiah tries to push past the man, but he gets shoved back. Isaiah throws a punch, but the man ducks and punches him in the stomach dropping him to his knees.

The man grabs him by the shirt and pushes him back towards the elevators.

The applicants notice this but continue waiting.

INT. ELEVATOR

Isaiah holds his stomach while the man in the suit stands behind.

The floor numbers light up....

1,2,3,4,5...

The doors open and an employee holding a stack of files tries to get on. Isaiah elbows the guard in the chest, pushes the other man against him, and exits the elevators right as the door closes.

The man in the blue suit lunges at him, but is stopped by the closing doors.

Isaiah sighs.

He looks around the room. It's empty except for a bunch of filing cabinets. He heads for the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Isaiah walks slowly down the hall looking behind himself every few seconds. He hears a sound coming from a room at the end of the hall.

INT. EXPERIMENT ROOM

Isaiah comes across a glass encased room full of people sitting at long tables. Its a mixture of men and women, from ages fourteen to fifty, spread apart eyes buried in lap tops.

A huge flat screen television is playing behind them showcasing various images.

Kids graduating schools.

People playing with children.

Videos of people dancing at parties.

People working together to clean up communities.

The people retain their focus on the screens. Nothing else seems to matter.

Isaiah enters the room.

ISAIAH

Hey!! What's going on here?!

Nobody responds.

People continue looking at their screens. Some are even laughing at the images.

ISAIAH

Hey! I said what's going on here?! Who are you people? What the hell is this?!

Some of the people in the room look up at him with bland expressions on their faces.

Their eyes register nothing. It's almost like he's a plain wall.

One of the women speaks up:

WOMAN

(Speaking in a monotone voice)

We are enjoying Create Tech. Who are you?

ISAIAH

Enjoying it? What are you talking about?

WOMAN

Enjoying the best high definition images possible.

ISAIAH

Lady are you on dope or something? This seems wrong.

One of the men in the room speaks.

MAN

Maybe you're wrong Isaiah.

Isaiah regards him with contempt.

ISAIAH

How do you know my name?

MAN

Maybe you're wrong. Create Tech is the future. It's making our lives so much better. No more distractions from the rest of the world. Now only the images on these lap tops matter. Such wonderful images.

The man turns his lap top around. Isaiah is taken aback by what he sees.

Images of buildings being demolished.

Police car chases.

Animals attacking people.

Violent tornadoes ripping through communities.

Violent and bloody street fights.

People crying at funerals.

Killing in foreign countries by terrorists.

ISAIAH

My God!! What is this?!

MAN

It's the future Isaiah. It's the most entertaining thing to see. Watch with us.

ISAIAH

No. I'm getting out of here. I quit.

One of the women in the room starts laughing. Then another begins laughing.

And another.

Soon the whole room begins to laugh at Isaiah.

WOMAN

Poor silly boy. Didn't you read your employee handbook. Once you're here, why would you ever want to leave? Page twenty.
Last line.

Suddenly everyone stops laughing at Isaiah and resume staring at their screens.

ISAIAH

Hell no! I'm out! That's it!

The people in the room glance up at him with cold eyes all at once.

EVERYBODY IN UNISON

Goodbye Isaiah!

Isaiah quickly exits. He looks back one last time to see everyone still staring at him.

INT. HALLWAY

Isaiah heads for the elevators at the end of the hall. He pushes the button looking back to make sure no one is behind him.

The doors open and three of the men in sunglasses appear.

ISAIAH

Shit!

Isaiah takes off running with two of the men in hot pursuit. The third man hangs back talking on a walkie talkie.

MAN IN SUIT

Yeah we got him! sixth floor!

Isaiah rounds a corner running as fast as he can. He looks behind and one of the men is gaining on him.

Isaiah sees a room with an open door and barges in. He tries to close the door, but the man crashes through like a linebacker.

Smash! Wham! Crack!!

