

Coffee Cup

by  
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INT. DOWNTOWN - FEDERAL BUILDING - MORNING

A SMALL OFFICE on the second floor, generic looking. A clock, calendar, and POSTER of a scantily clad movie actress adorn the walls.

ALAN DARBY wears a bored expression. With his hands folded across his chest he stares out the window watching the people below, particularly the WOMEN.

RICHARD SEGER, a friend, pokes his head through the doorway interrupting the moment.

RICHARD

Hey, you coming? Better get a move on it. Don't wanna miss this meeting do you?

ALAN

Yes I do.

Alan reluctantly leaves the window's view and scans his desk for a note pad. He follows Richard and other STAFF MEMBERS already on their way to the conference room.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Everyone takes a seat at the conference table. The SECTION CHIEF sits at the head of the table. Stern-looking. He's ready to speak serious stuff.

Alan wears his bored expression in the meeting. Also at the table is KATY KRINGLE. Richards sits across from her. He stares lustfully at her.

SECTION CHIEF

Everyone here? Looks like it.

(beat)

Sorry to say this but the coffee fund has been hit again. That's twice this month someone's been dipping in the coffee cup for coins.

The news receives a blank stare from around the table. Alan muffles a yawn. Who cares.

SECTION CHIEF (CONT'D)

This is serious. I'm thinking of putting in a surveillance camera. But I don't want to go that far.

(MORE)

SECTION CHIEF (CONT'D)

So I'm asking everyone to take out a slip of paper and write down a name. Someone of interest. Leave the paper with me when this meeting ends.

No one says anything nor looks surprised. A few of the staff take out a slip of paper but don't write anything.

WORKER #1

Is there a reward for catching the perpetrator

Someone SNICKERS.

WORKER #2

Yeah, free coffee.

More SNICKERING.

SECTION CHIEF

You think this is funny? Someone amongst us is an embezzler, and we need to ferret this criminal out. This is a federal building, federal property. Anything taken off the premises so much as a ink pen or paper clip becomes a federal case. I've already notified the FBI.

Seats become uncomfortable for some. A few shift, GROAN, curse silently. Katy has had enough and must speak up.

KATY

Excuse me, but how can you be so concern about petty cash when we have a major problem in this section?

SECTION CHIEF

(surprised)  
Oh, really?

KATY

(looking at Alan)  
He knows who he is and what he is. A sexist, disgusting pig. With that offensive poster in his office. Why does a nobody like him rate an office, anyway? He belongs in a cubicle.

ALAN  
(looks at Katy)  
And you belong in a straitjacket.

KATY  
I beg your pardon, you vagabond  
from a thrift store, you should be  
the last to speak about attire.

ALAN  
My, my, aren't we the supreme bitch  
today. What adventurous tick  
crawled up your ass and set you  
ablaze?

Katy makes an attempt to throw something at him. A co-worker holds back Katy's pitching arm in mid air.

Richard chimes in, eager to have any type of conversation with Katy. His lusts hardens for her.

RICHARD  
(smiling)  
Calm down Katy, it's just a poster.

Katy refuses to look at Richard, or even acknowledge him.

SECTION CHIEF  
Okay, that's enough. Let's end this  
love fest. If no one has anything  
meaningful to contribute, the  
meeting's over. And don't forget to  
leave your slips with me. I want  
names. The results will be posted  
on the board A-S-A-P, unless  
someone has something they want to  
confess now.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Alan and Richard discuss the irrelevance of the morning meeting.

ALAN  
Now that was a complete waste of  
time. I'm surprised we weren't  
strip searched, lined up against  
the wall for a cavity check.  
(beat)  
Why isn't it possible that the  
money just vanished?

RICHARD

Or borrowed to get something out of the vending machine.

ALAN

Cheap bastards should pay us what we're worth then there wouldn't be this problem. People have bills to pay.

RICHARD

I doubt anything from the coffee cup could ever help. Only those with a conscience pays for the coffee anyway.

(beat)

So who do you think will get the most votes?

ALAN

Who gives a rat's fart. Strange things do happen. Happens all the time. Take laundry for example. Where does that missing sock go after every wash? You search the washer, the dryer. Nothing. Vanishes into thin air.

