

The Illusion of Being Maternal
A Mercynaries Story from SinComics.com

Jules clattered after her boss as she took a purposeful stride through the heavy double doors of her office with a flourish that indicated she was angry. Jules smoothed her skirt and combed back her hair before putting on a smiling face and slipping through the door as it closed.

"The show was a great success, Ma'am! You 'Maternal Sunshine of the Spotless Dress' line went over brilliantly and will surely destroy sales of the competition's new sundress debuts. Any line not using flat colors this year will surely crumble." Director Barrows nodded slightly and sunk into the executive chair at her desk. "The cross-promotion and advertising for the pharmaceutical and vitamin division is already seeing sales and click rates triple across the-

"The dress didn't hang right!"

"E-Excuse me, Ma'am?"

"You saw it. Florence's dress. It was too tight. Fabric couldn't sway properly. It was perfect in yesterday's alterations!"

Jules adjusted her notes and flipped through to Florence's profile. "She is in the final months, Ma'am. It is expected that her shape will-

"Ugh, and if she's in the final months then I'm going to lose yet another model any day now. By the time you get them trained and useful, they're getting ready to leave! Why can't we get somebody to just STAY in shape."

"My lab tried, Director. The medicine and hormonal cocktails did allow women to experience the growth associated with a full pregnancy at a faster rate and without the nasty side-effects of actual babies."

"Jules, dear, I know. But due to the rapid maturation, it just meant that once my models got to the right size, the hormones burned out faster and they went back to being thin, waifish, and useless even faster. And my billions in research along with them. We've been over this."

"Yes, Ma'am, but I've been- The simulations..."

"Out with it, Jules! You know my thoughts on these mousey ramblings."

"My work... You're going to need to hire a new assistant."

"What? Are you quitting or is this some attempt at a negotiation? I will crush you, Jules! I love you like one of my own but I will grind you down and-"

"Ma'am, no! For the tests, you're going to need somebody new. And a bit different from our previous employees. Let me explain-"

Ronnie nervously fidgeted as the elevator ascended through the building. From his tiny desk at the ground floor through the catalog and magazine division to the show rooms and photography offices. He bet there were a lot of pretty ladies in that office. Damn shame his keycard didn't give him access to anything past the conference rooms on the second floor.

The elevator slowed as he reached the top floor and came to a halt with a deceptively cheery ding. Being called into the boss's office had to be a good thing, right? If they were going to fire him, his supervisor would have just done that downstairs. Unless they were rubbing it in! Making him see all the fancy offices and successful people before dashing his hopes and kicking him out. He'd only just started last month! They couldn't fire him after just a month's work, he had done his job well and-

The elevator doors slid open to reveal a young woman with glasses juggling multiple tablets and notebooks. She wore a fitted white mini-dress with a white jacket belted high above the waist and bright red stiletto heels. Her blonde hair was pulled back tightly. Ronnie thought she would be rather cute if she let her hair down and stopped dressing like an evil dentist. She looked back and forth between one of the tablets and at Ronnie's face.

"You must be Ronnie, correct? Boy have we heard good things about you! You're really burning it up down there with your..." She scrolled through the tablet balanced on her forearm. "Transcription, copy editing, and schedule management skills."

Ronnie beamed. His work WAS noticed! Everything was going to be great.

In the Director's office, Ronnie sat stiffly upright in his chair as his boss and her technician stared him down. Jules adjusted her glasses and looked through her notes.

"Mr. Ronnie...You are single, correct? Unmarried. Live alone. Nobody that would miss you if you moved away?"

Ronnie nodded. Maybe she was hitting on him asking for personal information? "I was thinking of getting a cat."

Director Barrows pointed at some boxes on her assistant's tablet. "And Ronnie, you like the company? You are a loyal worker?"

Ronnie enthusiastically nodded, eager to make a good impression. "Yes, ma'am! It's nice here and everybody is a big fan of Sandwich Wednesdays!"

The owner turned to the side. "Jules, I assure you I have no idea what that is."

Jules waved her hand towards their interviewee. "It's something we do to placate the lower workers. You can buy them off with some platters of meats and cheeses." She turned back to Ronnie. "Now, Ronnie, your evaluation came in quite high. We think you're ready for a promotion!"