Isaiah and the man topple over a desk fighting.

ISAIAH

Get the hell off me!!

MAN

Sir don't make this any....

Isaiah grabs a pen from the floor and stabs the man in the hand.

MAN

Ahhhhhhh!!!!

He falls back against a wall grabbing his wound.

The other man charges in the room. Isaiah grabs a stapler and throws it at his head.

The man ducks and never breaks his stride coming at him.

He throws a punch.....

Smack!

...It lands right upside Isaiah's head.

The man with the injured hands gets to his feet and grabs Isaiah from behind.

MAN

Alright sir! Fun time is over! Let's go.

The other man approaches to help.

OOOOF! Oww!!

Isaiah kicks him right in the stomach!

He elbows the other man in the nose with direct aim.

The guy grabs his face as blood starts pouring.

Isaiah bolts as fast as he can from the room.

He sees a stairwell door and heads for it.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Isaiah bounds down the steps two at a time. He's moving so fast that he almost bumps into Stacey smoking a cigarette.

STACEY

Oh my God! You scared the hell out of me!

ISAIAH

Stacey! What the hell are you doing out here?!!

STACEY

Taking a break from that crap. They want me to sell lap tops all day, well this is all I ask for in return. Some time for myself.

She notices Isaiah sweating and out of breath.

STACEY

Are you okay?

ISAIAH

No!! This place is terrible!! I don't know how the hell I could work here a month and not notice it!!

He looks at her.

I heard about your son.

Stacey nods her head politely and smiles.

STACEY

Leave it to Christine to tell everyone's business.

ISAIAH

Stacey look! We can get out of here! Right now!

Stacey shakes her head.

STACEY

No. I need this for my son.

ISAIAH

Stacey this company is turning everybody into mindless cyborgs!! You should've seen the room I was in.

Stacey suddenly looks concerned.

STACEY

What room?

ISAIAH

I... I don't know how to explain it. Look let's get to the police. I know there's another way out of here.

STACEY

Police won't help. They can't.

ISAIAH

Somebody has to! The whole damn world can't be turning into this!!

Stacey drops her cigarette and crushes it under her foot.

She suddenly pulls out a taser gun, and zaps Isaiah in the chest.

Buzzzzzz! Buzzzzzz!

Isaiah rocks back and forth like he's at sea.

He crumples to the ground sprawled out on the stairs.

ISAIAH' POV

His vision is blurry, and drifting in and out of focus.

Stacey is leaning over him talking, and her voice sounds soft and far away.

STACEY

It's okay Isaiah. I made a mistake and learned my lesson. Now is your chance to learn yours.

Slowly fade to black.

FADE IN

INT. ROOM DAY

Isaiah wakes up in what appears to be a board room. He's sitting in a chair at a long walnut table with a clear sheen.

Isaiah hears glass clinking off the side.

He looks over and sees a man of about fifty with a nice suit and graying hair pouring two glasses of water from a pitcher. A handsome Caucasian man with intelligent eyes. This is CECIL. The boss.

Two of the men in sunglasses hang back.

CECIL

Hello Isaiah. Sorry it's been so long since I've talked to you. I've just been a busy man. I don't think we've talked since I hired you correct?

He places a glass of water next to Isaiah and sits in the chair opposite him.

ISAIAH

What's going on?

CECIL

You tell me. You've been running through this building all day and haven't sold any lap tops. I want to make sure you're okay.

ISAIAH

I quit! End of story.

Cecil takes a long sip of water. The sound of it gurgling down his throat echoes in the room.

CECIL

Ahh. Good. Quit? Why? Are you not happy making good money?

ISAIAH

Man you are forcing people to work here! What kind of shit is that?!

CECIL

People don't really know what they want until you present it to them. That's where we come in.

ISAIAH

You got people watching these violent videos? Why?

CECIL

It's the future. People share and like the most horrible things all the time. Years ago it was all they did. Now I'm giving them the option to focus on it more.

