

THE BALLAD OF HARRY COX

By Christopher Stewart

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stewieville@me.com

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

A small town ice cream parlor. Pristine glass exterior. The overhead sign reads "Cox Creamery".

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A large crowd is gathered in front of Cox Creamery. Folks of all ages and backgrounds eagerly wait for the doors to open.

ADAM stands amongst the crowd. 18 years old. Plain features. Dressed business casual. His neutral demeanor contrasts with the giddy smiles around him.

Behind him, a Toyota Prius pulls into an empty spot.

INT. PRIUS - DAY

JIM is behind the wheel. Next to him is BERTHA. Both in their mid-50's. Looking at the crowd with genuine disgust.

BERTHA

Only in a town this pathetic would folks be this stoked over an ice cream parlor debuting their newest item.

JIM

You said it, sis. If there were anywhere else to get a waffle cone served by minimum-wage help, that's where I'd be.

BERTHA

Agreed.

Beat.

JIM

What do you think of Harry Cox?

BERTHA

I'm not a fan of them. I prefer lovers with a clean-shaven bulge.

JIM

I was referring to the owner of this here establishment.

BERTHA

Oh. I've never met him.

JIM

You're in for a treat. Harry Cox is one of a kind. A real man's man. He's everything I strived to be growing up.

BERTHA

Rich, popular and well-hung?

JIM

Yes, yes and yes. He also owns a successful steakhouse over in Longwood. Two businesses, two home runs. Harry Cox is a modern King Tut. What he touches turns to gold.

Bertha's face becomes flush red. Visibly aroused.

BERTHA

Goodness. He sounds...incredible.

JIM

I love it when you get all hot and frothy.

They look at each other with lust in their eyes.

BERTHA

You thinking what I'm thinking?

JIM

Fornication and cocaine?

Bertha smiles as she pulls a straw out of her cleavage.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Adam checks his watch. The time changes to 10:00.

Somewhere in the distance, a church bell RINGS.

The crowd instantly goes silent. They stare at the front door of Cox Creamery. Waiting. Watching. The air is thick with anticipation. No one moves --

Except for Adam. He looks around. Completely puzzled.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

The front door flings open. Moments later --

HARRY COX steps outside. Late 40's. Stout build. Chiseled jaw. Bald. Thick beard. A commanding aura of confidence.

Harry looks out at the awestruck crowd. Then speaks to them in a booming voice:

HARRY

Greetings! For those who don't know, I am Harry Cox. Welcome to my Creamery! For months you waited and now the time has finally arrived. So without further adieu, I invite you all to come inside and try my newest creation, the Packed Fudge Creampie! A one-of-a-kind delight that only Harry Cox can provide!

The crowd erupts into a joyous, over-the-top celebration.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Various incidents occur within the raucous crowd:

- An ELDERLY COUPLE tearfully embrace.
- A group of NUNS dance a synchronized Irish jig.
- Three FRAT BOYS take turns slapping each others butts.
- A hulking BODYBUILDER tears his shirt off.
- A female SOCCER PLAYER kicks random people in the shins.
- An EMO TEENAGER hysterically sobs as he pulls his own hair.
- A young MOTHER holds her sleeping baby high in the air.

MOTHER

Take my baby, Harry! Raise him! Let him suckle from your wise bosom!

Adam stands amongst the madness. Jaw dropped. Baffled by what he's witnessing.

INT. COX CREAMERY - DINING ROOM - DAY

Calm and reason have been restored. Customers enjoy various desserts served by the EMPLOYEES. Everyone is smiling and in good spirits.

Adam is seated at a table. Twiddling his thumbs. Waiting.

HARRY (O.S.)
Are you intolerant?

Adam looks up. Harry is standing there. Smiling.

ADAM
I'm sorry?

HARRY
Are you intolerant of lactose?
You're surrounded by dairy-based
delights but not partaking in any.

ADAM
Oh. No. I'm sure everything here is
good. I was actually --

HARRY
"Good"? Dear boy...

Harry sits at the table.

HARRY (CONT'D)
...as kind as your words aim to be,
"good" just doesn't cut the cheese
around here. After all, this is the
best ice cream parlor in town.

ADAM
Isn't it the only one in town?

HARRY
Indeed. Which makes it the best.

ADAM
So only by default?

HARRY
Perhaps, but the logic is sound.

ADAM
But wouldn't that same logic mean
it's the worst as well?

Harry's smile strains. His left eye twitches. Madness brews
beneath his calm facade.

HARRY
(sotto)
Stay calm, Harry. Murder is wrong.

