

Advisable for a Dog

Setting—Inside Tast-E-Donut, Midnight

Fluorescent lights beam down on two figures, THOM and the MANAGER in the 24-hour fast food coffee and doughnut restaurant. They're the only ones there, as per usual at the beginning of the midnight shift.

MANAGER: Alright, I'm out of here for the night. I need you to make sure the till's counted and the floors are clean by the time I get back at seven tomorrow.

THOM: You mean the usual deal.

MANAGER: Look, Ted—

THOM: (interrupts) —Thom—

MANAGER: (ignores) —I know you've been working this shift for the past 3 years, but if you just listen, you might one day make assistant manager.

THOM: (beams) You mean during the day?

MANAGER: Um, no. I'm the day manager, Ted—

THOM: (taps name badge)

MANAGER: (oblivious) —But I figure someone needs to watch the stupid son-of-a-bitch working this restaurant from midnight-to-seven.

THOM: We're hiring someone to work with me?

MANAGER: No, I'm finally getting a surveillance camera. You'll just review the security tapes in the morning to keep yourself honest, Ted—

THOM: --Thom—

MANAGER: You hear something, Ted?

THOM: --Thom—

MANAGER: That! Did you hear that, Ted?

THOM: --Thom—

MANAGER: Kinda sounds like one of those Budweiser frogs, doesn't it?

THOM: I don't watch T.V.

The MANAGER stares at THOM in stunned silence. He slowly backs away from the freak.

MANAGER: And with that, I'm out of here.

The MANAGER starts to walk away, and then turns back to THOM.

MANAGER: Oh, and be sure to squeegee the shit offa the commode seat before the morning rush. Drunks and cops may not care about what they squat on, but the commuters—(shudders)—they always know. Somehow, they always know, Ted—

THOM: --Thom—

MANAGER: --Weeeeiiss-errr, hee hee! See ya in the morning, Ted!

THOM: My name is—

MANAGER exits.

THOM: (dejected) –Thom.

THOM watches for the MANAGER to drive off. The coast is clear; a Starsky and Hutch-style jump lands him on the counter. He pulls a Mad Magazine seemingly out of nowhere.

THOM: “NYPD Blech!” Pure genius!

COP enters.

COP: Heya, Terry.

THOM: (Taps name badge)

COP: (looks at badge) Hey, not bad for plastic. (Points to his own badge) But mine's definitely shinier.

THOM: That it is. Lemme guess—(runs fingers over temple like a medium)—Coffee?

COP: (laughs) You got it, Terry.

THOM: (mutters breathlessly) Thom

COP: (unnoticing) And a Double Glaze-Blasted Donut with Sprinkled Goodness for Mr. Muffins.

THOM: Is that advisable for a dog?

COP: You have no idea. You ever see a sugar-hyped attack K-9 take down a perp?

THOM: (shakes head)

COP: (tears in his eyes) It's a damn pretty sight.

THOM: Would Mr. Muffins like a Red Bull to wash that down?

COP: (still picturing violence)

THOM: (clears throat, slides coffee and doughnut to the COP) There ya go—two adrenaline rushes and at least one ruptured thyroid in the making.

COP: Thanks, Terry.

COP exits.

THOM: (checks name badge) Nope, definitely says "Thom." (Buffs it) Ass.

THOM resumes his position on the counter, his back against the register. He whips out an old-school Game Boy.

GUNMAN enters.

The GUNMAN walks up to the counter and levels the business end of a gun barrel directly between THOM's eyes. THOM remains too absorbed in his Game Boy to notice the panty-hosed face of his assailant.

THOM: Welcome to Tast-E-Donut. May I interest you in a Tast-EEE Combo?

GUNMAN: (clears throat) . . . GIMME ALL THE MONEY IN THE REGISTER AND SAFE!

THOM: I'll just give you a second to decide then.

The GUNMAN pauses to study the overhead menu, and then shakes his head to refocus on the task at hand.

GUNMAN: GIMME ALL THE MONEY IN THE REGISTER AND SAFE, YA MUTHER FUCKIN', PAPER-HAT-WEARIN' DILDO!!

THOM actually puts down the Game Boy in anger, but it quickly dissipates as he reaches up to find he is, in fact, wearing a paper hat.

GUNMAN: (reads THOM's name tag) WHAT ARE YOU?! FUCKIN' RETARDED, THOM?!?!
(Pronounces "Thom" with the "h" included phonetically)

THOM: --Thom—

GUNMAN: SHUT THE FUCK UP AND GET THE MONEY, DILDO!

Toilet Gal awkwardly walks in, trying not to prematurely drop her load.

TOILET GAL: Excuse me, but where's the little girl's room?

GUNMAN and THOM look up at her, surprised. GUNMAN points the gun at her.

THOM and GUNMAN: (in stereo) The what?

TOILET GAL: (looks at gun) The bathroom.

GUNMAN: Are you a customer?

THOM nods in agreement with GUNMAN.

TOILET GAL: Look, mister. I've been on a bus for six hours. You ever see the bathroom on a bus?

THOM: So that would make our "little girl's room"—which is unisex; lock the door—worth at least one Tast-E donut.

TOILET GAL: (grabs her crotch) I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!

THOM: We have many exquisite donut choices for under a dollar. You seem like you could use a crepe.

