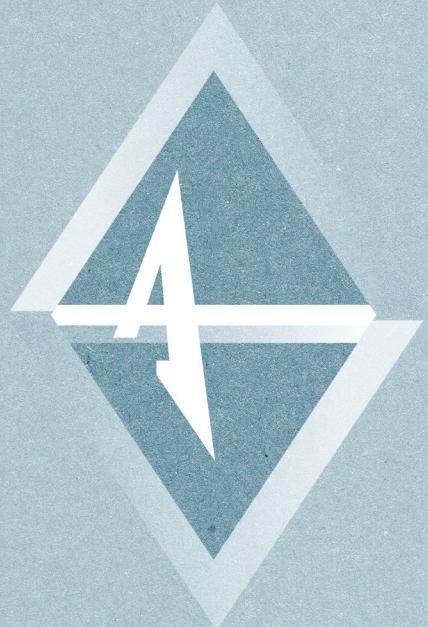




HUMAN RESOURCES

work is murder.

Hi BLAKE,



Welcome to ArcCroft.
Your home away from home.

GENRE: HORROR | COMEDY

FORMAT: FEATURE FILM

DURATION: 100 MINS

LOGLINE :

A struggling musician's first 'real job' is revealed to be a corporate nightmare, where employees are forced to feign happiness or end up as prey to their bosses.

At ArcCroft,
you've got a job for life.



Sign:





SYNOPSIS

29-year-old Blake dreams of being a rockstar but is trapped in a dead-end café job with an egomaniacal boss, Tim. One of his bandmates gives Blake a tip about a job opening at ArcCroft, a seemingly perfect corporate company that promises a supportive, family-like environment. Encouraged and supported by his girlfriend, Denise, Blake applies for the job.

On Blake's first day, he learns that his new bosses, Jacqueline and Aaron, enforce strict and peculiar rules which force their employees to exhibit unnaturally forced happiness. One miserable employee, Gus, stands as an exception until he receives a final warning and is forced into a meeting with HR. When Gus returns, he too is overly-cheery and announces that he's been promoted. Blake learns people who get promoted are never seen again.

Despite warnings from Jacqueline and Aaron to put his work first, Blake continues to try and launch his music career, going so far as to take a sick day to play a gig. In response, Jacqueline and Aaron transform into monsters and eat Blake's friends and bandmates before resurrecting their corpses as overly-cheerful, mindless drones. They then manipulate reality to force Denise to break up with Blake.

On a lunch break, Blake runs into Tim who offers him his old café job back. Aaron and Jacqueline capture Tim and reveal their true, monstrous forms to Blake. They're hags, who were once like the witch from Hansel and Gretel, but who have adapted to modern times by luring their victims in with stable employment before literally stewing their employees in their own misery. They eat Tim and turn him into a minion before giving Blake his final warning. With no other choice, Blake resolves to keep his job.

At the work Christmas party Blake is reminded of everyone he's lost and tries to escape. Aaron and Jacqueline again transform and stalk Blake through the office. In a climactic showdown, Blake finds their oven and tricks them both into it, vanquishing them and destroying the building.

In the aftermath, Blake looks for work/life balance by applying for an office job at a record company, marrying his passion with stable work. However, the company has been bought by ArcCroft, and in true horror movie fashion, Jacqueline has survived and is his new boss once more.

THE HERO.

BLAKE

Male. 29 years old.

Blake is our everyman; anyone who's ever hated their job, their boss, or had an unrealised dream can connect with his journey. He never dreamed of working an ordinary office job and still clings to his teenage dreams of one day becoming a rockstar.

To Blake, "growing up" and "getting a real job" are just synonyms for giving up. But after a life spent working in hospitality he's eager to leave behind the rude customers and self-absorbed boss, and now he's just desperate enough to try a "real job" as long as he can still pursue his dreams. It all depends on finding the mythical work/life balance. Taking his first steps into an office job, Blake feels naïve about how things are supposed to work and is happy to default to the experience and knowledge of others.





THE VILLAINS.

JACQUELINE

Female. 30's.

Jacqueline is the nicest, most-loving boss that anyone has ever had. She's eternally smiling and projecting happiness to the point of toxic positivity. Every problem an employee comes to her with is their fault, could have been avoided, and can be solved by "simply trying harder next time". Questioning her is met with hostility.

The truth is far more sinister. Jacqueline is a witch – a hag to be precise – from old timey Germany. Just as the witch from Hansel and Gretel lured in children with houses made of candy, Jacqueline has adapted to modern times by luring in victims with positivity, the promise of family, and a steady paycheque.

THE VILLAINS.

AARON

Male. 30-40.

Aaron is Jacqueline's right-hand man. Everything he learnt about business, and the supernatural, he learnt from her. He's a little bit of a yes man and a lot simply Jacqueline's male counterpart. The constant smile, projecting a happy demeanour, and toxic positivity found in Jacqueline are all present in Aaron, but where she's faux kind and sweet, his façade is more bro-y.





THE VOICE OF REASON.

DENISE

Female. Late 20's.

Denise is Blake's girlfriend, and a kindergarten teacher. She's the kind of person who wanted to be a teacher since she was five. Her whole life, she's known exactly who she is and who she wanted to be. She has a giant heart and is exactly the kind of person you want looking after your kids. Her mum is and always has been her best friend.