RICHARD

Maybe you're right. Hell, we have some honest people in this office.

Richard walks over to the poster. Looks it over. Wonders aloud.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

Hmm...think your poster is safe?

INT. CAFETERIA - AFTERNOON

At a small table Alan is about to have a late lunch alone. Only a few STRAGGLERS remain from lunchtime, CHATTING.

Nearby sits Katy with a coterie plotting world peace. She spots Alan, picks up her drink and walks over to sit across from him. Alan ignores her.

KATY

Neanderthal.

ALAN

Woman, why are you here?

KATY

To inform you I plan to file a formal protest stating your insensitivity and callous attitude towards maintaining a peaceful relationship among your co-workers.

ALAN

Does my poster bother you that much?

KATY

Yes. Along with your lack of breeding and pseudo existence.

ALAN

The poster is harmless.

KATY

It's filth and degrading.

ALAN

And what are you? Art critic? Culture police? Or how about a regular busy-body, a roving nuisance.

KATY

Remove that garbage or I file a complaint.

ALAN

What for? You're the only one bothered by it. Besides it's my picture in my office.

KATY

Your office? We'll see about that. I want that poster gone, or face eviction.

ALAN

Then buy me another.

KATY

Absolutely not.

ALAN

Positively yes.

Alan is anxious to end the conversation, says nothing else. He continues eating, waits for Katy to leave.

KATY  
(getting up from seat)  
And tell that stalker to quit  
saying hello to me before I report  
him.

ALAN  
If you mean Richard, you tell him.

KATY  
I would but I'm not speaking to  
that...  
hovering gnat.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - LATER

Alan is entering when the phone RINGS.

ALAN  
Right now? Okay, I'm on my way.

Alan leaves his office.

INT. RICHARD'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alan walks in and takes a seat. Richard looks depressed sitting at his desk, hands Alan an interoffice holey envelope. He opens it and takes out a small note.

RICHARD  
What do think?

ALAN  
(reading aloud from the  
note)  
I've had enough of you. Prepare to  
meet the consequences of your  
actions tomorrow.

He hands the small piece of paper back to Richard.

ALAN (CONT'D)  
(nonchalantly)  
Well?

RICHARD  
Sounds like a threat.

ALAN  
Sounds like Katy.

RICHARD  
You think I should call in sick?

ALAN  
Why?

RICHARD  
Maybe I should apologize to her.

ALAN  
What!?! For saying hello? Forget it.  
She's just a neurotic bitch. Screw  
her.

RICHARD  
I've been trying.

ALAN  
Well stop trying. Making love to  
her would probably be the same as  
sticking your pecker in a freezer.

RICHARD  
What about the note?

ALAN  
Harmless paper. What the hell can  
she do anyway? The best thing for  
you to do is ignore her completely.  
And muzzle that lust of yours. It's  
beginning to show when you see her.

Alan looks at the clock on the wall. Checks his wristwatch.

ALAN (CONT'D)  
Well, looks like another work day  
has drawn to a close. You staying  
late?

RICHARD  
(mumbles)  
No.

ALAN  
Well then I'll see you tomorrow.  
Cheer up. Enjoy the rest of the  
day. Have a nice evening and get a  
good night's sleep.

Alan returns to his office. He turns off his computer, picks up his briefcase and leaves for the day.

Away from the Federal Building, he walks toward his car in a nearby parking lot, gets in and drives away.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - EVENING

Alan parks his car beside a gas pump and goes inside the

CONVENIENCE STORE --

He picks up something for dinner: bread, juice, microwave dinners. Drops the stuff on the counter.

STORE CLERK  
(bored as hell)  
Will that be all?

The clerk doesn't bother to look at Alan, immediately begins to punch keys on the cash register.

ALAN  
Yes, that's it...  
(remembers)  
oh, and add fifteen for gas.

STORE CLERK  
(dryly)  
You want gas, we've got a special  
on Windbreaker Chili Beans. Buy one  
can get three cans free.

ALAN  
No thanks. The only gas I need is  
for my car.

