ANOTHER SHAMELESS CHRISTMAS CAROL RIP-OFF

By

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LOGLINE: The CEO of a medium sized company gets a visit from the company’s founder on Christmas Eve, 2006.

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FADE IN:

EXT: A NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING WITH AN MODERN SCULPTURE IN FRONT – DAY

Only a few cars are in the parking lot.

Super – “December 22, 2006”

INT: AN EXECUTIVE OFFICE – DAY

GEORGE PUTNAM, 50, thin frame, small stature, in good physical condition. He is the CEO of THE JACKSON CORPORATION. He is typing on his computer.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

MICROSOFT OFFICE MESSAGE

To give the employees an early start on the Christmas weekend feel free to leave at 3:30, if the work situation allows for it.

OFF COMPUTER SCREEN

George presses the keyboard’s “ENTER” key.

INT: OFFICE OUTSIDE EXECUTIVE OFFICE – DAY

The office is empty. The wall clock shows 3 o’clock.

George steps into the office from his office. He walks through the office and exits the office.

INT: AN OFFICE BAY – DAY

There is no one at any of the desks. A wall clock shows 3:07.

George walks through the office bay.

INT: ANOTHER OFFICE BAY – DAY

George walks to the LONE PERSON, man 50s, in the bay and gives a cheerful greeting.

GEORGE

Happy holidays.

LONE PERSON

Thank you, and same to you.

George walks through the office bay.

INT: A LONG NARROW CORRIDOR – DARK

George opens the door and flicks a light switch. The lights in the room turn on. The lights are dim and slowly get brighter. George walks across the dimly lit room. There is a life size bronze statue of a man who is pointing the finger of his outstretched hand. The man has a stern face and wire rimmed glasses. George gets the illusion the statue was looking and pointing his finger at him.

GEORGE

I don’t know why I don’t get rid of this thing.

George exits through the door at the opposite side of the room.

The room is brighter and the base of the statue reads: “Beauregard Jackson Founder 1919”.

INT: A COMPUTER ROOM – BRIGHT

The room has 3 desks each with a desktop computer, each computer has 3 large screens. The room is cluttered with computer equipment. There is an IT EXPERT in the office.

George enters the office.

GEORGE

Happy Holidays.

IT EXPERT

Hello George.

INT: A LONG NARROW CORRIDOR – WELL LIT

George walks through the corridor and flips a switch before he exits the corridor. The lights gradually dim.

EXT: A DEPARTMENT STORE FRONT – DARK

There is a BELL RINGER.

BELL RINGER

Merry Christmas.

George tosses a bill into the bucket.

BELL RINGER

Thank you. Merry Christmas.

GEORGE

Happy Holidays.

George steps into the store.

INT: A CAR – MOVING – DARK

George is driving on an old winding one lane road. He sees someone on the side of the road pointing at him. On second look he sees it is a bare tree.

INT: A CAR – MOVING – DARK

George drives to his house. The garage door opens. He sees someone inside pointing at him. On second look he sees no one is inside the garage.

INT: AN UPSCALE KITCHEN – NIGHT

The house’s interior has tasteful Christmas decorations.

George and his SPOUSE eat dinner.

Super – “Christmas Eve”

They eat without saying anything.

INT: AN UPSCALE LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

George and his spouse are sitting on the couch watching television. The television shows closing credits. His spouse stands.

SPOUSE

Goodnight.

GEORGE

You’re not staying up until midnight?

SPOUSE

I’m too tired.

She gives George a peck of a kiss. She makes her way to the stairs. George changes the channel. The television shows it’s 10 o’clock. The station has on a black and white version of “A Christmas Carol”. The television shows this movie will run from 10 o’clock till midnight.

INT: AN UPSCALE LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

George sits on the couch. There is a commercial for a product that is used mostly by geriatric people on the television. A digital clock below the television reads 10:20. The television screen switches back to “A Christmas Carol”. George is nodding off.

