

The Promotion

by

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INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - DAY

RONNIE HELDEN (27M) SITS AT HIS COMPUTER IN HIS SMALL CUBICLE. THE SIDES OF THE CUBICLE BARELY REACH THE LEVEL OF HIS SHOULDERS, GIVING HIM NO REAL PRIVACY.

OFFICE WORKER 1 walks by and drops some papers on Ronnie's desk

OFFICE WORKER 1
Hey, Ronnie. Take care of these,
will you? I've got a lunch date.

Ronnie looks up as if to say "Sure" but the colleague is already gone.

OFFICE WORKER 2 walks by and looks at Ronnie over the side of the cubicle.

OFFICE WORKER 2
Ronnie. Good to see you, man. Can
you cover for me at the two o'clock
meeting?

Goes off without waiting for an answer.

OFFICE WORKER 2 (CONT'D)
(over his shoulder)
Thanks, man.

Ronnie shakes his head, goes back to the computer.

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR walk up to the cubicle's entrance while Ronnie has his back to the entrance.

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR
Ronnie. I'd like to...

RONNIE
(loudly)
No! I'm busy!

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR
What???!

Ronnie turns and sees who it is.

RONNIE

Oh, sorry, Mrs. Johanssen. I thought you were someone else.

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

Well, I certainly hope so. (beat)
Ronnie I'm concerned about that report that was due yesterday. You had plenty of time...

RONNIE

I'm sorry, I'm almost done. (beat)
If I wasn't doing all this crap for everyone else...

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

Well, Ronnie, if you can't handle your responsibilities.

RONNIE

I can do mine fine. It's everybody else's that keep getting dumped on me. Am I the only one who works around here? I stay late every night, I've never gotten the promotion and raises I was promised, and...

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

I have no say over that, Ronnie. I just work here too. Mr. Lixton has the final say. I barely got my own raise this year.

RONNIE

You got a raise? But I still didn't?

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

Well, I *am* a supervisor.

RONNIE

What am I then? Just some schnook that can be replaced by a computer?

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

Oh, you've heard? But it hasn't been finalized yet.

RONNIE

What??!!

RONNIE'S SUPERVISOR

Sorry. Forget you heard that.
(beat) I'll expect that report from
you by the end of the day.

She leaves and Ronnie sits there, staring at her back, turns and stares at his computer, and lays his head down on his arms on the desk.

INT. APARTMENT - MORNING

Ronnie is at home in his small apartment. He paces between the living room, kitchen and bathroom, talking to himself. Over and over again.

RONNIE

Uh...Mr. Lixton, it would be really nice to get a raise.

No...uh...Mr. Lixton, I'm long overdue for a promotion. And a raise.
Do you think it's...uh...time that I...uh... get a promotion?
Uh, how do you feel about my getting a raise? Or maybe a promotion..?

Ronnie stops in front of the bathroom mirror, looking at his reflection.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Now look determined. Tell him exactly what you want. Strong voice. Loud but not too loud. Firm.

Uh, Mr. Lixton. I...uh... I've been putting in a lot of overtime and...it's not like I mind, I'm very dedicated to the company, and I love my job, but it's been five years now, and I'd sure appreciate it if...you know...maybe you could...

No, not like that, you schmuck.
Strong. Confident. Don't hesitate.
Try it again.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Mr. Lixton! I..uh...
(sputters and stutters)
I want...I think...I wonder...Ah,
fuck!

He turns away from the mirror, goes into the kitchen, takes a piece of toast from the toaster, throws it on a plate, slabs butter on it, gobbles it down.

RONNIE

(mumbling to himself)
Maybe I should just call in sick
today. And tomorrow as well. (beat)
Or I could shoot myself.

Ronnie goes out his front door.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Ronnie is riding the elevator. Alone. He looks dejected.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

Ronnie steps out of the elevator, walks to the front door, and exits the building.

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ronnie comes out the front door of the apartment building. We switch to his POV and see...

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Ronnie realizes suddenly that he is in the middle of a jungle. He panics. He looks behind and sees...no apartment building. Just more jungle. He turns around 360 degrees and sees he is surrounded by jungle. He hears a RUSTLE off to his side, looks toward the sound and sees a fifteen-foot long LIZARD, coming after him.

RONNIE

Shit.

Ronnie runs, zigging and zagging as the lizard pursues him. Suddenly Ronnie notices a hanging vine. He grabs it and swings to a branch of a neighboring tree, which he grabs, climbs onto, and holds on to tightly for dear life.

He looks around, his eyes huge with amazement.

The lizard wanders off. After a while, Ronnie grabs another vine and swings down to the ground, looking around cautiously. Birds are CHATTERING loudly, unseen animals are SCREECHING in the background, a large dark ANIMAL that looks like a cross between a bear and an ape hurries by, apparently not even noticing Ronnie, who is now cowering in the shadows behind a tree.

He steps out from behind the tree, looks to his side, and sees...

EXT. FRONT OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ronnie is right in front of his apartment building. He looks bewildered, confused...and frightened.

RONNIE
What the fu...?

After standing there a moment, looking all around him, he shrugs, turns and walks along the sidewalk. Everything around him is normal. People walking, cars honking. As he walks, he keeps looking around...to his sides and behind him, obviously reassuring himself that everything is as it should be. He reaches the curb at the end of the block, steps down to cross the street, and suddenly finds himself...

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

Ronnie is in the middle of a war. BOMBS are going off, RIFLES are shooting, MACHINE GUNS are firing, SOLDIERS and CIVILIANS are SCREAMING and YELLING, and running everywhere.

RONNIE
What the hell is going on?!

A soldier runs toward Ronnie with his rifle aimed directly at him. Ronnie raises his hands to show he is unarmed but the soldier runs right on by him.

A nearby EXPLOSION knocks Ronnie off his feet.

MOTHER (O.S.)
(screams)

Ronnie picks himself up, turns and sees that a small CHILD is running directly into the path of a huge oncoming TANK. Ronnie runs, grabs the child, and leaps out of the way just in time as the tank continues its rush forward.

The MOTHER runs up shouting and crying.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

Thank you, thank you. Oh, bless you

She takes the child from Ronnie and holds it in her arms, stroking it.

MOTHER (CONT'D)

My child, my child. You saved him,
you've saved my child. Thank you.

RONNIE

You're welcome. I was just...

Suddenly the Mother, the Child and the battlefield disappear and Ronnie is again...

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

...on the city street. Ronnie looks more confused than ever. He sits down on a bus stop bench and looks around at his surroundings. After a moment a bus appears, stopping right in front of him. He boards the bus, takes a seat, and looks out the window as the bus continues on its route.

To Ronnie the world looks normal, just the everyday life of the city. At a bus stop, he gets off the bus, walks a short distance, and as he reaches the end of the block suddenly discovers that in front of him is not another city street, but...

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS IN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Ronnie is out in the middle of farm country with fields of corn as far as he can see. Nearby is a railroad track. A mustached VILLAIN is tying a YOUNG WOMAN to the track.

YOUNG WOMAN

(screaming)

Help! Help me, please! Someone save
me!

The Villain finishes tying her to the track and we see and hear a TRAIN approaching, faster and faster every second.

VILLAIN

(twisting his mustache)

Heh, heh, heh. Now, you little
beauty. Scream as much as you wish.
No one can hear you out here. My
nefarious plot is complete and I
will inherit your uncle's wealth.

Ronnie sees what the villain has done.

RONNIE

(shouts)

Never, you cad! Fear not, young
lady. Ronnie is here!

The Villain looks up and is startled to see Ronnie.

Ronnie runs and jumps on the Villain. They struggle. They fight. The Villain is winning. No, Ronnie is winning. The Villain. Ronnie. The Villain. Suddenly Ronnie swings a blow to the jaw of the Villain. The Villain falls unconscious onto the track.

Ronnie unties the Young Woman and pulls her to safety. Just as he does, the approaching train rolls over the track where she had been. The Villain, still lying on the track, becomes conscious just in time to see his imminent fate.

VILLAIN

Noooooooo.

The Villain is dead, and Ronnie has saved the Young Woman. He holds her in his arms. She looks down at the two halves of the Villain and says...

YOUNG WOMAN

Yuck.

She looks up at Ronnie.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

My hero...

As her lips near his to give him a kiss of gratitude, Ronnie is suddenly back in...

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Ronnie is staring blankly into space, with his lips parted. He notices where he is, realizes there is no grateful young woman in his arms, closes his lips, and looks around embarrassed in case someone has seen him. Suddenly a ROBBER runs out of a bank, collides into Ronnie, and they both fall to the ground.

Ronnie grabs onto the Robber, struggles with him, and holds him down. A POLICEMAN runs up, gun drawn, and arrests the Robber.

Ronnie looks up and sees he is surrounded by people, all looking at the Policeman and Robber, and gesturing towards Ronnie.

CROWD

Yea! Hurray! What a hero! Bravo!
What a man!

Ronnie stands up, brushes himself off, and bows to the crowd. He notices that he is almost in front of his own office building. As the applause and cheering of the crowd continues, he walks to the building, firmly opening the building's front door and strides into the building.

INT. RONNIE'S BOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Ronnie enters the door to the reception area. A RECEPTIONIST is at her desk but he walks straight by it.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you, Mister ...uh....?

RONNIE

(as he continues to walk
toward a door at the back
of the reception area)
Holden. Ron Holden.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

I'll announce...

RONNIE

Don't bother.

Ronnie strides towards the boss's door, slams it open and walks into the office. The BOSS, sitting at his desk, looks up, startled.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Holden here, JL. Where the hell's that raise and promotion I was supposed to get a year ago?! I want them now. And that raise better be retroactive!

FADE OUT.

THE END