STORE CLERK  
(extremely dry)  
Well, that certainly will move your  
ass without the flatulence.

INT. ALAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Settled in the comfort of home Alan is

-- in THE KITCHEN preparing dinner.

-- In THE LIVING ROOM watching TV.

MOMENTS LATER --

he falls asleep on the couch, snores while the TV remains on.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - MORNING

Elevator doors split open, Alan exits into

HALLWAY --

and walks to open a door, enters the

OUTER OFFICE --

where he sees unusual activity. Excitement brews. People mill around, TALKING, GOSSIPING, GIGGLING.

Alan walks slowly, reaches Richard's office. A small CROWD OF THREE have gathered outside the door, engaged in WHISPERING, eavesdropping, rumor-mongering.

Alan sees the section chief and TWO MEN who look like FBI inside

RICHARD'S OFFICE --

Richard is being grilled. The section chief watches the proceedings, stares at Richard, frowns, shakes his head in disgust.

AGENT #1

Look make it easy on yourself,  
confess now and we'll knock some  
time off of your sentence.

AGENT #2

Take the deal or I'll beat a  
confession out you.

OUTER OFFICE --

Katy walks up to Alan. She gives him a shrewd smile.

KATY

I wonder who dropped a dime on your  
friend?

Katy walks away. Alan stares after her. He looks at Richard being berated by the agents.

RICHARD'S OFFICE --

RICHARD

I didn't do it.

AGENT #1  
Of course you did.

I'm being framed.

AGENT #1  
Yeah, yeah, that's what they all  
say.

AGENT #2  
We have a reliable witness who says  
you were seen doing what you  
shouldn't have done.

SECTION CHIEF  
You leech. Have you no shame, no  
remorse? Stop lying.

AGENT #1  
Now I'm going to ask you one last  
and final time before I ram both of  
your feet up your sorry bitch ass.

RICHARD  
(yells)  
Somebody help me!

Both agents take off their jacket and remove their gun holsters, roll up their sleeves, and give the section chief a nod. Chief closes the blinds and the door as he walks out leaving Richard to his fate.

OUTER OFFICE --

Alan turns from staring at the door to see everyone working as the activity returns to its normal routine.

Alan hurriedly makes a beeline to his office.

INT. ALAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Grasping for air he RIPS the poster from the wall, crumples it, tosses it in the trash, then closes the door and blinds. A depressed look stains his face as he collapses in his chair.

ALAN  
(mumbles)  
Damn!

Suddenly he straightens up. Katy is looking at him from the doorway. Quietly securing the door, she walks in, glances at the empty space on the wall and smiles her approval. He gazes at her posture.

Katy turns around, faces Alan. She walks slowly, unbuttoning her blouse effortlessly, closes in on Alan who's beginning to feel the heat. Alan realizing he's about to be grilled feels his forehead ardently dripping sweat.

KATY

Posters are for wimps, Alan. Nail my flesh to the wall now, and don't make me jealous again.

INT. SECTION CHIEF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The Chief is on the phone, in a calm and pleasant mood.

SECTION CHIEF

I don't know what happened. Over reaction, maybe. The anonymous woman decided not to file harassment charges against him. Says Richard didn't do what she believed she had seen.

(pauses, listens)

I know...but she thought his hand in his pants pocket was pointing at her and took it the wrong way. Got it confused as a naughty gesture.

(pauses, listens)

But those interns sent down from the Inspector General's Office were pretty good.

(pauses, listens)

Yep, Gloria takes harassment pretty serious, upstairs. All her staff carry live rounds and brass knuckles as a reminder that the men in this building should always remain gentlemen to the women.

(pauses, listens)

After I left, Richard fainted and the interns went back upstairs to be graded on their performance.

(pauses, listens)

Well, at least the missing money showed up in the coffee cup. It's been a strange day, even Katy had a smile by the end of the afternoon.

(pauses, listens)

(MORE)

SECTION CHIEF (CONT'D)

No I won't forget to stop by the  
store. Love you, bye.

The Chief hangs up the phone, chuckles and shakes his head.

SECTION CHIEF (CONT'D)

Women!

THE END