ISAIAH

This doesn't make any sense.

CECIL

It makes perfect sense. The world is reliant on technology so much more now that it did in say... 2018. So no more distractions. We give them high quality entertainment. Morale and having a conscience is out.

ISAIAH

Why? Why turn people into drones?

Cecil laughs.

CECIL

Isaiah people have been doing that since way before I came along. The internet transformed everyone into bullies. Spewing hateful rhetoric behind screens. Pictures and videos of the most horrible stuff was being shared. We welcomed it. Liked and shared it. Now that stuff like Facebook is gone, I want to bring back what they truly want. High definition videos of the craziest, most entertaining images around. They will pay top dollar for it. They will love it. The future is technology.

Isaiah's face registers defeat.

ISAIAH

I'm calling the cops.

CECILE

It does seem like the idea thing to do. Call the police. However since we've come on the scene, crime has dropped by fifty six percent. People are looking at our lap tops everywhere. We even have cell phone receptions now. They're simply too busy watching to do anything wrong. Anything that tickles their desires. They watch. Oh of course they still go to work and make a living, but their conversations are different. No more articulate debates about anything political or social. Just talks of what they've seen.

ISAIAH

I'm an artist. I'm not a video freak.

Cecil laughs again

CECIL

Isaiah you may have sold a few art pieces but a successful artist you'll never be.

ISAIAH

I have a interview tomorrow...

CECIL

Do you remember that night you got drunk and hit that kid on the bicycle with your car?

Isaiah's face freezes.

ISAIAH

What are you talking about?

CECIL

I think it was three years ago. You went to a party, got drunk, convinced yourself you could drive, and on your way smashed into that sixteen year old boy coming home from his fast food job on his bicycle.

Isaiah looks shocked.

ISAIAH

How do you know bout that?

CECIL

I have my ways. Thank God the boy is okay. Just a busted leg. Walks with a slight limp. Of course you know that. You drove off out of fear, but every so often you check up on him. You even sent some money to his family to help with medical expenses, but never confessed. I'm pretty sure your new company would think differently of you if they knew.

ISAIAH

You mutha....

Cecil clicks on a television overhead. On it is a shaky hand held image of Isaiah's mother putting groceries in her car.

CECIL

Your mother correct? Nice lady. The minute you began acting erratic we paid her a visit. There's a bomb under her car. All I have to do is push a button. Boom.

Isaiah looks at the screen with tears welling up.

Cecil leans forward.

CECIL

Isaiah no one cares about art and literature anymore. Technology is where civilization will wrap up its story. Stay with us. You're a good seller. Nice numbers for someone only here a month.

(In a menacing voice)

Try to leave and I destroy your world.

ISAIAH

Don't hurt her.

CECIL

I don't intend to. As long as you play by the rules.

Isaiah stands and walks away, head hanging down.

CECIL

(Calling out)

And remember. In three months you get an evaluation. You could be a floor manager in no time.

INT. WORK ROOM SIXTH FLOOR

Isaiah enters the room as defeated as a sports team after losing a championship. He sits at his desk, face wet with tears.

Stacey looks over at him with a grimace.

Christine seems concerned.

CHRISTINE

You were in the bathroom a long time.

ISAIAH

Do you think a place like this can help us in the future?

CHRISTINE

Yes I do.

Isaiah puts on his head piece.

ISAIAH

I've been drawing and painting since I was a kid. It was all I ever wanted. I never thought for a minute that it would be considered out dated.

CHRISTINE

This is better. Trust me.

Isaiah closes his eyes.

ISAIAH

Is this what we really want? Is this the future?

Christine just shakes her head and continues working.

He looks up and see Mark.

A smile is on his face as he nods at Isaiah.

Isaiah pushes a button on his earpiece.

ISAIAH

Welcome to Create Tech. How may I help you?

THE END.

