

Another Day, Another Rewind

By Andrew Descheneaux

It was well-known that the longer one spent on the internet, the more likely one was to become a complete asshole. There were many theories about this, but the one I subscribed to the most was the lack of consequences. After all, the sheer distance and anonymity protected most people from any real retribution, and usually the worst punishment for shitty behavior was for your account to be blocked or banned from a space. Even so, this didn't stop anyone from making yet another account to do the exact same thing as before.

Pretty much everyone had those kinds of desires—thoughts and impulses which could really land you in trouble if acted on in real life—but places like the internet gave you the freedom to just *do* those things.

And I understood that mentality no better than the moment my fist collided with my boss's face.

I watched as he recoiled backward in pain and shock, that cocktail of emotions mixing together with anger and sheer incredulity as he comprehended how his seemingly-meek subordinate just broke his nose in broad daylight. A grin spread across my face as I bathed in the catharsis of the act after he berated me yet again for an issue he could've easily resolved on his own.

And then time rewound to precisely five seconds before I punched him, and I proceeded to do it all again. No consequences whatsoever.

It was a little different this time; I opted for a black eye instead of a broken nose. Sometimes you just need to mix things up to keep from getting bored. Unfortunately, there wasn't time to give him both, since one of my coworkers usually snaps out of his shock pretty quick and stops me from redecorating the shithead's face.

I didn't bother hitting him, either. For one, it pretty much always spurred the others to collectively tackle me to the ground, and it was also just not *satisfying* in the same way. I wasn't smacking down a self-righteous asshole who drowned me with oceans of bullshit, but rather a pretty decent guy who was just trying to do the right thing.

Eventually, he decided to tackle me again after I went a bit further with the boss, and this time I rewound a bit further. Now he was in the middle of ranting to me about something to do with stacking boxes improperly.

“—and for the last time, you have to listen to instructions, not just randomly throw everything on a pile at once—!”

“Stack the blue and red ones separately, you already said that.”

"I... I did?" He asked, pausing his tirade as he processed my words. "Really, I could've sworn I didn't."

"Nope, you really did about a minute ago." I replied, deadpan.

See, for some reason he only stopped his rant if I said those exact words. Not about putting the right boxes together, but "you already said that". He always ignored or brushed off any other response I made unless I suggested that he repeated himself and forgot about it.

Judging from the look of unsettlement and worry on his face whenever I suggested something similar, it was probably a big concern of his. Perhaps he was worried about having Alzheimer's or other memory-related issues. Hell, maybe he really did—it would explain why he went on that rant about following instructions after not telling me a damn thing other than to stack the boxes and be quick about it.

Still, if he was going to take out his own problems on me, he wasn't going to save himself from getting his face smashed in. At least in some aborted timelines.

"Anyway, boss, it's the end of the day. If there's nothing else, I'll just pack my things and clock out if you don't mind..." I said, already turning around to do just that.

"Oh, yes, that's fine." He muttered, staring uncomfortably at the pile of somewhat-neatly stacked boxes as I continued to pack up.

I promptly finished up and went out the door before he could find some other pointless task to keep me here after hours. He usually did that unless I specifically went out of my way to leave quickly or distract him. I wasn't going to waste any more time here, and I had enough of pummeling him before rewinding, so there was nothing left for me to do but leave while I still had the chance.

I sighed as I left the dinky office building and stepped out into pouring rain.

"Shit, forgot the umbrella," I muttered, looking up at the thunderclouds.

That was one of the things about this power. No matter how amazing it was to rewind any of the events in a given day, I still couldn't stop things like the rain—it was always going to happen no matter what I did today. And rewinding to the beginning just to get my umbrella was just far too much of a hassle to bother with.

"Well, there's always tomorrow," I said to myself, doing my best to ignore my increasingly-drenched clothes as I made my way to the car.

Tomorrow, I'd get to do more work, get pissed and punch my boss in his stupid face again, then rewind and pretend I'm completely fine with everything before going about my day. Or maybe I'll

just finally quit and find another job. Who knows, maybe something exciting could happen for once.

Hell, I could just not go into work and relax the whole day, then rewind it back and go in once I've had my fill of rest. I suppose the sky's the limit.

But that's for tomorrow.