THE FISH OUT OF WATER

by
Josh Brine and Jacob Cowdin

July 5th, 2018

INT. ROCHEDALE ENTERPRIZES. DAY

A black cassette tape player sitting on an office desk. Next to the tape player is a white company-branded mug filled with black pens and a company-branded inspirational day-calendar. Below the date on the calendar it reads “Everyone’s a Winner”. Someone pushes the eject button on the tape player, inserts a cassette tape, and pushes the play button. Playful-happy-go-lucky music begins to play.

CUT TO:

A Call Center filled with office desks. There’s a photocopier in the corner of the office with a motivational-poster next to it that reads “Are you a Winner?”. The desks are filled with employees talking on headsets. The employees are dressed in casual-business attire in muted-outdated-tones. They are talking to customers on their headsets and typing customer information into their computers. The employees are enjoying their normal work day; enjoying their normal jobs; enjoying their normal routines. This is ROCHEDALE ENTERPRIZES: a sweepstakes call center; where “Everyone’s a Winner”.

One employee is being yelled at by a customer through his headset. He is wearing a navy blue sweater with a striped shirt beneath. His brown hair is neat. He is 21 years old. He is motionless and he hates his job. His name is CHARLIE.

Charlie is sitting at his desk with his headset on listening to his customer yell at him. Charlie looks to his right and sees a COWORKER smiling, enjoying conversation with her customer, while brushing her doll’s hair with a toy brush. Charlie hears someone sneeze. He looks to his left and sees a COWORKER wipe the sneeze on his shirt after failing to find an alternative solution. Charlie then looks behind him to find a COWORKER emptying a large bag of chips into his mouth with crumbs spilling over his face, onto the floor. Charlie turns back around, reminded he is being yelled at by a customer; reminded he hates his job.

Charlie snaps. He gets up, leans over to his coworker—the sneezer—and pulls the tape from his tape player. The music stops. Charlie tries to break the tape, then throws it in anger. The sneezer is stunned and stares at Charlie in disbelief. Charlie stands on top of his desk as the entire office stares at him in shock. Charlie yells at them:

CHARLIE

I QUIT!

Charlie jumps off his desk and smacks over a pen cup from a co-worker's desk. He then walks over to a girl sitting at the corner desk. She is beautiful. She is wearing the color red and has long brown hair. We don't know her name because Charlie has never spoken to her, because she is a new employee of Rochedale Enterprizes. And thus she is known as CORNER DESK. Corner Desk stands to her feet to greet Charlie. She is not scared. It's as if she had been expecting him.

CHARLIE
I love you, Corner Desk

CORNER DESK
I love you too, Charlie

Charlie kisses Corner Desk and then walks away towards the front door without looking back. While walking towards the front door he passes a coworker: a sweet-looking MIDDLE-AGED MOTHER with her headset on. She looks at Charlie with disgust. Charlie flips her off while walking past her. The Middle-Aged Mother is appalled. Charlie continues to flip her off until he has walked completely past her desk; until she returns the favor and flips Charlie off. This catches Charlie off guard as he walks into the wall and finds himself sitting at his desk with his headset on, listening to his customer yell at him. He looks to his right and sees his coworker brushing her doll's hair with a toy brush, enjoying her conversation with her customer. Charlie realizes he was dreaming.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. ROCHEDALE ENTERPRIZES. DAY

Suddenly Corner Desk walks past Charlie's desk towards the photocopier with papers in hand. Charlie blinks heavily exiting his daydream. With eyes locked on Corner Desk walking past him, Charlie interrupts his yelling customer:

CHARLIE
Please hold.

With haste Charlie throws-off his headset and walks over to the photocopier, breathing heavily with nerves.

Corner Desk is using the photocopier with her back turned to Charlie. Charlie is standing six feet behind Corner Desk. He is nervous. He looks down at something he wrote on the palm of his hand earlier.

INSERT:

The palm of Charlie's hand has the words "suck it up" written on it in black pen

Charlie then looks at the motivational-poster next to him.

INSERT:

The motivational-poster reads "Are you a winner?"

Suddenly Corner Desk turns around to walk back to her desk while inspecting a document. Charlie panics. Corner Desk turns back to the photocopier to pick up the other papers she almost forgot. Charlie quickly turns away and picks up something from his desk to photcopy.

Corner Desk doesn't notice Charlie and walks away from the photocopier, back to her desk. Charlie's head turns to watch the girl of his dreams walk away. He sighs as his head drops.

Charlie is heading for the main doors of Rochedale Enterprizes. He is wearing his backpack and putting on his skateboard helmet. He passes a motivational-poster on the wall that reads "THE FISH OUT OF WATER"

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY

Charlie is skateboarding to a skate park. He's wearing his helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads. He's listening to music on his walkman.