INT: DREAM SEQUENCE – DARK

Beauregard Jackson points his finger.

INT: AN UPSCALE LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

George wakes. On the television Jacob Marley’s ghost is making his entrance. Marley’s MOANS have a strange ECHO.

There is a figure in the shadows. The figure comes into view.

GEORGE

Shouts

Call 9-1-1.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Yells

It doesn’t matter how loud you yell no one can hear you!

GEORGE

What do you mean?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Look at the television screen.

There is no sound from the television and the image is frozen.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON (CONT’D)

There’s the telephone, call 9-1-1.

George keeps an eye on the figure as he gets up and dashes to the telephone. There is no sound on the telephone.

GEORGE

What’s going on?

Beauregard switches on a light. He has on the same style suit as the statue in the company’s basement.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Do you know who I am?

GEORGE

You look like Beauregard Jackson, but that’s no possible.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

I am Beauregard Jackson. I’m long dead but your actions have been haunting me in the afterlife.

GEORGE

Wait a minute, I give generously to charity and do volunteer work.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

I’m not interested in your personal business. I’m interested in my business.

GEORGE

What business?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The business I founded and built from nothing with my own two hands. The business you are doing a pathetic job of running.

GEORGE

The company showed a 4% profit this year.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

My business showed a 4% profit in 1930. In this economy you should be showing double digits.

George glances at the television screen.

GEORGE

What, am I to be visited by three spirits?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

What I have to show you I’m going to show you myself. An important thing I learned in life is if I want something done right I should do it myself.

GEORGE

So, show me.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Yes, let me show you the past.

GEORGE

My childhood?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

No, this past year is about as much of your foolishness as I can stand. Now come.

Beauregard leads George out the front door.

INT: AN OFFICE BAY – DAY

The wall clock reads 10:15. It’s snowing outside. Almost all of the cubicles are empty.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

This is January. It’s after 10 and hardly anyone is here.

GEORGE

This is the day of the snowstorm.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

There was 4 inches of snow this day. Less than half the people showed up and most of those that did were more than 2 hours late.

GEORGE

Safety trumps what we do here.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

In my time the cars weren’t anywhere nearly as safe or reliable and people still made it on time.

Beauregard leads George out of the office bay.

INT: AN OFFICE BAY – DAY

The wall clock reads 1:20. There are snow flurries outside. There are three people in the office. One man puts on his coat and leaves.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Perhaps you remember this day in February?

GEORGE

This is the day I released everyone at 3 o’clock because of the impending snowstorm?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The snowstorm that never came. The accumulation was less than an inch. Three o’clock me eye.

GEORGE

Some people take late lunches.

Beauregard gives George an angry stare.

They step into an elevator.

INT: AN OFFICE BAY – DAY

The wall clock reads 2:30. The trees visible through the office windows are budding. There are six people in the office. Two of the people walk out the door.

GEORGE

Is this Good Friday?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Yes.

GEORGE

I released everyone at 3 o’clock.

Beauregard points at the clock.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Do you really think these people went to church? If they did half the churches in the city would have collapsed.

GEORGE

These are a couple of hours on a few special days out of a year. They don’t make a difference.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Everything makes a difference.

INT: ANOTHER OFFICE BAY – DAY

The trees outside are in full bloom. A wall clock reads 10:17. The bay is full of employees.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

This is a typical work day in June.

GEORGE

You see. The office is full.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Let’s see more.

They walk to one desk. Beauregard stops for George to see the man is reading a sports story on the internet. They continue to another cubicle where there are two women.

WOMAN ONE

We figured we’d see what kind of 4th of July sales they have on furniture.

WOMAN TWO

That’s true if you’re going to make a large buy you may as well get it on sale.

WOMAN ONE

Nobody pays full price.

The women laugh. Beauregard gives George an icy stare then nods for George to follow him. There is a man and a woman at the next cubicle.

MAN

I didn’t believe it when Junior gave the money to an orderly.