ADAM
What was that?

Harry takes a deep breath. His eye stops twitching and his jovial demeanor returns.

HARRY

Where are my manners?! I'm Harry
Cox. Owner, Founder and Manager.

Harry holds his hand out. Adam shakes it.

ADAM

Adam Smith.

HARRY

Adam Smith. Now why does that name
sounds familiar?

ADAM

I'm here to interview for the open
cashier's spot. With you actually.

HARRY

That's right! Again, forgive me.
Even a brilliant mind such as my
own can get overwhelmed, especially
on a big day such as this.

ADAM

Speaking of, and forgive me for
asking but I gotta know, is it --

HARRY

Eight inches? Yes it is.

ADAM

I'm sorry?

HARRY

It's eight inches.

ADAM

What is?

Harry starts to reply, but stops when he realizes they're on
different topics. He clears his throat. Embarrassed.

HARRY

Sorry. Thought you were inquiring
about my...never mind. Continue.

ADAM

Right. I was gonna ask is it normal
for folks around here to react like
that when you unveil a new item?

HARRY

Indeed, they get a little excited.

ADAM

"A little excited"? A grown woman begged you to nurse her baby.

HARRY

You have to understand, before I opened the best ice cream parlor in town, there was nothing else for them to get excited about.

(lowers voice)

Between us, most of the townsfolk are blue-collar, which is just a nice way of saying they're simple-minded and somewhat retarded.

Harry chuckles. Adam forces a smile, not amused.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Factor in the warm weather and lack of day cares and it made this the perfect place to setup shop.

ADAM

What's wrong with day cares?

HARRY

I can't be within a thousand feet of them...

ADAM

What?

HARRY

...or any school. But enough about me. What made you wanna apply?

ADAM

Honestly? I need the money. I got accepted up at State and a golf scholarship only goes so far.

HARRY

Ah. College. A noble-but-ultimately unnecessary endeavor in my opinion. Education is overrated. I have everything a man could want and don't even have my diploma.

ADAM

Why not?

HARRY

I got expelled when I was in ninth grade. Had a bit of temper back then. Plus I got caught sleeping with one of my teachers.

ADAM

Oh wow.

HARRY

It all worked out though. I never liked home-school anyways.

ADAM

Wait. What?

HARRY

Side note. Have you ever met a perverted party clown named Gizmo?

Adam laughs at the random question, but stops when he sees that Harry is intently awaiting an answer.

ADAM

No. I don't know any party clowns. Much less a perverted one.

Harry exhales. Genuinely relieved.

HARRY

You're lucky. Gizmo is bad news. I hired him for my birthday bash last year. I'll spare you the details, but let's just say Gizmo ruined my party when he whipped out his big, hairy, uncircumcised penis and twirled it around like a propellor blade. It reeked of bad cabbage.

Adam cringes.

ADAM

What does that needlessly vivid story have to do with my job --

HARRY

Worst part? As the cops hauled him off, he swore to return one day and give an encore performance.

Harry shutters. His cell phone RINGS, startling him. He quickly silences it.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Sorry about that. I --

His phone RINGS again. He silences it once more.

HARRY (CONT'D)
They'll call back if it's urgent.

ADAM
Seems like it is.

A loud GURGLING is suddenly heard. Adam winces.

HARRY
Was that your stomach?

ADAM
Yeah. I have Crohn's Disease.

HARRY
Tough break. But that's why you
should always wear a condom.

Adam glares at Harry, incredulous. Harry's phone RINGS again.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Let me go answer this while you
tend to your STD. We'll reconvene
in five to continue this. Shalom!

Harry departs the table. Adam sits there, flabbergasted.

ADAM
What in the actual fuck?

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

Harry answers his phone as he walks outside.

HARRY
(into phone)
Hello?

INT. COX CREAMERY - BATHROOM - DAY

Adam enters the single-occupant bathroom. As the door shuts, all of the noise from the dining room disappears.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

Harry is on the phone. All smiles.

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
(from phone)
This is Captain Burns of the
Longwood Volunteer Fire Department.
Is this the Harry that owns the
steakhouse on Main Street?

HARRY
(into phone)
Indeed! What can I do for you, sir?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
I'm sorry to tell you this but your
steakhouse is on fire.

Surprisingly, Harry's smile widens.

HARRY
Why are you sorry? I appreciate the
kind words! It is on fire! Sales
there have been through the roof!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
What? No. It's on fire. Actual
fire. Flames are the only thing
going through the roof right now.

Harry's smile fades a little. Dread creeps in.

