

“The Paintening”

INT. OFFICE - DAY

The hum of fluorescent lights fills the open-plan office. Desks are cluttered with paint swatches, order forms, and empty coffee cups. At one end of the room, two employees, **LINDA** and **GARY**, sit at adjacent desks. Both are typing on their computers but speaking in hushed voices. Other employees, scattered around the room, try to focus on their work but occasionally glance toward Linda and Gary, visibly uncomfortable.

LINDA (leaning closer to Gary) So, you know that shipment of “high-durability” primer? Turns out it wasn’t primer at all—it was mislabeled as dog shampoo. Barry found out after the Peterson job started smelling like wet Labrador.

GARY (raising an eyebrow) Seriously? And Barry didn’t notice until after the second coat?

LINDA (nodding gravely) Yup. Penny said they tried to air it out, but the smell only got worse. Now the client wants a refund, and Barry’s blaming it on “subpar ventilation.”

(One employee nearby shifts uncomfortably, their typing slowing.)

GARY (smirking) Classic Barry. Next, he’ll blame the painters for “improper shampoo application.”

LINDA (lowering her voice) Oh, and speaking of painters—did you hear about Jason’s “emergency” dental appointment?

GARY (grinning) You mean the one where he “accidentally” ran into his ex’s cousin at the dentist’s office?

LINDA (snickering) Exactly. Apparently, he was “catching up” so long that he missed his afternoon shift. Penny covered for him, but everyone saw the Instagram story of him and that cousin eating ice cream.

(A few desks away, an employee stiffens, clearly pretending not to listen. Their eyes dart toward Linda and Gary.)

GARY (pretending to be serious) Ah, yes, the old “ice cream after a root canal” routine. Very convincing.

LINDA (laughing) But it gets better. Penny told me Sandra found out and started marking Jason’s paint cans with “DO NOT USE” labels. He tried to paint over them, but she used permanent marker.

GARY (mock disbelief) No! Sandra is diabolical.

(Another coworker nearby coughs awkwardly, clearly listening but trying to remain inconspicuous. Their face flushes slightly.)

LINDA (sipping her coffee) And you won’t believe what Sandra did last week. She put glitter in Mike’s toolbox. When he opened it at the client site, it looked like a craft store exploded.

GARY (stifling laughter) Wait—this was the same job where Mike was bragging about his “impeccable professionalism,” wasn’t it?

LINDA (grinning) Oh, yes. The glitter was all over his shirt during the client walkthrough. Penny said the client complimented his “festive approach.”

(The nearby employees exchange uneasy glances. One person accidentally drops a pen, breaking the tension briefly, but the awkwardness lingers.)

GARY (leaning back in his chair) Honestly, this place is better than TV. Who needs reality shows when you’ve got this circus?

LINDA (smiling) Just wait until you hear what Penny told me about the Christmas party planning.

(The murmured conversation continues as the camera pans out, showing other employees shifting uncomfortably in their seats, stealing glances at Linda and Gary, their curiosity barely contained.)