

COMPLIANCE ISSUE

Written by

James Austin McCormick

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[jimbostories@hotmail.com](mailto:jimbostories@hotmail.com)

FADE IN:

INT. WORK CUBICLE - LIT

An LED ceiling panel casts a sterile light over us.

A card stands proudly on a desk, congratulating its recipient on their new job.

A weary Office WORKER (30ish) picks up a steaming mug from his desk.

PING

A system message flashes up on his computer screen.

WORKERS WILL NOT CONSUME HOT DRINKS AT THEIR WORK STATION.

The man turns, glancing around - nothing but muted partitions. Not a person in sight.

Typing sounds fill the air.

He shrugs, puts the mug to his lips.

PING

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He wavers for a moment then lowers the cup.

WORKER

Jesus!

PING

WORKERS WILL NOT USE INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE.

WORKER (CONT'D)

(Whispering to self)

You got to be shitting me.

PING

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He stares in disbelief.

CUT TO:

INT. WORK CUBICLE - LIT

The coffee's cold, untouched.

The man stops typing.

He stands, stretching out a stiff back.

PING

WORKERS WILL REMAIN SEATED

He gives a snort.

WORKER

Well, I need the bathroom.

Another message.

WORKERS WILL NOT LEAVE THEIR WORK STATION.

WORKER (CONT'D)

Watch me.

PING

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He slumps down and reluctantly, resentfully continues working.

INT. WORK CUBICLE- LIT

The coffee has a congealed film over it.

The man stops, interlocks his fingers and leans back.

He lets out a long sigh.

PING

WORKERS WILL KEEP WORKING AT ALL TIMES.

WORKER

I'm thinking.

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Anger flashes across his face.

He raps on the wall of the next cubicle.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
(Little more than a  
whisper)

Hey.

No response.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
(Louder)

Hey.

The typing stops.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
What's wrong with this place?

No answer.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
You hear me?

He raps again.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
Say something, will you?

A yellow post-it note slides under a partition.

A scrawled message: *We're not allowed to talk.*

PING

WORKERS WILL NOT COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER

WORKER (CONT'D)  
(Irritated)  
Says who?

PING

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WORKER (CONT'D)  
Compliance.

He spits out the word like it tastes bad.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
And what if someone doesn't  
'comply?'

He holds up the post-it note.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
What are you going to do?

NON-COMPLIANCE RESULTS IN TERMINATION.

The ceiling light flickers. A faint siren sounds.

Then, a GASP from the next cubicle.

A muffled SCREAM.

Followed by struggling and the dragging of feet.

And finally, silence.

The man sits terrified.

INT. NEXT WORK CUBICLE - LIT

He leans across, staring at the now empty cubicle.

The chair rotates slowly.

INT. WORK CUBICLE - LIT

Tears glisten in the man's eyes

WORKER  
This is insane.

PING

QUESTIONING COMPLIANCE ISSUES IS A COMPLIANCE ISSUE.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
Look, I won't say anything. Just  
let me leave, okay?

Another message:

REQUEST FOR TERMINATION RECEIVED.

He gasps.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
What! No!

PROCESSING.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
Cancel, cancel it.

REQUEST...

He watches, waiting.

...CANCELLED.

He heaves a sigh of relief.

WORKER WILL BE SEATED. COMPLY.

He drops into his seat

WORKER WILL FOCUS ON THE SCREEN. COMPLY.

His attention remains on the monitor. His blink rate slows and slows.

WORKER'S HANDS WILL REMAIN ABOVE THE KEYBOARD...

He places stiff, claw like hands over the board.

...AND TYPE. COMPLY.

His fingers move across the keys.

WORKER (CONT'D)  
(Muttering to himself, barely  
audible). This can't be happening.

WORKER WILL NOT SPEAK. COMPLY

His lips press into a thin, bloodless line.

COMPLIANCE IS MANDATORY.

All expression drains from his face.

His breathing becomes slow, mechanical.

He sits statue still.

No longer a person, but a drone.

A single bead of sweat runs down his brow.

FADE OUT: