

And Act of Kindness
by Geoff McCandles

God, I hate this job. Every time I walk into this building, I think of all the dumb mother fuckers I'm going to have to tolerate when they call in and I try to get them to do the simplest of things. What makes it worse are the ones who have accents so thick, I can't understand a word they're saying. It's like they're chewing on taffy or yak shit. Whatever. Then they have the balls to get pissed off at me because I can't understand—

Oh crap, here comes what's-his-name. Brian. Yeah, Brian. The smiling shithead who wrote me up two years ago for asking a whiny rep to do her goddam job.

“Hey, Brian.” I nod and snap on a fake smile while thanking god he's not trying to shake my hand. Never known a dude to have such long fingernails and love to shake hands so much. I could understand if he kept one of them long to spoon the coke he's shoving up his air hanger-sized nostrils. But all ten? Is he lazy, or using them to store crud that he can scrape off and store in a box next to the jars of urine in the trunk of his car for later? Heh, Howard Hughes, you fucker. And that wife of his. He must be blind and desperate with no sense of smell. That's one stanky 'ho.

Jesus Christ. Why do I always wind up in the furthest desk from anyone one of the three bathrooms in this joint? Gotta spend half my break following my Sherpa guide through the Congo to get to a pisser that isn't locked for cleaning. Might have to get this cob out of my ass sometime. Not today.

Okay, great. Let's get settled in, here.

“Hey, Tim,” I say as he sits down a couple desks away. Guy used to annoy the fuck out of me, but he turned out all right. Wonder why? Oh, well. Why question the reason for actually liking someone? “No, man. Just hoping to get out of here without ripping my hair out. You know how it is.”

Tim laughs. He's ex-military and short. Bet he had to kick some ass to establish himself and keep from getting picked on constantly.

I'm in a mood today. Must have been the crappy breakfast I had; tuna and crackers. Small calories, little taste. Usually the case.

I check out my little desk. It's kind of a joke, really. I have a monitor and network client box, or whatever it's called, and a keyboard and mouse. Instead of actual walls separating me from the people on either side, there are little white boards so we can write crap on them with markers. Not a bad idea really, until the stuff I put up there is erased by the cleaning woman who ninjas in when I'm not around.

Ten minutes to start of shift. Get logged in and pray like a mother I didn't get a bad survey. Love this company. If get a bad survey, I have to get ten good ones to overcome it and average my score out to performing. If they didn't pay as much as they did, most of us would be gone by now.

I scratch my chin. Beard's getting thick. I always tell myself I'm going to let it grow out, and then I wuss out the first time a whisker begins tickling my nose.

I look around and wonder who's eating a burrito. That smell is going to make it tough getting to lunch. I think of taco bell. There goes my appetite. Works every time.

“Hi Leo!” says a cheerful voice.

I cringe and glance up to see Bernadette grinning at me. She’s short, black, and all teeth-and-gums. She’s also the big boss. Can’t stand her bubbly ass, but she is the boss, so I give a half-hearted smile and hope she gets the hint that I don’t want to talk to her. Of course, she doesn’t and starts yabbering.

“How are you doing today?” she says with more energy than it would take for me to wring her neck.

“Good,” I respond in the blandest, oppressed English student being forced to eat his pudding on a rainy day tone. My face must resemble someone who thought they had won the lottery but realized they were one number off.

“Have a nice day!” Bernadette beams and walks away.

Her husband must be tired of her shit by now, unless she has him whupped real good.

Ok, checking email. Crap. Delete. Crap. Delete. Skim. Crap. Delete. Oh, hey. Here’s one from Vince. Looks like he’s doing well as a quality dude out in Arizona. Good for him. I’ll respond with same ole, same ole. Not like we were best buds, or anything, but it’s good to keep my thin social network alive and on cancer treatment meds.

Like a gopher, I pop my head up and look around. Not too difficult being six foot two and all. Ah, and there she is. The fucking little tight-assed cunt that came out of training two weeks ago. Long blonde hair, big tits, rosebud ass and nice full lips. I like curvy hips. Gives me something to grab on to. I also like a big ass. Not too fat, just big and round. One pound shy of being called fat, is my rule. I just don’t want to see or hear anything when I bury my face in it. Why the Hell do I have a sudden craving for a glazed donut?

She hasn’t said a word to me, though. Bitch. Won’t even look my way. In fact, she seems to be very careful about looking everywhere *but* at me. What the Hell’s her problem? I’m no model, that’s for sure, but I’m not covered in shit, either.

Her name is Bonnie. Same as my late aunt. What a card. Only saw her a few times but I always thought she was cool. Anyway, Bonnie has long, curly, dark blonde hair to her shoulders. After coming out of training two weeks ago, she’s just as happy as a little jaybird flitting around. Let’s see how she fares after a year of getting blasted by pissy old men who can’t get their twenty dollar per month cell service to work, or that little old woman from Hawaii who is screaming “Why my bill so high?!”

