

Human resources in swimming with sharks essay sample

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In the film *Swimming with Sharks*, a caustic look at Hollywood production culture is found, with many lessons to be learned from a Human Resources perspective. The film follows Guy, an optimistic young screenwriter, who has just been hired by arrogant, aggressive film producer Buddy Ackerman. Guy sees this as an opportunity to enter the movie industry, but he is warned by the experienced and callow assistant Rex, Buddy's previous assistant, that their boss is not an easy person to deal with. Buddy fulfills Rex's predictions, being an absolute terror to work with. He is demanding, aggressive, overbearing and makes Guy perform humiliating and menial tasks for him. He also tells Guy off at every opportunity, making him extend his influence far beyond what is required of him at his job (taking personal time to perform errands for him, etc.). The humiliation and dehumanization Guy experiences starts to take its toll, as he leans on Dawn, his girlfriend and another producer at the firm where Buddy works.

Guy is fired by Buddy over the phone, which drives him over the edge and forces him to kidnap Buddy. Tying him to a chair, Guy tries to make Buddy have a taste of his own medicine, torturing and beating him and performing psychological manipulation on him. He also learns that Buddy and Dawn have been sleeping together through a mistaken phone call. It is after this moment that Buddy starts to show a more sensitive side, telling Guy about his own experiences at the bottom of the food chain and telling him about his wife who has died. Buddy tells Guy that this kind of abuse is the thing he had to endure for ten years in order to get to his position, and that he passed on that abuse in order to get Guy to harden up and work for his accomplishments. Dawn shows up to see Guy about to shoot Buddy with a

gun, Buddy taunting him to do so in order to find success. Guy shoots the gun, but at Dawn instead; this puts the blame for Buddy's kidnapping and torture on her, leaving him to continue working for Buddy.

This movie has a great deal to do with Human Resources. First of all, the crux of the film relies upon the exposure of the audience to abusive behavior in the workplace. The Hollywood setting showcases just how caustic this kind of behavior can be; because of the high returns of those few who succeed, people learn to be cutthroat and competitive, which means tearing other people down (Tepper 178). Buddy performs several actions that can be categorized as abusive and hostile, such as making Guy wait to go to the bathroom until after he has performed a task – this is abusive supervision to a tee. Buddy treats Guy with dismissive and superior behavior, making Guy feel unwanted and worthless as a member of Buddy's team (Schuler & Jackson 212). Guy's retaliation is a natural offshoot of this kind of abusive behavior, as abusive supervision will often lead to violence in the workplace. This kind of film is a warning sign to those who wish to avoid having resentful colleagues and coworkers. The moment where Buddy regales Guy with his story of being someone's abused assistant once is my favorite moment for my favorite character – Buddy; he is such a compelling, A-type personality that he makes one understand just how appealing the abusive boss persona can be.

Works Cited

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