"Wow! I... I don't really remember being evaluated though."

Jules scrolled through her tablet. "We, umm, we track the work you do on your computer."

Ronnie nodded sagely. "That sounds efficient." Bosses loved to hear the word "efficient".

The Director's distaste and boredom was becoming harder for her to hide. She was used to giving orders and sending people on their way, so needing to play nice and engage one of her drones was an unpleasant new experience. "Ronnie. Dear... We would like YOU to help with a new initiative. You're aware of the company's key position in the maternity world. Leaders in fashion, medical, and biological fields."

"Yes, ma'am, it's part of the daily oath."

"Good, good. We need your help for the company to excel even more."

Ronnie smiled but furrowed his brow. "I'm happy to help but... I don't know anything about the maternity world. I'll study though! You just tell me-"

Jules handed over a stack of paperwork and pointed a pen at Ronnie and then the signature lines. "No need to worry about that. I'll be doing all the hard work. Hey, how would you like to meet our models?"

Grabbing the pen and signing everywhere and anything he was presented with, Ronnie beamed. "Would I!?"

With the papers signed, Jules dropped them off at the desk and started to assemble several containers and boxes from a table off to the side. "Director, the issue we had with the earlier test subjects is that the female body is designed and programmed to finish the process when the baby is ready. Our new subject doesn't have that biological imperative. There is no ending mechanism so it can reach the desired advancement but doesn't have a finishing state so it finds a new homeostasis." Jules pointed to Ronnie and held up a long tube with a needle on the end. "Roll up your sleeve."

Ronnie leaned away from her but nodded. "What is that? Is this a drug test? I didn't know I'd need an injection..."

Jules shook her head. "I suppose the position could go to another worker. They would much rather have that new apartment and help the models..."

"A... new apartment?"

"Of course! An assistant to Director Barrows can't be far away. She needs you close. Now, arm."

Ronnie pushed up his sleeve and Jules effortlessly slipped the needle in, taped it to his arm, and attached the line to a silver canister. After a flurry of button presses on the canister, a radiant blue liquid slowly worked its way towards Ronnie. He felt a cold burn for a split-second as the liquid entered his veins, but the feeling almost immediately faded.

Jules returned from the desk with a small paper cup. Ronnie looked inside and saw several brightly colored spherical pills inside. Director Barrows was now at his side with a tumbler of gray water. She offered the first smile Ronnie had seen from her.

"Wash those down with this. My new assistant!"

Ronnie smiled, dumped the paper cup into his mouth, and took a deep swig of the water. It had an acidic, citrus-y taste. He could feel it moving down his throat, thick and coating like stomach medicine. His throat quickly felt numb. Ronnie went to speak but he was overcome with a deep, aching exhaustion. He wobbled in the chair and tried to shake his head to regain his composure. His stomach rumbled and he could no longer keep his eyes open. Jules and the Director were excitedly exchanging words but it was all garbled randomness to Ronnie. He slumped back in the chair and fell into a deep, dreamless sleep.

Spots of light filtered the world back to Ronnie. His head was fuzzy and light but things started to come back to him. What he could make out was all white. Shaped but all white. White cabinets and dressers against white walls. White curtains over bright windows. White sheets spread over him. A loud snapping click boomed in his ears and he groggily slumped his head over to it.

"Ah, it's alive. Good good." The blurry figure of Jules leaned into his view and she stopped snapping her fingers. "Everything went quite well. Your first success."

Ronnie tried to speak but the best he could mumble was a "Blftst."

Jules nodded. "Indeed. Now, we're waking you back up because the trials have run their course. Nobody wants a model jacked up on fresh chemicals and hormones. They're bad enough as they usually are."

Ronnie's limp hand patted his face and things felt as normal as they could through his haze. He slumped his hand onto his chest and it was met by a cushioned softness. He patted it again and felt the same confusing sensation.

Jules picked his hand up and placed it at his side. "There will be time to feel yourself up later. I have work to do."

A slurred "Womnnn?!" oozed out of Ronnie's lips.