WOMAN

Talk about a tip.

MAN

The advantage of being around gangsters.

The man and woman laugh. Beauregard continues to the next cubicle with George in tow. A woman is on the telephone.

WOMAN ON TELEPHONE

No that’s more a color for a kitchen. For our living room we should have something richer.

(Pause)

I wasn’t thinking more of a burgundy.

(Pause)

It’s not as if we paint the living room every year.

Beauregard and George step over to the next cubicle. A YOUNG MAN and a YOUNG WOMAN, both in their early 20s, are in the cubicle. The Young Woman is sitting and the Young Man is standing.

YOUNG MAN

You always dress so nice for the office.

YOUNG WOMAN

Well I always try to look my best.

YOUNG MAN

Do you have any plans for this weekend?

YOUNG WOMAN

No plans. I don’t plan that far ahead.

They come to the last cubicle in the line. A SUPERVISOR is at her desk. A SUBORDINATE stops at her supervisor’s desk.

SUBORDINATE

Can I leave work early today? I have to pick my son up from school.

SUPERVISOR

Yes, is he alright?

SUBORDINATE

Oh, yes, it’s just my daughter will be going with her friends after school so there will be no one at home.

SUPERVISOR

I know how it is.

INT: A BREAK/SUPPLY ROOM – DAY

The room has a coffee maker, cabinets, sink, and a wall calendar that shows September. Beauregard and George enter the room and stand in a corner.

A man walks into the break room. He scans the room then opens a cabinet and takes a box of pens and a box of pencils. He steps out.

A woman saunters in and pours herself a cup of coffee. She glances around then puts a box of hot chocolate mix inside her handbag. She scans the room again. She opens a cabinet grabs a handful of highlighters and a box of pencils and puts them in her handbag. She takes a couple of sips of coffee then saunters out.

A man rushes in. He quickly opens a cabinet and takes a package of yellow pads and rushes out.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

A quarter of the office supplies in the building ended up as school supplies.

Beauregard leads George out of the break room.

INT: AN OFFICE BAY - DAY

The wall clock reads 3:05. Most of the people in the office are putting up Halloween decorations.

GEORGE

This is the Halloween Party.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

This is the day before the Halloween Party. This is normal work hours. Productivity lost is an effort that by design is to lose productivity.

GEORGE

Such things are done to increase morale and so increase productivity.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The first part happens the second part never does.

Beauregard leads George to an exit.

INT: A STAIRWELL - DAY

A fire alarm blares. Costumed people make their way down the stairwell and out of the building.

Beauregard and George walk with the crowd.

EXT: A PARKING LOT – DAY

Costumed people walk to their assembly areas.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Do you remember what caused this false alarm?

GEORGE

One of our offices used dry ice as part of its decorations. This triggered a smoke detector.

Fire engines arrive.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

This act of foolishness cost the company $10,000.

The fire marshals wave the people back into the building. Beauregard and George walk with the crowd.

INT: A STAIREWLL – DAY

Beauregard and George walk up the empty stairwell.

As they continue up the stairwell six people walk down the steps and walk past Beauregard and George.

As they reach an office door two people walk out of the office.

INT: A LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Beauregard and George enter the room. A few people are picking at the food on the table.

GEORGE

This is the Thanksgiving Party.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The Thanksgiving Party was supposed to be from noon till 2 o’clock.

(Beat)

People spent the morning getting ready for the party. Then they spent the afternoon stuffing themselves at the party.

(Beat)

When they had enough food, they went home. Yet another day of lost productivity.

GEORGE

The only thing you have convinced me is that your concept of management is decades out of date.

(Beat)

Accepting minor losses is part of doing business.

(Beat)

Your time and management practices are past.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You don’t like the past then let me show you the present.

EXT. A HOTEL – DAY

Beauregard and George are at the hotel’s entrance.

GEORGE

This is where we had the winter holiday party.

Two men walk past Beauregard and George and enter the hotel.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Employees of yours?

