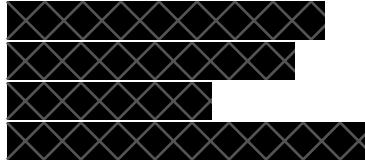


# **FUTURE SHOCKS**

“Middle Management”

Michael Gainey



## **PAGE ONE – Six Panels**

### **PANEL ONE**

ANGLE ON: A kneeling, helmeted construction worker. This is JOHN. Greying temples, rough hands and mortar-speckled clothing are an ample CV; He has been doing this a long time. From his knees, John scoops mortar from a nearby wheelbarrow with a trowel, intending to spread it atop the brick in his other hand. Behind him, an idyllic brick suburban home has just been completed and the walkway he is building is the finishing touch.

### **PANEL TWO**

John positions the brick in place in the walkway, leaning his torso over, bracing himself with one hand on the ground. He is diligent, focused, but we see a faint satisfied smile. He is a man who enjoys a good day's work.

### **PANEL THREE**

John shoots upright, clutching his hip in agony. He experiences a shooting pain and grimaces uncontrollably.

John: AGH!

CAPTION: No. Not now.

### **PANEL FOUR**

John sits back on his heels, his eyes closed as he takes breaths through clenched teeth. A MESSAGE\* pops into frame.

\*NOTE This is the futuristic means by which management communicates with workers. This should be visually represented like a text message with his audible response just below mimicking a text message conversation.

MESSENGER: You are 43 seconds behind projection, John.

John: I'll make it up. I c'n make it up.

**MORE**

**PANEL FIVE**

LOW ANGLE: John is doubled over. Though he would claim otherwise, the pain is written in his face. His hands clutch his hip as if to squeeze the pain into submission.

MESSENGER: I will schedule an eval--

John: No! No. I c'n-- UNGH!

**PANEL SIX**

CLOSE ON: John's face. He sweats nervously, panicked by the message. Whatever pain he was experiencing is forgotten. This message is infinitely more distressing.

MESSENGER: Proceed directly to the Manager for evaluation.

John: The Manager.

## **PAGE TWO –Five Panels**

### **PANEL ONE**

A cavernous room of white walls, floors and ceilings with no décor. We are straight on JOHN as he enters the door on the far wall. Even the door is nearly indiscernible from the wall with no moulding or gaps, just clean edges. John looks toward camera to the Manager, off-panel, unrevealed. A sleek metal chair positioned in the center of the room is the only fixture.

CAPTION:                    I haven't seen the Manager since my promotion

The Manager (OP):            Greetings, John.

John:                    G-greetings, sir.

### **PANEL TWO**

CLOSER, HEAD-ON: John, now seated, sits forward slightly, pleading, clutching his knees with his hands. His sad eyes look to camera toward the off-panel Manager.

The Manager (OP):            Are you no longer passionate about brickwork?

John:                    No! S'all I wanna do! I love it!

### **PANEL THREE**

Matching the previous shot. John offers a nervous, pathetic smile.

The Manager (OP):            Are you ill?

John:                    I-I-I 'm tip-top.

### **PANEL FOUR**

CLOSER STILL and HEAD-ON: John sits still further forward in his chair and folds his hands, practically praying for the sympathy of the off-panel Manager.

The Manager (OP):            There is no room for underperformance at Remington, Davis and Stern.

John:                    I c'n do better. I--

The Manager (OP):            You've been chosen for retirement.

**MORE**

**PANEL FIVE**

MEDIUM SHOT, ¾ ANGLE: Sitting completely forward now, tears stream from John's eyes as desperation sets in. His expression beams forward, hoping for sympathy.

John:           No!

The Manager (OP):           The Owners require progress...

## **PAGE THREE - Six Panels**

Panel One should cover the top third of the page. Panels Two, Three and Four cover the middle third. Panels Five and Six across the bottom of the page.

### **PANEL ONE**

A LARGE PANEL: Over John's shoulder, we see THE MANAGER for the first time. It is a LENS embedded in the wall. For reference, think HAL from 2001: A Space Odyssey.

The Manager: ... and I require efficient laborers., John.

### **PANEL TWO**

SMALL PANEL: Gas spews from a vent.

SFX: fffssss

### **PANEL THREE**

From behind his chair, we see John look over his shoulder toward the vent in the ceiling (off-panel). Panic painted on his face, he realizes the events of his death have been set in motion.

John: No...

CAPTION: I think of my unfinished walkway.

### **PANEL FOUR**

John runs toward camera, reaching with one hand while clutching his hip with the other. Out of options, he makes one last dash for the door. Over his shoulder, the lens in the wall watches with cold indifference.

John: I have to finish! Let me--

CAPTION: I make a break for it...

### **PANEL FIVE**

CLOSE UP: John's face cringes in pain

John: AGH!

CAPTION: ...but my hip betrays me.

**MORE**

### **PANEL SIX**

Sprawled on the floor, John's weakening form reaches desperately toward the door with his last ounce of strength.

## **PAGE FOUR - Seven Panels**

### **PANEL ONE**

Matching the previous panel, John's body lies motionless on the floor, reaching even in death for the door in a desperate attempt to get back to work.

### **PANEL TWO**

SMALL PANEL: Air rushes into a vent, clearing the room of toxic fumes.

SFX: wfffffittt

### **PANEL THREE**

A YOUNG MAN stumbles into the room through a previously unseen door as if being pushed out into the world for the first time. He is completely nude. His balance and demeanor betray a lack of experience and he waves his arms to avoid falling over the previous John's body on the floor in front of him.

The Manager: Greetings, John.

### **PANEL FOUR**

Over the young man's shoulder, he looks up meekly to the Lens on the far wall. This is an unfamiliar situation and he is timid, frozen with uncertainty.

The Manager: You have been promoted to labor.

The Manager: And you are behind schedule.

### **PANEL FIVE**

MEDIUM SHOT: The young man hurries to remove the clothes from the previous John's body.

**PANEL SIX**

CLOSE ON: The Young Man. Through grateful, tear-filled eyes, he looks off-panel to the lens and says...

Young Man:            Thank you.

***MORE***

**PANEL SEVEN**

The young man runs out the door, clutching the bundle of second-hand clothes desperately against his chest, excited by his newfound sense of purpose.

**END OF SCRIPT**