EXT. SKATE PARK. DAY

Charlie arrives at the skate park and walks up to the skateboard bowl, preparing to drop-in. He hits the stop button on his walkman and puts his backpack and walkman on the ground. Suddenly he's interrupted by someone he knows walking up to the skate park. He is wearing tattered jeans with holes in the knees, a retro t-shirt, and sunglasses. There is a cigarette hanging from his mouth and he is carrying his boombox and skateboard. His hair is messy. His name is CALVIN.

CALVIN (O.S)
Well, look who decided to come back. Mr. Employee of the month himself.

Charlie notices who it is and tries to ignore him.

CALVIN (CONTINUED)
Let me guess. Another beautiful day living the American dream?

CHARLIE
At least I have job.

CALVIN
Hey man…whatever. Oh, is this today? Are you actually gonna do it? I didn't check my calendar. This is amazing. Let's see you do it.

CHARLIE
Hey, can you just leave me alone? I don't want to talk about this again.

CALVIN
It's your thing. Not mine.

Calvin puts his boombox and skateboard down and walks away.

CHARLIE
Where are you going now? (Finally looking at Calvin, watching him walk away)

CALVIN
(Stops to address Charlie's question, taking cigarette out of mouth)
You're too busy screwing around. I'm going to go talk to that girl.

Calvin walks over to a GIRL AT THE SKATEPARK. She is wearing a 90's oversized denim jacket and has colored hair. There is a bottle hidden in a brown paper bag next to her. She is sitting on a quarter pipe with an unlit cigarette hanging out of her mouth. Calvin sits down next to her, pulls out his lighter, and lights her cigarette. Charlie looks back down at the bottom of the bowl preparing to drop-in, trying to ignore Calvin. He then looks at the palm of his hand.

INSERT:

The palm of Charlie's hand. "Suck it up" has been crossed out. Below it reads "Stop being a little bitch"

Charlie looks back at the bottom of the bowl, ready to drop-in. He takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. SKATE PARK. DAY

Calvin taunts Charlie trying to get him to drop-in.

CALVIN (O.S)
Come on!

Charlie gives up, picks up his board and walks away.

CALVIN (O.S)
Figures! What a wuss! I knew it! I knew it!
Quit being a little bitch!

Suddenly Charlie turns back and kicks Calvin's boombox into the bowl, then takes off, running away.

CALVIN (O.S)
Hey! You fucking idiot! That's my music!

Calvin chases after Charlie.

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Next day. The employees of Rochedale Enterprizes are enjoying their normal work day; enjoying their normal jobs; enjoying their normal routines. Charlie is on the phone with a customer, seated at his desk. He is staring forward, seemingly daydreaming, motionless. We hear a CUSTOMER talking on the other line of the phone:

CUSTOMER 1
Hello? Hello? Is anyone there?

Charlie is startled out of a daydream and stumbles over his words, quickly returning to his phone call.

CHARLIE
Yes, yes, hello? Miss, I mean, Mrs...

Charlie is looking for the customer’s name on his desk until the customer abruptly hangs up.

CHARLIE
Hello? Hello?

Charlie takes his headset off and drops it on his desk, disappointed and frustrated. He leans back into his chair while taking a deep breath.

CHARLIE (CONTINUED)
(Whispers to himself)
Shit.

Suddenly Corner Desk walks past his desk again, on her way to the photocopier. Charlie quickly stands up, staring in her direction, ready to walk over to her and talk to her. He then sits back down, still staring in her direction, unsure of walking over there. He then blinks heavily:

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Charlie pulls away from his desk and walks over to Corner Desk and the photocopier. He reaches 6 feet from Corner Desk. He’s nervous. He looks down at the palm of his hand.

INSERT:

On the palm of Charlie’s hand "suck it up" and “stop being a little bitch" are both crossed out in black pen. Charlie then flips his hand over. The words "you might die today” are written in black pen.

Suddenly Corner Desk turns around from the photocopier.

CORNER DESK
Hi (smiling)

CHARLIE
(Startled, looking up from his hand)
Hi--

CORNER DESK
Do you need any help with the photocopier?

CHARLIE
I…uh…I…(shocked; panicking)

CORNER DESK
Uh huh…(content; patient)

CHARLIE
I…I—

CUT TO:

INT. CALVIN’S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Charlie collapses onto a pink couch in Calvin’s living room. Calvin is in his kitchen around the corner making lunch. The place is unorganized. Most of the items strewn about the room bares the question "how did that get there?". This is Calvin’s home.