The only thing she feels that's holding her back as a person, and that's holding the two of them back as a couple, is that Blake hasn't figured himself out the way that she has. Having easily completed her life's only goal, she's a bit of a dreamer, but she's equally realistic; one needs more than just sheer optimism to succeed; you also need a plan. She genuinely hopes for Blake's success but feels he might have more luck if he looked elsewhere; if his band doesn't pan out then he could consider tutoring music to kids.

THE EX BOSS.

TIM

Male. Mid to late 30's.

Tim has the constant appearance that he's about to explode and yell at you. Blake's old boss, Tim, is that guy. He's read every book on management and follows all the biggest names in business on LinkedIn, and thinks that's enough to make him a great manager. No, not great, the best.

He gives himself aggressive pep talks in the mirror each morning, believes in the endless power of hard work, and thinks that nothing is ever his fault. Even as the owner of a small cafe as long as he keeps working hard he thinks he should be able to become a millionaire one day, if not a billionaire.



THE CAUTIONARY TALE.

GUS

Male.

When bosses complain that "no one wants to work anymore" Gus is the person they're thinking of. He's bland and boring, as though the colour beige were a person, and this comes through in both his appearance and performance. Gus never had any dreams or prospects and took the first job that came his way. After getting his second warning at ArcCroft and learning what would happen if there was a third, he became determined to find a way to escape, or to at least save the next person who walked into the office.





THE COLLEAGUES .

CHRISTINE

Female. 20's -30's.

Christine has the world's best resting bitch face. Goth-lite, with pale skin, dark makeup, darker clothing, and macabre tattoos up and down her arms, her emo phase wasn't just a phase. Christine is also the friendliest person you've ever met. The moment she meets you the bitch face fades into the biggest smile as she greets you with a hug. She's mum to eight dogs and if something ever happened to one of them it would break her.



BILL

Male. 60's.

Bill is that guy in every workplace who has been there longer than anyone else; it's like they built the office around him. He's too useful to ever get rid of, and yet he's always getting passed over for promotion. But he doesn't mind, he's happy exactly where he is. He looks like Santa Claus and exactly as kind, friendly, and loveable as you'd want him to be. At home he's the perfect grandfather to his two dozen grandchildren, but his humility and professionalism keep him from talking about personal stuff like that at work.



LACHLAN

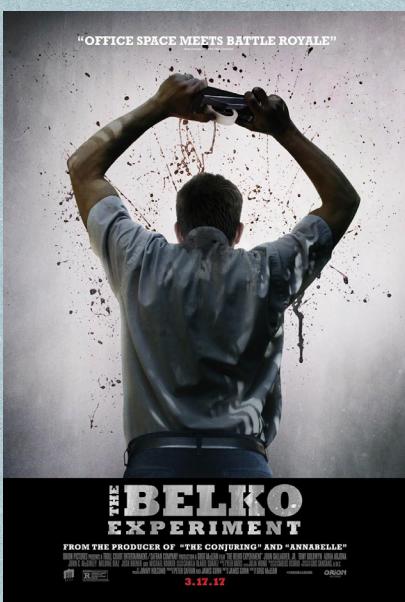
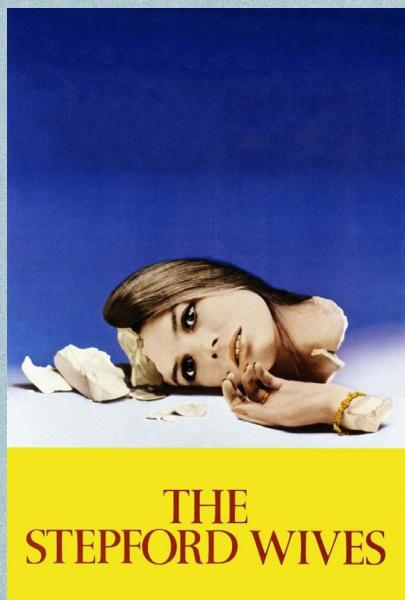
Male. Late 20's.

Lachlan is the anti-Blake. He too had big dreams of being a rockstar when he was in highschool, but the moment he graduated he knew that he had to grow up, take responsibility for his life, and get a real job. Now he dreams of working his way up the ladder into a management position and making enough to one day afford his own home.

STORY WORLD

ArcCroft Incorporated seems like an ordinary workplace. However, beneath the surface it is a sinister place where the HR manager, Jacqueline, keeps her employees in a state of constant misery. The office is filled with employees who appear happy and content, and who speak of their colleagues as family, but in reality they fear reprisal from Jacqueline should they ever let their true feelings to the surface. Disobedient employees are reprimanded through Jacqueline's supernatural abilities, as she twists reality to have work literally encroach on her employee's home lives to keep them compliant and deeply unhappy, and those who continue to resist meet untimely ends. The story explores the modern workplace through themes of corporate loyalty, the commodification of time and labour to the detriment of the worker, and the consequences of putting work ahead of one's own needs.

REFERENCES .



ABOUT THE WRITER.

James Smith is a neurodivergent screenwriter with a slate of award-winning satirical and comedic screenplays. His first ever feature screenplay won third prize at the Queensland Screenwriting Awards, and his funny, high-concept scripts have continued to receive multiple awards and international recognition.

He has previously worked on both web-series and short films with Paper Studios (Quite Frankly, Ghost Board, Everybody Hates Me) as a writer, editor, producer, first assistant director, and even directed his own work. He is always writing, working as a copywriter until he makes it big or AI takes his job, whichever comes first.