GEORGE

You know they are.

(Beat)

A company party of course employees are going to come.

INT. A HOTEL LOBBY – DAY

Beauregard leads George into the lobby. About a dozen people are in the hotel lobby. Beauregard points to the wall clock. The clock shows 11:07.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The Christmas Party was supposed to start at 12.

GEORGE

People have to allow for traffic.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

They never allow for traffic when it means getting to work on time.

Beauregard opens the party room door.

INT. A PARTY ROOM – DAY

The party is in full swing. People are taking generous portions of food from the luxurious buffet table.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You spared no expense as usual.

GEORGE

My employees are worth it.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You are the CEO of a business, not a charity. You don’t give away things without expecting a return on investments.

(Beat)

Has anyone every asked you about the company Christmas Party during a job interview?

(Beat)

Do you know of anyone who quit a job because the hors’ de verves were second rate?

George opens an emergency exit. George looks shocked. Beauregard shakes his head.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON (CONT’D)

It’s not going to alarm.

(Pause)

I was wondering when something was going to disturb you.

EXT. AN INTERSECTION NEAR THE HOTEL – DAY

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

In case you have forgotten this way is back to the office and that way leads to most of your employees’ homes.

Five cards go in the opposite direction of the office. One car turns in the direction of the office.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

He is one of the few that lives that way.

(Beat)

He is going home.

(Pause)

A lavish party for an entire day of almost zero productivity.

Beauregard turns.

EXT. A LARGE DEPARTMENT STORE – DAY

Beauregard leads George to the department store.

INT. A DEPARTMENT STORE – DAY

BOB and CAROL CRACHIT are shopping. George recognizes them.

GEORGE

They are married but they work in different departments.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Which made it easier for both of them to call in sick the same day.

GEORGE

They called in sick to go Christmas shopping?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

That’s right.

Beauregard leads George to an exit.

INT. A DISCOTHEQUE – DAY

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You gave your secretary, excuse me, administrative assistant the afternoon off so she could spend it with her family?

GEORGE

You know that’s what I did.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

I do, now let me show you what she did.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT is at a table with four other women. They are laughing and drinking.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

I told my boss I wanted to go home to be with my family.

FRIEND 1

You’re terrible.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

He’s such a sentimental fool. What did you tell your boss?

FRIEND 1

I didn’t tell him anything, he left before I did.

The women laugh.

Beauregard takes George to the men’s room door.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

I think this is an appropriate place to go to show you where your lax policies will lead.

GEORGE

The future?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

That’s right.

EXT: PARKING LOT – DAY

About 75% of the parking spaces are open. It’s a sunny day and the trees are bare.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

In your present this time of day the lot would be ¼ empty instead of ¼ full.

INT: A BUILDING LOBBY – DAY

There is an empty reception desk.

Beauregard enters the building. George hesitantly follows him. They walk past the reception desk.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

One cost savings measure was to do away with the receptionist.

(Pause)

I know what you want to see.

Beauregard leads George to the door of a janitor’s closet. Beauregard motions for George to go inside. When George reaches the door Beauregard abruptly opens the door and pushes George through the portal.

INT: AN EXECUTIVE OFFICE – DAY

They are outside the entrance to George’s office. Beauregard opens the door wide. George sees himself seated at the desk typing on his computer.

GEORGE

I don’t get it. I don’t see anything different.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You still haven’t learned to look at what is happening outside your office.

Beauregard points to the Administrative Assistant’s desk.

GEORGE

What happened to her?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Downsizing, she was laid off.

(Beat)

You anguished over the decision for a while. You gave her your regrets.

(Beat)

That didn’t change the fact she was out of a job in a bad economy.

Beauregard opens a window and motions for George to come to the window. George approaches the window.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Often times, subordinates have to pay the price for poor management.

George look out the window and Beauregard pushes him out.

INT: A SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Bob Crachit is in the room with a YOUNG WOMAN, mid-20s.