CHARLIE
—I want to get rich and move to Paris.

CALVIN (O.S)
Huh? What’s that?

Calvin peers around the corner pouring milk into a styrofoam bowl of cereal with a plastic spoon in it. He is dressed in a robe and wearing a raccoon hat. Charlie answers Cal by looking at him

CALVIN
What's wrong now?

CHARLIE
Nothing

CALVIN
Bullshit. What's up? Did you get in trouble at work?

CHARLIE
No

CALVIN
Then what happened? Did you spill coffee on your keyboard and piss off everybody?

CHARLIE
(Takes a deep breath and looks forward again)
No! I was standing at the photocopier, about to talk to this girl—

CUT TO:

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Charlie is at work standing behind Corner Desk and the photocopier.

CALVIN (O.S)
—was it Corner Desk?

CHARLIE (O.S)
Yes, Corner Desk

CALVIN (O.S)
Yeaaahhh! What happened?

CHARLIE (O.S)
All of the sudden she turned around and she said "Hi". I totally froze and thought to say: Hi, my name's Charlie. What's yours? But what I really said was…

CALVIN (V.O)
You totally made out with her right there?!

Charlie exhales realizing he missed his opportunity

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

CALVIN
Chuck? (Pause) Chuck?

Charlie's daydream is broken by Calvin's voice. Calvin is now sitting on a camping chair next to Charlie in his living room and is eating his bowl of cereal

CHARLIE
Huh? What?

CALVIN
Do you ever feel like you don't know who you are anymore, man?

CHARLIE
No. Wait what?

CALVIN
Ask me the same question.

CHARLIE
Ok (pauses to remember question)? Do you ever feel like you don't know who you are anymore?

CALVIN
(Interrupts Charlie)
Fuck you. I know who I am. I'm Calvin. Who are you, man?

CHARLIE
(Confused)
I don't get it.

CALVIN
(Interrupts Charlie)
Fuck you. Who are you?

CHARLIE
Alright, this is ridiculous. I'm not doing this again

Charlie stands up and heads towards his skateboard and backpack so he can leave.

CALVIN
(Frustrated with Charlie)
Figures. Should have expected that. Where are you going to go? Paris? To go be employee of the month somewhere else where you fall in love with a girl you never talk to?

CHARLIE
(Stops walking and faces Calvin to confront him)
Hey! I was going to talk to her. I was just…waiting for the right moment. And why do you still have boxes here? You've been living here for like, what, 1 year, 2 years?

CALVIN
(Stands up to confront Charlie.)
Do you know what your problem is? You're so afraid of getting hurt and you think life is supposed to be so safe that you're never actually going to do anything with yourself.

CHARLIE
Well at least I don't give up on something after I get used to it. You can't even keep a girlfriend or a job for longer than, what, a few months?

CALVIN
Well at least I try. That's better than you've ever done. You haven't even had a girlfriend.

CHARLIE
Fuck you.

CALVIN
There it is. …There it is!

Calvin smirks with eyes wide-open. He seems almost excited. He rips off his robe not caring where it lands. He's bare-chested, wearing only his boxers and a raccoon hat. Charlie braces himself.

CALVIN
Chuck, hit me

CHARLIE
(Surprised)
What?

CALVIN
Hit me as hard as you can. Trust me.

CHARLIE
(Surprised and confused)
No! I'm not going to hit you. It's not going to do us any good.

CALVIN
(Talking over Charlie)
You still not trust me. Just hurry up and hit me. As hard as you can!

CHARLIE
I'm not going to hit you! No!

CALVIN
Man, if it worked for Jack Durden it will work for you.

CHARLIE
Who the hell is Jack Bourbon?

CALVIN
Jack Durden! Holy shit have you never seen Fight Club?!

CHARLIE
(Charlie pauses to think about his answer. He has a hard time looking into Calvin's eyes)
No!

Calvin closes his eyes and takes a deep breath to gather himself. He opens his eyes and locks onto Charlie. Calvin then punches Charlie in the face.

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Charlie is at work sitting at his desk. Charlie has a black eye. He is staring forward and looks miserable. His phone rings and he answers.

CHARLIE
Rochedale Enterprizes where everyone's a winner, this is Charlie, how may I..oh,

Miss Whitman, hello…yes—oh, I'm sorry, Mrs Whitman—yes, it's—uh huh—yeah I'm so sorry…

The customer on the phone begins to yell at Charlie. Charlie is frustrated. He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Suddenly a jubilant COWORKER walks up to Charlie in a hurry, needing his help. He breaks Charlie's daydream.

COWORKER 1
Hey Jim, could you help me with the printer? Rosa quit this morning.

CHARLIE
(Holding his hand over the microphone so his customer can't hear him)
Wait, Rosa? Who's Jim?

COWORKER 1
You know, the new girl who sat at the corner desk over there (pointing in the direction he's referring to)

CHARLIE
Corner Desk?

With haste Charlie swivels his chair back and looks in the direction of the corner desk. The corner desk is empty.

CHARLIE
Rosa?

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is standing on the beach staring at the ocean. The clouds are dark and the sky is the same color as his navy blue sweater. He is alone. Charlie then sprints towards the ocean.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Charlie is staring at the corner desk; shocked and broken; still trying to compute that Corner Desk quit.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie runs as fast as he can into the ocean; crashing into the waves, falling over, allowing the water to move him; take control of him.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

Corner Desk is laughing at something a coworker said. Still smiling, she glances over at Charlie and locks eyes with him. This is a distant memory of Charlie's he suddenly remembers.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH. DUSK

Charlie is saturated. He's still in the ocean. He stands to his feet and looks around; locking eyes with the shoreline: from where he came from.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CALL CENTER. DAY

COWORKER 1 (O.S)
Hey buddy, are you ok?

Charlie throws off his headset. He snaps. With one launch he picks up his skateboard and backpack and sprints towards the front door of the call center.

COWORKER 1
(Excited)
Hey, where are you going?! Can I come?

Suddenly Charlie stops, turns back to his desk to grab his helmet. Charlie looks at COWORKER 1 and says

CHARLIE
I quit

Charlie then grabs the doll from his coworker and throws it across the room. He continues running towards the front door

COWORKER 1
(Confused)
Wait, Jim, because of the printer?

CUT TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY

Charlie is riding his skateboard with purpose. He is wearing his helmet and pads.

EXT. CALVIN'S HOUSE. DAY

Charlie skates to a house and walks through the front door without knocking. The girl from the skatepark is laying on the pink couch playing a Gameboy. Calvin turns the corner from his kitchen into the living room to see who walked into his house. He's wearing jeans and an old Calvin and Hobbes t-shirt.

CALVIN
Well, look who decided to come b—

Charlie punches Calvin in the face then runs away. Calvin gathers himself, holding his hand over his eye watching Charlie run away.

CALVIN
Did you finally watch Fight Club?!

Charlie takes-off on his skateboard

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY

Charlie skates to the skatepark.

EXT. SKATE PARK. DAY

Charlie arrives at the skate park, puts his skateboard on the bowl, and looks down at the bottom of the bowl. He assesses the situation. Charlie then backs away from the bowl and throws off his helmet and pads. Charlie places his skateboard on the coping of the bowl and drops-in. He crashes. HE LAYS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL. Calvin's BOOMBOX is still there in pieces at the bottom.

Calvin runs up to Charlie out-of-breath, concerned of his safety, calling out for him from the top of the skateboard bowl:

CALVIN (O.S)
Chuck! Chuck! Are you alright, man?!

CHARLIE
(Trying to sit up)
I think I broke my leg.

CALVIN
No shit. Are you gonna die?

CHARLIE
(Lays back down defeated)
I hope so.

Calvin takes a deep breath, takes off his sunglasses, and smiles, revealing a big red mark around his eye where Charlie hit him.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKATE PARK. BOTTOM OF SKATE BOWL. DAY

Calvin slides into the bowl and lays down next to Charlie, starring at the sky with him

CHARLIE
Cal, (looks at Calvin) am I good brother?

CALVIN
Sometimes you are.

Charlie looks back up at the sky. Calvin looks at Charlie

CALVIN (CONTINUED)
Am I a good brother?

CHARLIE
Sometimes. Well, when you want to be.

Charlie and Calvin stare at the sky. Charlie takes a deep breath as Calvin pulls out a cigarette and lights it. Charlie looks at Calvin

CHARLIE
I quit my job today

CALVIN
(Looking back at Charlie; surprised and proud of him)
No shit? I lost mine today

CHARLIE
(Looks at Calvin with surprise)
You had a job?

CALVIN
Yeah I had one. Not any more. (Pauses) So, what are you going to do about Corner Desk?

CHARLIE
I don't know.

Charlie takes cigarette from Calvin's mouth and takes a hit

CALVIN
So did you stand on your desk and yell "I quit"?

Calvin takes the cigarette back from Charlie and takes a hit

CHARLIE
No

CALVIN
Figures. I bet they still think you work there.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKATE PARK. DAY

CALVIN (O.S)
How the hell am I gonna get you out of this bowl?

As the credits fade in, Calvin helps Charlie out of the bowl. Charlie rests his weight on Calvin from his broken leg as they walk away together.