Jules paced back and forth looking at charts and her tablets. "Well not technically, that would defeat the whole purpose. Sure outwardly but genetically you're the same, which is all I really care for." Seeing Ronnie's confused shuffling and attempts to rise, Jules effortlessly held him down with one arm. He struggled weakly until Jules tired of his interruption of her work, reached over to the table beside him, and jabbed him in the arm once more. "Go to sleep. We'll talk later."

Ronnie was slowly brought back to reality as the chemicals wore off and he was more together and composed the second time around. As together and composed as he could be in a strange, distorted body. His arms and legs were thinner and had lost muscle. His features softer. His stomach thinner, causing his hips to look like they stuck out more, and they looked suspiciously more full to begin with. His chest, they were undeniably breasts. Small but definitely there. And down there... His hands rested on his smooth lap; what had those drugs done to him... No matter what Jules said about him, he was completely a woman.

Unsure of how long he sat on the bed trying to make sense of himself, Ronnie startled when he heard the door open. Director Barrows confidently entered the room and looked over Ronnie. She scanned him up and down before glancing over her shoulder to Jules, now back in her business attire.

"The process will require a few days for the full effect, Director."

"Well in that case, welcome to the team, my new assistant. We have big plans for you and you're going to be SUCH a help to my projects!" Ronnie looked back up at them in confusion. The corporate world was a strange one. "Let's get our star home, Jules."

Jules walked over to Ronnie and motioned back to her superior. "I'm going to need some help, boss."

Director Barrows was taken aback. "What? Don't we pay people to handle these things?"

"This is a quiet operation, Ma'am. You and I are the only ones that know about our latest tests. It wouldn't look good if details of our model came to light."

"I suppose. Consider this your first perk, Assistant. You get help from me on your first day. People usually have to spend a lot to get that."

Ronnie was walked through the white facility and led to an elevator. It sunk deep through the facility until they reached a garage with the Director's car waiting for them. As Ronnie shuffled inside, he was overcome with how fancy the luxury car was. Its plush seats felt good on his new body as he sunk into them. The Director slid in next to him and did her best to avoid Ronnie's constant star-struck staring. But if her plans worked out, she could buy her new toy her own limo and this would be their last awkward trip together.

They arrived at a gleaming skyscraper made of glass. Ronnie gawked, leaning back to see the top, but Jules was quick to stick an arm out and stop him from falling backwards. He was guided into an elevator and taken many floors up, before the car stopped and opened directly into an apartment. It was nicer than even the fanciest hotel room Ronnie had seen. The lighting graced the pastel walls and all the furniture was brand new and fresh. The grand living room branched out to a modest kitchen with the bedroom just visible down the hall. The Director walked past Ronnie, looked over the quarters, and shrugged.

"Modest, but we took what was available on short notice. Jules, I need a drink."

Jules pattered around the living space, making the final checks and notes. "No alcohol, Ma'am. The subject will abstain from it. I have the kitchen well stocked with all the essentials she requires and to help the process along." She pointed her pen at Ronnie. "For now, eat as much as you want. I can restock. Take advantage of it. Most models can't."

Ronnie was thoroughly overwhelmed and simply nodded.

The Director huffed. "Then I'm calling it a day. Jules, update me when the project can commence. Assistant, welcome aboard." She hurried to the elevator and Ronnie gave her a meek wave as the doors closed.

Jules made her final checks and pointed Ronnie to a phone on the table. "That will contact me. And only me. If you need something, let me know and I will come by. You have tonight off to explore this space. Eat and rest. Anything in the closets is your wardrobe to choose from, but I will be making your choices when you return to work."

Ronnie waved as the elevator took away his other guest. He had a direct line to the boss's pretty helper! That had to be a good sign. Looking over his fancy new apartment, Ronnie steadied himself on the couch. He was still getting used to his new body. His limbs felt longer and more slender than before so it took some adjusting to get used to walking. Why had they done this to him? What part of being an assistant required the loss of his manhood? But Director Barrows WAS rich, so she knew better than he did.

A gurgling in his stomach allowed Ronnie to stop thinking about the deep issues. He was hungry and tired, so his goals were to fix those and food came first. The pantry was well-stocked and the fridge had a bounty of individually boxed and labeled containers. That was thoughtful of Miss Jules. Ronnie dug into the closest one but was too famished to pay much attention to what it was. Something with cheese and sauce and meat, but it made his grumbling stomach stop and that's what mattered.

