

ARCHIBALD

(THE JOKER)

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

A low-rent office. The type found in the back of a bar or restaurant. Or in this case, a strip club. Hunched over the room's only desk is PETER CIRILLO.

Cirillo doesn't bother to look up as an odd-looking young man named ARCHIBALD MERRYMAN is shown in. He's awkward and humble but strangely confident.

CIRILLO

'Siddown.

Archibald sits across the desk from him.

ARCHIBALD

Thank you very much for taking time to meet with me. Much appreciated.

Cirillo makes a grunting sound.

ARCHIBALD

How is your family? Your wife? Your lovely daughter--

CIRILLO

What do you want, Archie?

ARCHIBALD

Yes, of course. Frankly sir, I'm looking for a job.

CIRILLO

A job.

ARCHIBALD

I'm very adaptable, I have excellent computer skills, I'm good with numbers, I speak four languages, I'm very punctual--

CIRILLO

--Ya dumb cluck. Murphy's got twenty men out looking for you. You're a dead man. I'm supposed to give a job to a corpse?

ARCHIBALD

Oh you needn't worry about Murphy. I'll handle Murphy.

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CIRILLO

You'll handle Murphy. Get the fuck outta here.

ARCHIBALD

Sir, please don't be hasty.
I implore you to reconsider.
You won't regret--

CIRILLO

--I said get out, you crazy little freak. Out.

Archibald frowns...

ARCHIBALD

That's very rude. There's no call for rudeness. I'm not crazy or a freak.

CIRILLO

Yeah, you are. Enough now. Scram. You want me to call Murphy?

ARCHIBALD

(sighs)
I cannot say I am not disappointed. But I did suspect you might take this attitude.

He takes out a photo, places it face down on the desk. Cirillo picks up the photo. Turns pale.

CIRILLO

Oh my God.

ARCHIBALD

What a pretty girl she is. The picture doesn't do her justice.

Cirillo lunges at him, but Archibald gets out of the way with surprising speed.

ARCHIBALD

Calm yourself sir. Let's try and keep this on a business footing shall we?

Cirillo produces a gun, puts it to ARCHIBALD'S head.

CIRILLO

You sick sonofabitch! Where is she?

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Archibald cackles with laughter, unafraid of the gun.

ARCHIBALD

Not to worry. She's in the hands of a very reliable man. A violent sexual pervert to be sure, but reliable. He won't touch your daughter unless I give him express permission. Or, if I fail to call him once every hour. In that event, well, I don't want to think about that. That's an ugly thought, and I like to think positively.

Cirillo lowers the gun and crumples into his chair. Archibald shines with quiet triumph.

ARCHIBALD

That's better. Yes indeed. Positive thinking is the key to success. You look at any great man. Caesar, Moses, Hitler, you name 'em, what do they have in common? They were all positive thinkers.

(beat)

Feeling a little calmer now? Excellent. So now about this job. Perhaps we might discuss the shape of our new arrangement.

Off Archibald...