HARRY
Who'd you say this was?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Captain Burns of the Longwood
Volunteer Fire Department.

Reality hits Harry like a freight train. His eyes widen as
full-fledged panic takes over.

HARRY
No! Oh my God! This can't be
happening! Please, sir! Save my
precious and profitable steakhouse!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
We're doing all we can but I'm
afraid the structure is fully
engulfed and a total loss.

HARRY
Use the white water!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
The...white water?

HARRY

You know! The good water! Reserved
for folks...like me! I officially
invoke my skin-mandated privileges!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

That's not what that --

HARRY

Code Nike! Just do it!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

Sir, the building is lost. I'm
sorry. I truly am. If it's any
consolation, I do have good news.

Harry's face fills with hope.

HARRY

You just put the fire out and the
damage is so minor that I can
reopen before the lunch rush?

CAPTAIN BURNS

No. Not at all. I was gonna say
that everyone made it out safely
and your insurance should cover all
of the damage.

The hope fades from Harry's face. His eye twitches. Fury
brews beneath the surface.

HARRY

(gritted teeth)

How...is any of that...good news?

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)

Because no one died and you can
rebuild your steakhouse.

HARRY

Rebuild? Rebuild you say?

Harry lowers the phone. His lip sneers. Veins bulge in his
neck. A simmering volcano of rage on the brink of erupting.

Bird poop falls from the sky and SPLATS on Harry's bald head.
A blood vessel pops in his twitching eye.

HARRY (CONT'D)

SON OF A BITCH!!!

Harry puts the phone to his ear.

HARRY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Rebuild with what?! Do you realize
what all goes into that?! Tools!
Paint! Drywall! Name one store that
sells all of that! And the lumber!
Where am I gonna find that much
lumber?! It doesn't grow on trees,
ya know!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
(from phone)
That is precisely where it --

HARRY
Silence! I'm the Captain now! I'm
done with you! Enjoy your flight!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
My flight?

Harry angrily punts his phone. It sails high into the air,
arches at its apex and falls back towards the Earth.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The Prius rocks back and forth. Fog covers the windows.
Harry's phone falls into view, SMASHING into the windshield.

INT. PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Bertha sit up in the backseat. Naked. Nostrils coated
in white powder.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - CONTINUOUS

Harry walks in circles. Enraged. Screaming at the ground.

HARRY
How?! How does a steakhouse catch
on fire?! It's just grilling meat!
Dumbass hicks do it everyday and
don't burn down their shanties!
(quieter)
It must've been started on purpose.
An inside job. I bet it was Pierre.
Yeah. No doubt about it. This is
what you get, Harry. This is what
you get for hiring a Canadian Jew
to run your kitchen.
(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

I should've known that dreidel-
spinning kitchen jockey was a pyro
Judas!

(screams)

I hate you Pierre! I hate Canada! I
hate Jewish kitchen managers! Hot
freakin' dammit I hate everyone!!!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (O.S.)

Harry?

Harry stops. Looks up.

The employees and patrons are all standing outside, staring
at him in disbelief.

HARRY

What are y'all staring at?! Can't a
man grieve in private?!

The lone FEMALE EMPLOYEE steps forward.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Harry. What's going on? Why are you
acting like this?

HARRY

Silence, quota hire! I'm the man
and the man is speaking now! If one
more question leaves those lips,
you'll be using them to kiss your
job goodbye!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Wow. Okay. Sorry.

Beat.

HARRY

Knock, knock.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

Um...who's there?

HARRY

Ah! A question! You're fired!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE

What?! But you --

HARRY

Insubordination is not tolerated!
You're done! You will never again
serve my one-of-a-kind ice cream!

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
"One-of-a-kind"?!

The Female Employee looks at the patrons.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)
Harry here buys cheap, store-brand
ice cream in bulk and resells it to
y'all at triple the price. His
"creations" come from Pinterest.
Nothing here is fresh or original.

HARRY
Treachery! Those are trade secrets!

The Female Employee grins, then turns to her co-workers.

FEMALE EMPLOYEE
This place is done. Come on. The
Slick Beaver has two-for-one dances
until noon. First round's on me.

The other employees nod and disperse towards their cars.

HARRY
Oh! You all wanna quit?! Fine! I
got a stack of hopeful applicants
as big as my biceps!

Harry flexes his arms. He then turns towards the remaining
crowd of patrons. Their shock has turned to anger.

GLORIA, a middle-aged midget, steps forward. Infuriated.

GLORIA
You've been gouging us with stolen
recipes this whole time?! We loved
you Harry! How could you do this?!

HARRY
Newsflash, Pygmy! Life ain't fair!
Try having stinky-dick clown ruin
your birthday party! Or a big-nosed
Canadian torched your steakhouse!
Or a loudmouth midget punch you in
the nuts when you least --

WHAM! Gloria punches Harry in the groin.

HARRY (CONT'D)
Ow! My huge balls!

Harry drops to the ground in agony.

The crowd CHEERS emphatically. They pick Gloria up and carry her away like a conquering hero.

INT. COX CREAMERY - BATHROOM - DAY

Adam washes his hands. Oblivious to the events outside.

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

Harry staggers gets to feet. Grimacing in pain.

JIM (O.S.)
You son of a bitch!

HARRY
Ugh. What now?

Harry turns around.

Jim stands a few feet away. Wearing boxers. Furious. Holding Harry's mangled phone.

JIM
Is this your phone?!

HARRY
What of it?!

JIM
It smashed the windshield of my beautiful Prius and ruined my sister's coitus. You are gonna make this right.

HARRY
What are you gonna do?! Sue me?!
I'm as rich as I am well-endowed!

JIM
I don't want your money. I want something more.

Jim's eyes narrow dramatically.

JIM (CONT'D)
An apology.

Harry inhales. Aghast. Genuinely offended.

HARRY
You sick, twisted bastard.

JIM
Apologize.

HARRY
No!

JIM
Apologize!

HARRY
Never!

JIM
Then I challenge you to a duel!

HARRY
I accept!

They glare at each other. Harry CRACKS his knuckles. Jim rubs lotion on his chest. A tumbleweed rolls by between them.

INT. COX CREAMERY - DINING ROOM - DAY

Adam exits the bathroom. He immediately stops, looking around the deserted dining room.

ADAM
Okay. What'd I miss?

CRASH!!! The front door SHATTERS as Harry and Jim brawl their way through it.

They wrestle to the ground. Jim gains control and straddles Harry's face. Harry flails hysterically, his cries muffled.

Adam watches, unsure what to do. Jim looks up and notices him.

JIM
A witness!

Jim covers his nipples with his hands and sprints out the front door.

Harry gets to his feet. Woozy and nauseous.

HARRY
Where...where'd he go?

ADAM
He ran off.

HARRY
And you didn't stop him?!

ADAM
Clearly.

A wall-mounted phone RINGS. Harry presses the speaker button.

HARRY
(into phone)
Cox Creamery! What do ya want?!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
(from phone)
Harry! It's Captain Burns. Sorry to call this number. I tried your cell but it keeps going to voicemail.

HARRY
I know! Some...uh, Haitian boatmen stole my phone and are holding it for ransom!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Right. Anyways, I'm calling with fantastic news. Your steakhouse didn't catch on fire!

Beat.

HARRY
Come again?!

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Your steakhouse isn't on fire! The one across the street is. By pure coincidence, the owner of that one is named Harry as well. In all of the confusion, I called you by mistake. Your restaurant is fine! Isn't that great?!

Harry's face softens. The rage is replaced with realization. He looks around the empty dining room of his once-thriving ice cream parlor.

CAPTAIN BURNS (O.S.)
Hello? Harry?

Harry reaches under the phone and it. He leans against the wall, stunned, in total disbelief.

HARRY

I'm ruined. Finished. My reputation
destroyed through no fault of my
own. Can this day get any worse?

CREEPY GIGGLING is suddenly heard. Harry and Adam look at
each other, then at the back door.

Standing there is GIZMO. Mid-30's. Morbidly obese. Shaggy
hair. Greasy clown face paint. Stained carnival pants.

Harry's knees give out. He falls to the floor, terrified
beyond measure.

Adam just shakes his head, fed up with this day.

ADAM

Of course the clown shows up.

Gizmo licks his lips as he slowly walks towards Harry.

GIZMO

Hey there, Harry. I heard you're
having a bad day. Don't you worry.
Your old pal Gizmo knows just the
thing to cheer you up. After all,
one Harry Cox deserves another.

Gizmo unbuttons his pants. Harry's eyes fill with dread.

HARRY

No! Please! Not the propellor!

ADAM

And this is where I leave.

Adam heads towards the shattered front door. He covers his
nose, disgusted.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Jesus. It is like bad cabbage.

Gizmo's pants hit the floor. Harry's face contorts with fear.

HARRY (O.S.)

Oh God! It's still uncircumcised!

EXT. COX CREAMERY - DAY

Adam walks away. In the background, we see Gizmo's bare ass
gyrating furiously as Harry's SCREAMS fill the air.

THE END