After washing his hands and dumping the dishes in the sink, Ronnie wandered to the far end of the apartment and saw his new room. It had two wall-length closets, a number of dressers, a make-up table complete with a giant mirror, and a huge canopy bed up against the wall. Ronnie opened the bed's lacy curtains and pushed the silk pillows aside before plopping back onto the downy comforter. He was barely on it for a few moments before he slipped into a deep sleep.

The next morning, Ronnie was jostled awake by a sharp poke to his side. Jules was standing over him holding out her pen and impatiently looking at her tablet. Ronnie skidded to the front of the bed.

"Miss Jules, I-" he stammered.

Unaffected, Jules pointed to the mirror. "Let's go, I have tests to run."

Ronnie crawled off the bed and followed her to the mirror. Jules stood him up straight and squared his feet. She pulled out a length of tape and wrapped it around Ronnie's new bust before typing some numbers into her tablet. When she let go, he touched a hand to his chest and felt that it was heavier and pushed out more. They had to be twice as big as they were the day before. Before he could comment, Jules tapped his arm down and continued with her measurements. After getting his waist and hips, she took his height, and reviewed all her numbers.

"You're doing quite well. Not quite the progress I wanted already, but acceptable."

Ronnie slumped. "I'll try harder?"

Jules pointed him to the dresser which was overflowing with underwear. Silky lady underwear. Ronnie cautiously looked it over. Jules looked him up and down and back at her tablet.

"Start with the third drawer. Those should fit you for now." She then pointed to the pink door. "Shower is through there. I'm done here for the day. You just continue to rest and eat and I'll check in tomorrow."

Ronnie smiled and nodded. Those were tasks he could accomplish and they were a lot less hectic than his normal work duties. He'd try to impress Jules with... whatever he was actually supposed to be doing.

The rest of Ronnie's week continued in the same manner. Every morning, Jules would come to his apartment, take his measurements, those bust and hips measurements would be increasing at a rate Ronnie wasn't quite comfortable with, Jules would assign him some new clothing, and he would spend the day resting. He was tired a lot and ate several meals per day, but the apartment was nice and he got to watch a lot of TV.



The next week, Ronnie woke himself up. He stretched and felt the ample weight of his curves, his nightie tight against his chest. He was already looking through the underwear in the dresser's top drawer, having outgrown everything in the lower ones, when Jules arrived. She took his measurements once more, smiling the whole time, but then Ronnie felt a prick in his arm. Jules dabbed away a spot of blood and put the device in a canister before remembering Ronnie.

"Just some more in-depth tests. I want to run your numbers at the lab."

"Is that good?"

Jules looked him up and down, proud of her creation's figure and femininity. "Very good."

Ronnie nodded in agreement. She was totally checking him out! Jules turned to go, but Ronnie stopped her.

"Miss Jules, do you think maybe I could go out soon? It's getting a bit boring. I'm thankful for your hospitality and all but I'm feeling a bit cooped-"

"I think you're ready. I will collect you tomorrow for a morning regimen."

"Thanks, Miss Jules!" Ronnie went over to her for a hug she reluctantly accepted. His plump breasts dwarfed hers as he pulled her in tight.

It wasn't just the boredom, Ronnie wanted to get out and moving around. He was starting to develop a bit of a gut from doing nothing more than eating and sleeping all day.

In the morning, Jules provided Ronnie with a tight top and leggings and pulled a pair of hard-soled slippers from his closet. They entered the elevator and it descended to an unknown floor. When the doors opened, Ronnie saw a brightly lit room filled with treadmills and various machines spewing data.

"Wow, this is our gym?!"

Jules eyed him suspiciously. "Yes... the gym. Why don't you do warm up on the treadmill?"

Ronnie was thrilled since this was exactly what he needed to drop the extra weight. It took some time to get used to the new sensations coming from the body's extra weight bouncing around, but Ronnie accepted he'd need to slow down and managed with practice. He tired fairly quickly, either due to the new body or the week of leisure, but Jules led him to a bright white room containing a bubbling pool in the middle.

Jules motioned for him to undress and get in. "Hot tub. It will help you relax after your test."

Ronnie slid into the warm, slightly thick water but it was comfortable. His skin tingled as he sunk in.

"Miss Jules! Get in on this! It's really comfy!"

She just shook her head and retreated from the room to clack away on the machines in the other room.

For the rest of the week, Ronnie began every day with a workout and long soak in the gym, but he couldn't shake his growing gut. He was eating less and working out more, but every day he woke to

the bulge in his belly larger and rounder than the day before. By the end of the week, it was easily visible through all of his clothing.

Jules was unconcerned and even delighted by his weight gain, so Ronnie tried not to complain and just go with it. His bump neared the size of a basketball when Director Barrows paid him her first visit since he moved in. She threw one arm around his shoulders and gently patted his stomach with her other hand.

"My dear, assistant, I think it's time you started helping me with your work again."

Ronnie was a little relieved to be back to tasks more interesting than sitting around. "Yes, ma'am. I'll be happy to get back to the computer systems and-"

"No, my dear, no. I want you in the studio." She motioned to the elevator and Jules pressed the button. Ronnie rose with a grunt, holding his stomach, and followed his boss away.

Ronnie was driven to one of the company's studios and led to a large, open room with racks of clothing and piles of fabrics lining the walls. Director Barrows moved in a flurry, holding clothing and fabric up to Ronnie, barked numbers and orders at Jules. Ronnie didn't want to interfere so he stood rigid and sucked in his gut as best he could. Director Barrows flicked him in the back.

"No, no! Stand natural! Loose. Let the world see that beautiful figure."

The scene continued for hours and a multitude of costume changes. Ronnie was exhausted even though he did little more than stand around, walk short distances, or turn around at the Director's orders. She seemed delighted at whatever he was doing right, so Ronnie felt like he was doing well at the new job.



For the next weeks, Ronnie's days played out in the same routine. Mornings in the gym, then he was driven to the studio and worked one-on-one with Director Barrows on her fashion and plans. She started lessons on modeling and walking and posing. The whole process was confusing but Ronnie held on and followed her orders. It had been about a month since he signed on and he would have been unrecognizable to his old self. His belly was round and extended. Plump enough that his breasts touched his stomach. He felt healthy otherwise and Jules assured him he was great and exactly what was needed, not to worry, and he would have plenty of time to get used to it.

Director Barrows sketched as Ronnie took a break to rest and refresh himself. "At the risk of you getting full of yourself, this is amazing work, Jules. Just one month and she's as full as a mother expecting any day now."

"I'll take that as high praise from you, Ma'am. The tests show that the hormonal changes are stable and self-sustaining now. He'll stay that way until you tire and give him the ending treatments."

"Tire! My dear, these designs are worth every penny spent on your research. I have a doll I can move and pose and put to work. To see the natural flow of my work on a mannequin that can run the catwalk... Yes, yes. Jules, look over the schedule. I want her in a show. I have my inspiration and designs, get me some models, and make her the star."

For their next session, Director Barrows held up several swatches of spangly fabric to Ronnie and murmured to herself. This continued for quite some time until she barked some orders and numbers at Jules and excused herself. Ronnie relaxed, holding his protruding belly. Jules took a phone call and left, but the Director soon returned with a long purple dress draped across her arms.

"For you, dear!" She beamed.

Ronnie looked it over in confusion. "That's... a dress. Like a lady's dress. I know you've been giving me a lot of loose clothing for my weight problem and whatever's going on with my body but..." Ronnie was cut off by the studio door opening and in marched a line of the company's models. Every one of them was gorgeous and clad in elegant clothing. They were curvy and made up perfectly with outfits that embraced and proudly showed their pregnant bellies. Ronnie stiffened when the gravity and gravidity of his situation struck him. He looked from the models to himself over and over. "I'm- I- I'm not fat, I'm-"

Ronnie broke from where he stood and waddled out of the studio as fast as he could manage. The models muttered among themselves and Director Barrows growled.

"Jules! Bring her back to me. If anything happens to my doll!"

Jules complied and raced out the door. She quickly caught up to Ronnie down the hallway.

"What did you do to me?! I'm- Ugh, pregnant?!"

Jules matter-of-factly shrugged. "You're not technically pregnant since you're not with child. Your body has just undergone a hormonal cascade that tricked it into thinking it had to prepare and grow for a pregnancy. You're in a self-perpetuating pregnant state that can't end in birth."

Ronnie stared at her blankly for several minutes. "I didn't want this!"

"You agreed to sign on to become the Director's new assistant. We have the paperwork."

"I took a job as a helper. I'm not a science experiment!"

"You are helping. The Director is the nation's greatest designer of maternity wear and nutrition. Your work is a great help." Ronnie gasped for air. "You DO want to continue helping, correct? It would be a shame to have to let you go in such a state. We would not be able to provide a good reference for your next employer."

Ronnie slumped and allowed Jules to hoist him up to his feet and lead him back to the Director and other models to plan for her new show.

The night of the event was nothing more than a blur to Ronnie. The models came and went, undergoing costume changes with a swarm of stylists buzzing around them. Every time the curtain opened, lights flashed and the crowd noise was a buzzing din mixed with the music booming from overhead. Ronnie spent the whole night being done up in a chair and barely had a chance to admire the models. Director Barrows personally took over for his makeup duties after the first stylist complained about Ronnie's short hair. He'd had that haircut since college and was thankful it stayed a constant

despite what he'd been made into.

As the night wore on and the costume rack was slowly whittled down, Director Barrows fixed up her own makeup and signaled to Ronnie.

"It's time, my doll!"

It took Ronnie a few attempts to get up out of the chair but with a grunt, he freed himself and tottered onto his heels. He clung tightly to the Director's arm as she strutted out to the curtain with a confidence Ronnie couldn't even dream of.

The flashes and sound were disorienting and Ronnie held tight. Trying his best to remember the walk and route the Director had drilled him on, but the experience was so overwhelming. The Director led him out to the end of her arm, signaled for him to turn around for the crowd, and then pulled him back in. She shouted some thankful platitudes to the photographers and people in the crowd, but Ronnie was dizzy and stressed, so he just awkwardly waved and tried his best to smile. That was the same thing he did in the job interview that led to this madness.



Ronnie soon learned that the life of a model wasn't as glamorous as he hoped it would be. He

was whisked away from event to event, country to country, and subject to the Director's whims at every stop along the way. He didn't even get to spend much time with the other models to enjoy his situation. Outfit after outfit was pushed his way and he was dressed in all manner of clothing as he pranced around runways in front of photographers and artists he'd never heard of. He was practically shoved on stage to model the company's new line of "From Here To Maternity" lingerie and night wear and had no desire to see the coverage the Director and Jules fawned over when the reviews were out. In comparison, the gym wear and "Maternity House" end of summer dress line were a breeze to show off. It was at the company's reveal of its new office wear brand for the mother that wanted to work until the last moment, that Ronnie almost became wistful for his old life of tedious work.

Flying back home, Jules and the Director debated some of the figures. Ronnie was happy for the flights since they kept him off his feet and he could rest in the plush seats and not feel the weight of his belly.

"Ma'am, we can't have her on stage at every show. It will start to become suspicious how you have the same pregnant model in every line."

"That was the whole point, Jules! To have a doll I can use over and over and have her be perfectly pregnant every time. Do you not agree with the quality of the work? So much more convenient than hopping from model to model as they go off and abandon me for their... babies!"

"The work is secondary to the issue, Director. We can continue to use the subject for testing and design, but we'll need to put at least a year between now and her next big show." The Director grumbled and noisily crumpled her papers for show. Jules was used to this level of executive pouting and continued. "If you'll authorize the funding into my work on facial remodeling, we can use that to hide her identity as a long-term solution."

Upon returning to the lab, a quick elevator ride took the group to Jules's workspace. As they entered, Jules let out a gasp and rushed to the broken machinery littering the ground. Devices had been broken apart and their materials collected, notes were confiscated, computers and backups smashed, and chemicals mixed and dumped. Ronnie stayed huddled behind the Director as Jules frantically searched through the pile of debris.

"You know," A young woman's voice rang out from the back room, "You have a suspiciously perfect model." A blonde woman casually walked in, holding a selection of glamour shots and magazine profiles.

A redhead followed close behind flipping through a catalog. "Some of the dresses ARE pretty cute though. Wouldn't she look good in this one?!" She hooked her thumb at her partner while holding out a picture of a two tone mini dress with tails.

The Director stood her ground. "Explain yourself."

The blonde smiled. "Mercy and Ruth, nice to meet you. We're... investigators of sorts. But it doesn't take much to question how a suspiciously curvy model springs up out of nowhere and becomes a fashion star overnight. We've seen the signs before. You make a model with boobs that big when you own your own secret laboratory and people are just going to start asking questions."

Director Barrows crossed her arms and stared down the uppity interloper. "Everything is on the level. We have our employee's signature and approval on everything. You have no grounds to-"

The redhead waved her off and addressed Ronnie. "Dude, how long have you been a lady?"

Ronnie looked back and forth to the Director and Jules. "All my life?"

The redhead sighed and tutted when she walked past the Director and saw Ronnie's bulging figure. "Look what they did to you! Don't stick up for these jerks! When was the last time you saw your feet?"

The Director pushed her arm out to sweep Ronnie behind her. "Enough of this! She's fairly compensated for something she signed up for. I made her a star and she loves it."

The blonde grinned and grabbed a stack of papers from off the desk. "Yeah, we hit up your office first. Would this be her contract? I noticed you cheaped out and tried to hide him as an 'assistant' instead of a model."

"She assists me so it's a perfectly valid filing."

Ruth flipped through the contract and grinned wider. "But models are salaried while assistants are hourly." Director Barrows winced and Ronnie looked around to figure out what was going on. "I think your assistant could make a pretty convincing case that what you've done to him and what you're using him for means he's been on the clock 24 hours a day for the past months. And I don't think you've been properly paying that out so we'd be happy to have our team set him up with a wage theft lawsuit."

Mercy nodded, her pigtails bobbing. "That's a looot of overtime."

Director Barrows cracked her knuckles and thought over the situation. Ethics be damned, but wage lawsuits were expensive and came with bad press. "Ronnie, love, how'd you like a NEW promotion! One that comes with a new contract. We can clean up that bit of messiness and get you taken care of."

The redhead groaned. "Don't do it, man! She's trying to take advantage of you! Side with her and you're going to be filled up like a balloon for the rest of your life while she gets richer. This is your best chance to go back to normal!"

Ronnie was breathing in quick, short bursts. He had no idea what was going on and confrontations made him very nervous. "I-I want to be normal again. I know you like me like this Miss Jules, but I don't want to be like this anymore."

Jules looked at him quizzically. "What?"

Ronnie held his belly and stepped forward. "I have demands!" Director Barrows grumbled and stomped over to a desk at the edge of the room. "I want you to make me normal again. A normal guy. Without boobs. Or pregnant."

The Director growled, "We get it!"

"And I want my old job back."

Ruth threw down the contract. "Seriously, man?!"

"Yeah, I like the company. The work's not much but I'm treated okay and there's room for promotion."

Mercy threw up her hands and waved them maniacally. "This is your chance to stick it to a boss that's abused you! Demand more!"

Ronnie thought deeply for a moment. "And we all get an extra Sandwich Wednesday. Sandwich Fridays for everybody in the office!"

The blonde and redhead sighed and after moments to repeatedly curse under their breath, addressed Jules.

"You can turn him back?"

"It's a simple enough procedure. I just need to neutralize the-"

The redhead waved her hands at the lot of them and activated a device on her arm. "What-EVER! Just fix the idiot and don't do this again." A green doorway appeared next to the them, they gathered up the confiscated material, and stormed out of the lab before the door blinked away.

Ronnie's transition back to his old self took its time, but he was thankful to the Director and Jules for allowing him to retain use of the fancy apartment while it happened. The process felt like a week long deflation as his belly, hips, and chest slowly reduced in size. Once he had regained his manhood, Jules returned to make her final diagnoses and summarily moved Ronnie back to his old apartment and set him up to return to work. Ronnie was happy with the normalcy. Being a star seemed like a lot of trouble but being normal got you two sandwiches a week.

Read more Mercynaries comics and stories at: <http://www.sincomics.com/ddg.php>