This place’ll break her spirit nicely and give her that vacant stare of hopelessness, slouched shoulders, and, with luck, an ass that’s been passed around the call center like a bong at a Grateful Dead concert. “I like swimmin’ with bow-legged women and swim between their legs!” I hum with a little smile.

She’s clearly a social butterfly and a toucher. Always touching shoulders and arms, lightly tapping them with her finger as she tosses her head and laughs all Hollywood-like. Makes me sick. And then a thought crosses my mind.

Maybe I’ll just kill her. The question is: how to do it? Or, more accurately, how do I do it and get away with it? Tough to do. Got to at least try to get away with it just to see if it can be done. I’ve watched a few of those CSI shows to know what should work. And boy, will it be work. With the shit the cops have at their fingertips, committing murder without getting caught is a bitch.

She's not married, I think to myself. Either that or she isn't wearing her ring on purpose. Probably doesn't want to scare away the horny bucks. Slut.

Focus, Leo.

I'll have to find out if she lives alone, in a home or apartment or wherever. We get off at the same time, which means I can follow her home. I think she drives that little yellow Camry. Once I know where she lives, I'll spend a week or two with the binocs checking her patterns—when she leaves, who she's with and anything else I see. I'll figure that shit out.

I smile at Rick as he walks by. Have no idea why he likes me. We only spoke once or twice about some football and now I'm his super pal. Whatever. Keep walkin', fat boy.

Okay. Next step is to catch her alone. Now do I kill her on the spot or knock her out and take her somewhere to do it unmolested? Speaking of molestation . . . naw, not my style. Where to take her? Hotel? Mountains? Shit, all I need is to have a cougar jump on my ass while I'm getting ready to kill her. Be a helluva story, though.

It'll have to be in her house. I'll need some razors and nair to strip every bit of hair off my body. Don't want to leave any hair for dna evidence. What about skin? Crap this is getting complicated. Who cares if I get caught? I'll have to keep a gun handy so if they figure me out and come for me, I can eat my early retirement bullet. Save the taxpayers some money. Yeah, right.

Now the big question. How do I kill her? Torturing has been done to death, so I'll probably do it quick like. She still has to know who killed her and why, though. I imagine Bonnie sitting tied to a chair, her eyes all red and puffy from crying, her big tits heaving as she realizes that she's about to meet the god that created them. He must've been on his game that day.

Focus, Leo.

"Oh, Leo!" she'll whimper piteously. "Why are you doing this? What did I ever do to you?"

I'll just grin like the devil and say nothing while thumbing my big-assed bowie knife. It'll drive her nuts. She'll start begging and bargaining, offering to give me what I want or do anything I want her to. I'll begin to look like I'm considering it and move behind her, saying I'll let her go if she doesn't say a word to anyone.

Miss Bonnie tight-ass will promise on her mother's grave that she won't say anything. She'll even begin to laugh a little, thinking that she might very well get out of this horror alive.

That's when I'll grab a fistful of hair and yank her head back to expose her throat before making a nice clean cut. I wonder if her gurgling will sound like it does in the movies. Can't wait to find out.

I smile, thinking that I have a viable plan in place. If all goes well, I'll have that bitch dead in a couple of weeks. I'll even go to her funeral and see how long I can go without smiling like a redneck watching a wrestling marathon after a NASCAR race.

I'm jerked out of my thoughts when I see someone coming toward me. Shit, it's her!

Be cool, Leo.

"Hi there," she smiles pleasantly and extends her hand toward me. "I'm Bonnie. Are you Leo?"

I nod and shake her hand. Her touch is warm and her nails are long, scraping my skin a little. I can feel her body heat from here and smell the cheap sweet perfume wafting my way. What's she trying to cover up?

“I’m so sorry I haven’t had a chance to introduce myself,” she says, her brow creased with regret. “I’m usually pretty good about getting to know people, but I’ve been so nervous learning the job and all. Will you forgive me?”

“Of course,” I mutter. What the Hell is she trying to pull, here?

I hadn’t noticed that her other hand was behind her back until she pulls it out. She’s holding a small Tupperware dish and there’s something inside. I crane my neck a little to get a better look. She unseals the lid and the smell that comes out makes my water. Is that what I think it is?

“I made some homemade lasagna last night,” Bonnie says with a sly grin. “Tim said you really like it, so I brought some in for you.”

I reach out and take the container from her, the sumptuous smell of ricotta cheese and marinara sauce causing my gut to grumble like a priest being told to keep his hands off the altar boys. I stare dumbly at the block of Italian glory. When I look up again, she’s walking away, her ample ass swaying to and fro.

I dig my spoon into the heavenly pasta and take a bite. Damn, this is almost as good as mom’s—until mom began putting bell peppers in it. I finish all of it and lean back, thinking that I won’t kill Bonnie after all. She’s cool.

As I chow down, my eye finds Ryan. That sawed off little fuck. I can’t stand him since he tattled to my supervisor that I was taking too many personal breaks. I’ll bet he would be easy to kill him . . .