YOUNG WOMAN

I’ll be back in a few minutes.

YOUNG WOMAN steps out of the room.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Yes, Bob and Carol Crachit were downsized. This is a job interview.

YOUNG WOMAN returns with a MIDDLE-AGED MAN.

MIDDLE-AGED MAN  
I’ve got two stronger candidates who are coming for interviews this morning. I’ll show you out.

Middle-Aged Man shows Crachit the door. Crachet, Middle-Aged Man, and Young Woman leave the room.

GEORGE

What just happened?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

You remember Bob and his wife calling in sick to go Christmas shopping?

GEORGE

Yes.

Beauregard looks over a console.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

How do these newfangled things work?

(Pause)

Oh yes!

The flat screen in a conference room turns on.

ON SCREEN:

It’s a golf course. The trees are budding. Bob Crachit makes a drive just as two men drive to the hole in a gold cart. The EMPLOYER, 50, steps out of the cart and strides up to Bob.

EMPLOYER

You called in sick today.

BOB CRACHIT

Well I’m feeling much better now.

EMPLOYER

Good, you’ll be healthy enough to find a new job. You’re fired.

OFF SCREEN:

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

The bad work ethic he developed while working for you made him ill prepared for his next job. This firing made him a poor employment candidate.

Beauregard leads George out of the conference room.

INT: A DEPARTMENT STORE ENTRANCE – DAY

Beauregard and George enter. George gives a long look to the Lone Person. They walk past the Lone Person. George looks back at the Lone Person.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Do you know that greeter?

GEORGE

The face looks familiar. I suppose I’ve seen him when I came in this store before.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

No, he used to work for The Jackson Corporation.

(Pause)

He was one of those people you see all the time in the hallway but never talk to.

(Pause)

He was a hard worker. He had 22 years with the company.

(Beat)

His hard work, experience, and loyalty didn’t prevent him from being downsized.

(Beat)

At 55 he was out of a job and had a skill set that wasn’t a match for any other job.

(Beat)

The greeter job is the best he could get after a 10-month job search.

GEORGE

The future can be changed, right? This is what might happen, not what will happen?

BEAUREGARD JACKSON

Yes and no.

(Beat)

The economy will take a downturn and have a slow and sluggish recovery. There is nothing you can do about that.

(Beat)

The only thing you can do is prepare The Jackson Corporation to weather the hard times. This will help my company and the people who work for it.

INT: AN UPSCALE LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

George is in the couch in his living room. A morning television show is on. His spouse comes down the stairs. She has on a robe.

SPOUSE

You fell asleep on the couch again?

GEORGE

What a dream, or was it a dream.

SPOUSE

Did you say something?

GEORGE

Nothing, I was just thinking I have a lot of work to do tomorrow.

SPOUSE

Well think about it tomorrow. It’s Christmas!

INT: OFFICE OUTSIDE EXECUTIVE OFFICE – DAY

The wall clock shows the time as 9:18. The Administrative Assistant strolls into the office.

GEORGE

Step into my office please.

INT: EXECUTIVE OFFICE – DAY

George sits at his desk. Administrative Assistant steps in.

GEORGE

Your office hours start at 9 o’clock, not 9:01, much less 9:18. You are expected to allow for traffic or any other foreseeable delay in order to get here no later than 9 o’clock. Do not let this happen again.

(Pause)

Now arrange a meeting with the department heads today. There are many changes we have to make.

INT: A WHITE SCREEN

There is a montage of memos written by George and headlines from 2008 concerning the recession, businesses failing or downsizing, increases in unemployment.

BEAUREGARD JACKSON(V.O.)

George Putnam spent the next year improving The Jackson Corporation’s profit margin by increasing discipline and operational economy. Some people left the company in disgust and many of them regretted their decision when the economy took a downturn.

(Beat)

George Putnam was not a popular CEO but The Jackson Corporation weathered the economic downturn and only a few of its employees were laid off.

FADE OUT: