

Pump-Action Positivity

Today, someone asked me, “Hey, could you stand in this line of people who have founded the company Corp, LLC?” And I, an outspoken *dude*, replied, “Why, I would never put myself in that line. That’s a woman’s business!” I do own 1% of Corp stock, but that’s not nearly enough to claim it’s my own business. I suppose I could see the confusion from a bystander, given my Corp name badge, woven in colorful Kevlar. I was looking for the bathroom, but, clearly, this waiting line I stumbled upon was meant solely for our company’s visionary founders, Cynthia Festina and Rebecca Remington. Everyone knows Corp. It was founded in 1994 and easily became the world’s leading manufacturer and distributor of **confetti shotguns**. As a crucial employee under Corp’s “funpowder” division, it was a given that I would be at Corp’s annual executive summit conference.

I remember the firm’s early days when they hired me. Rebecca herself had stressed the company’s admittedly lengthy yet essential motto: “If there’s ever a lackluster party, liven it up with a Corp™ brand confetti shotgun!” And in my five years as a manager, I’ve basically made that my mantra.

Oh, and here comes Rebecca now. No doubt she is soon going to give the conference keynote speech. I make eye contact and motion to her designated line as a courtesy.

Then I remember The Incident.

It was December of 1998. The staff Christmas party was in full swing. Lights were strung, refreshments were had, and all 28 people in my division were jamming out to Mariah Carey’s hit album “Merry Christmas” on CD.

It was in this situation that I was suddenly struck with the iconic Corp motto. This party needed to be much livelier. After all, this album was absolutely overplayed. I had to do the room a favor by distracting their ears from hearing “All I Want for Christmas is You” for the 83rd time this week. Armed with ambition (and a prototype confetti shotgun from my office), I loaded in a multicolored slug and pumped the forend.

“Everyone, let’s give it up for a reasonable fiscal year!!” I shouted. Everyone looks over as I pull the trigger. No dice. Confused, I tried the trigger a few times more. Nothing. I turned the gun and examined the barrel a bit, moving parts around while trying the trigger. Then I finally got it. BANG! Although it was accidental, since my gun was still pointed to my side when it fired. And that would have been fine, except for the fact that my boss, Rebecca Remington,

had walked up the stairs and directly in front of it at that exact moment. I just about froze.

Our firearms launch no bullets, but the Corp™ confetti shotgun still releases a large, concentrated concussive blast to fire the confetti. This happened to be enough to take Rebecca off guard and send her tumbling back, and she fell down three flights of stairs. And the worst part is, she was dressed up as Santa Claus and coming up to surprise us. I totally scrooged it up! I became unsteady. On the bright side, though, her big bag of gifts for us broke her fall when she crushed them with her body weight. At that moment, it was truly relatable when Mariah sang, “I hear those sleigh bells ringing...”, since I had forgotten ear protection. And then I blacked out.

Now, in the present moment, I wonder if my boss still had that in mind when she saw me. I begin to sweat as she approaches. I can’t just run away or something (it’s unprofessional!).

“Good Morning, Issac,” Rebecca says.

“Um... H-hi, Rebecca...” I stutter.

“You okay, Isaac?” Rebecca inquires.

“Um, yeah. I mean, you’re not still mad about that Christmas party thing... are you?” I ask.

“Mad? Of course not! You really livened up the party there!” she replies.

I’m shocked. “...Really?”

“Yes!! In fact... I was even considering a bit of a raise for our most committed employees,” she mentions.

I am flabbergasted. “A... raise...?” My eyes begin to tear up a bit and I gaze into the distance. My mouth quivers into a smile.

“Indeed! Let us celebrate!” From her bag, she removes her confetti shotgun and shoots me point blank.