TOILET GAL: Fine. Whatever. Asshole.

TOILET GAL throws a dollar on the counter. GUNMAN snatches it and stuffs it in his pocket. Raises chin at THOM.

THOM: Here, in the adult world, we call it a restroom.

THOM points to the sign and door right beside her. TOILET GAL half trots into the bathroom. Door opens, illuminating the darkness within. She hits the light switch. Camera cut back to counter.

TOILET GAL: (from bathroom, disgusted) OH, SWEET JESUS!

GUNMAN: YOU GONNA GET THE MONEY OUT OF THE SAFE OR WHAT?

THOM: It wouldn't exactly be safe anymore, now would it?

GUNMAN: JUST DO IT, YA FUCKIN DILDO!

THOM: Nope, this isn't working at all.

GUNMAN: (incredulous) WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU MEAN?!

THOM: Alright, for starters, the shouting. I'm two feet away from you. I think "inside voice" is still effective at that range. Second, the "fucks." I'm all for the freedom of speech and any vernacular that

implies fornication. But combine those and the gun and you're creating one hell (pardon my language) of a hostile work environment.

GUNMAN: Work environment?

THOM: You're a career criminal, right?

GUNMAN: Yeah, that'd be pretty accurate.

THOM: And I am a restaurant clerk in charge of tending to the doughnut and coffee needs of cops and vagrants between the hours of 12-7 am . . . or, in this case, to provide to the necessary services for you, the robber.

GUNMAN: (looks at watch) Yeah, speakin' of which, could we get back to that?

THOM: Soon enough. After we establish work group dynamics. Synergy knows no boundaries.

GUNMAN: (stunned silence)

THOM: (continues) Here at Tast-E-Donut, we adhere to a mission statement which, when stated clearly, makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. I figure we can just use it unchanged.

GUNMAN: (mutters) Dildo—

THOM: --Thom. Let's try to avoid the derogatory lingo, lest we're forced to self-impose Interpersonal Communications training.

GUNMAN: (shudders) Good lord 'n butter, no.

THOM: See? Progress already. Let's move on to our needs.

THOM grabs a crayon and flips over a paper tray insert. He draws two large overlapping circles.

THOM: This is a Venn diagram. In this circle will be your needs; in this one, mine. The overlapping center space will be our common aspirations.

GUNMAN: Very savvy.

THOM: (beams) Thanks. Alright, so you need the money in the register and safe—

GUNMAN: --And a Number 3 Combo.

THOM: (glances up from writing) Damn tempting, aren't they?

GUNMAN: (shrugs)

THOM: Okay, and I need a steady girlfriend, potentially marriageable, with a proclivity towards giving

head on a frequent basis.

GUNMAN: Spit or swallow?

THOM: Excuse me?

GUNMAN: Spiiiiit . . . or swallow?

THOM: Does it really matter?

GUNMAN: Only if you want to trust her.

THOM: I'm not following you . . .

GUNMAN: Besides the clean-up factor, it's also an issue of trust. Not to flaunt the male ego, but semen's mighty important stuff. Especially since it carries half of our genetic make-up. If a woman refuses to swallow it, then she's rejecting you at the basest of levels and doesn't trust you. And if she doesn't trust you, how can you really trust her?

THOM: Or it could be that she's not hip to the idea of manimals swimming down her throat. I would argue this further, but alas, you have the gun.

GUNMAN: (shrugs)

THOM: (adds "swallows" to the center circle) I'm also going to add "a new job with career potential" to mine.

GUNMAN: Chalk that up for me, too.

THOM: (surprised) You want a job?

GUNMAN: Well . . . yeah. I could stand to make an honest living. It's that or wind up wearing sandals in the shower at the state pen.

THOM: (staring)

GUNMAN: So I'm a bit of a germaphobe.

Cut to TOILET GAL in the bathroom. She is hovering above the seat, bracing herself up with arms outstretched against the stall walls. The donut is positioned in her mouth. She's almost finished her deposit, when she precariously reaches for the toilet paper roll with one hand. Tiny, unusable pieces break off the single ply roll.

TOILET GAL: (muffled due to big-ass donut) Oh, fuck. . . .

Wipe back to the counter. THOM walks to the other side of the counter. He takes off his apron, nametag, and paper hat and ceremoniously puts them on the GUNMAN.

THOM: Welcome to the Tast-E-Donut Team. Memorize that mission statement; it's on the test for Employ-E of the Month.

GUNMAN: (startled) Are you serious?

THOM: As a heart attack. It's a 12-page test with an essay at the end.

GUNMAN: No, about the job. Isn't anyone gonna notice?

THOM walks towards the door. He pauses, and then turns.

THOM: You're gonna do okay.

THOM gives a thumbs-up and exits to the closing theme from "The Incredible Hulk." He walks down the side of the street into the sunrise, his silhouette stopping on occasion to put his thumb out to hitch a ride.

Fade into rolling credits.

Post-Credits

Setting—Inside Tast-E-Donut, 12:37 AM, 1 Week Later

The GUNMAN is manning the counter at the Tast-E-Donut. His picture for "Employ-E of the Month" sits right next to his "Wanted" poster.

COP enters.

COP: Heya, Terrance.

GUNMAN: (pulls out gun) --Thom.

Cut to security camera. GUNMAN flicks it off with gun trained on cop.

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