

The Riddler was the CFO of our business, which was part of a group, which was part of a conglomerate. Ours was a small unit, about half of 1 percent of the total business. The Riddler had been drifting down organizationally for awhile, coming in as CFO for a 2 billion dollar unit, dropping back to a \$1 billion unit, then a \$500 million unit, and now to us, about \$300 million. There was only one unit smaller, in Slovakia, so this was for all practical purposes his last stop. He had been a plant manager for awhile so he felt pretty comfortable telling plant guys how bad they were. He was in his mid 50's, and a total sociopath. He had few filters, and a lecturing tone. He physically looked like the Penguin with white hair and an Irish nose, but behaved like the Riddler. When he was done lecturing and yelling at you, which occurred when The Queen of Tarts was not around to do it, you often wondered, "What the F* set him off? What did he just say? What does it mean?"

I was call into an Executive meeting once, to present next year's budget, and was waiting my turn. A guy from the fruitcake division was talking and suddenly the Riddler got up and walked over to the guy, and then he hunched down and started swinging his arms back and forth from side to side, and then he started growling. "You know this is" he asked the Fruitcake guy.

"No" was the quiet reply, as he started moving back a little.

"This is a gorilla, throwing up dust...they sway back and forth and put up dust and make a big show of being tough. In reality, all they are doing is throwing up dust. And that is what I think your presentation is...just GORILLA DUST" and he sneered and waddled back to the table.

The Riddler did not like me at all, and would do especially odd things when I was involved in a conversation. If I was on the phone in a group setting, he would make faces when I talked. The classic, roll you eyes and stare in disbelief at what came out of the phone types of faces, to discredit you and reinforce his dominance. Then he would yell.

At the last budget call on Tuesday, he did his classic launch at me. We were projecting inventory to go up because we were trying to build out existing cupcake models, to create a hole in our schedule so we could do a prototype build of the new models. The idea was ramp up inventory a bit, so you have some time to focus on the new models. The new models were the number one new product focus, and resources were being pulled from other projects to work on them. The launch was 3 years late, and The Queen of Tarts was pissed more and more with each passing year. It did not help that three product managers had worked on it in the last three years, but that was just details. He was going to can the current one if the launch did not happen in July.

Anyway, The Riddler exploded and asked why he had not been asked to approve this build plan. I was not sure what to say, since the VP of ISC had approved it. So I tried to explain we were trying to put a hole in our production schedule so we could focus on the new tools.

The Riddler said "Was this just an emotional decision? Is it just emotion driving this?" He said it loudly and repeatedly. I had no idea how to respond, since this was a mandated July launch, so went back to the "Building a hole in our production schedule..." story, only to be immediately shouted down by The Riddler who declared "That's why no one supports Cupcakeland! When you try to explain things, you use words!"

And once again, I had no idea what he was talking about. The Wheaties Guy jumped in to say, “Look Riddler, this is a budget call, they were not coming in to explain the product launch”, but The Riddler was rolling his eyes again, and I just kept my mouth shut. There was just no point. It was all Gorilla dust now.