

From Powerline – the Story of me, Mario, and your Mom

By Don Zolidis

GILBERT, a nerdy guy who works at a video game helpline

JOHANNA, a nerdy girl who has been at this a little longer

Lunchtime after a terrible call. Gilbert is pretty despondent.

Gilbert looks at a list.

GILBERT

“After each call, take a moment for self-evaluation. How did you do?” Second worst call of the day.

Gilbert takes out a lunch pail and sits down stage. Thinks about feeding his lunch to the pigeons.

Johanna enters and joins him.

JOHANNA

You doing okay? I heard screaming earlier.

GILBERT

Yeah I think that’s gonna be my signature technique. People are gonna call and I’m just going to scream incoherently into the phone until they hang up.

JOHANNA

That bad, huh?

GILBERT

My second call I just hyperventilated.

JOHANNA

What about your first call?

GILBERT

I didn’t pick it up because I was afraid I was going to hyperventilate.

JOHANNA

So you showed good judgement. Everybody does terrible their first day. I mean I didn’t do as terribly as you, but I was super nervous. I had an upset stomach for like ten minutes.

GILBERT

I had three panic attacks. I had one, and then I had a panic attack about my first panic attack. And then I had a third panic attack because I felt that I was having too many panic attacks. That can't be normal.

JOHANNA

If you were normal, you wouldn't be working here. Only weirdos get hired.
<Bartholomew enters again.

BARTHOLOMEW

*Not to worry, I have found some natural predators who will take care of the pigeons. Do not look the wolves directly in the eyes. Thank you.
He exits.>*

GILBERT

Are you a weirdo like that?

JOHANNA

Not quite that big. But pretty big. You know what my favorite game is? Ice Climber.

GILBERT

I love Ice Climber! It's icy and you climb!

JOHANNA

I know! And you wear a little parka?

GILBERT

So cute!
Realizes he's not being very manly.
I mean, um... it's very stylish.

JOHANNA

I love parkas. When I wear one I feel like I'm a furry creature. See I told you I was weird.

GILBERT

No I get it. When I wear a parka I feel like a snowbeast.

JOHANNA

Tell you what, on your next call, maybe I can listen in and offer advice. I don't want to steal your thunder or anything, but maybe I can give you some pointers.

GILBERT

That would be amazing. I am the worst employee in the history of this company.

JOHANNA

Definitely not true. There was one guy who ate his phone. I didn't even think that was possible, but he literally cut up his receiver with a knife and fork and ate it.

GILBERT

I'm better than that guy.

JOHANNA

Slightly.

GILBERT

All right, it's a deal.

Gilbert heads to his desk. Johanna follows.

JOHANNA

This is your cubicle?

GILBERT

Home sweet home.

JOHANNA

This one is cursed.

GILBERT

Oh great.

JOHANNA

I'm just kidding. They're all cursed. All right, show me what you do.

GILBERT

Well I just wait for the phone to ring. This is where I start freaking out, by the way. I start thinking, "I'm going to be terrible. I'm going to be the worst. I'm going to be awful. They're going to hate me. I know nothing. I'm an impostor."

JOHANNA

Okay stop. You can do this.

GILBERT

Nobody has ever said that to me before. Literally every day my parents are like, "you're a failure. You're good at nothing. You were a huge mistake."

JOHANNA

I'm beginning to see where your anxiety is coming from.

The phone rings.

GILBERT

Ah!

JOHANNA

You got this.

The phone keeps ringing.

GILBERT

It's still ringing!

JOHANNA

That's right. And you can answer it. Take a deep breath.

GILBERT

Last time I took a deep breath I started hyperventilating.

JOHANNA

Then don't do that.

GILBERT

Don't breathe?! How am I supposed to live?!

JOHANNA

Answer the phone!

Gilbert shrieks and picks it up.

GILBERT

Ahhh!