

The Dark Side: why I can't work

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I've been unlucky in the job market. It's not that I hate working (well, actually, I do). I just have a



Chris Snyder

Wouldn't you hire this sterling, perfectly stable example of American youth?

bad habit of getting fired. I don't punch customers or projectile vomit or anything.

Mostly, I just scare them. Not that I do it on purpose (usually); it's not like I prophesize a great plague or warn them of the coming Armageddon. I just don't like interacting with other life-forms. It doesn't come natural (surprise, surprise) and I end up sputtering and twitching when I'm forced to hold a civilized conversation. Pathetic.

In any case, I can't hold a job. Most of my work experience has been on the "Welcome to McSlop!

Can I take your order?" level (these kinds of jobs create serial killers. I'm serious).

I spent most of my formative years slinging sandwiches at a deli. We had roaches, mold, and well, they hired me. The management wasn't real particular. I wore an apron and scarf in my hair (imagine WaHo head napkins), and had to deal with customers when they said the roast beef tasted like dead raccoon.

The place was disgusting: there were vines growing in the bathroom (really) and the floor was blacker than the void that is my closet. How pleasant!

Working at the deli stunk. My vegan straightedge coworker would (loudly) sing "Don't you know you're eating death? The taste in your mouth is the corpse on your breath!" as he made ham sandwiches.

It depressed people.

Thankfully, that job ended when the floor in our restaurant randomly caved in during the lunch rush (really). The singing vegan actually fell into the basement (there is justice!), and I decided to try my

luck at a cappuccino bar.

That was a very, very stupid idea.

There is nothing worse in this life than a bunch of Gen-X yuppies that are skim-vanilla-tall-iced-latte junkies. They shake as they order their drinks, eyes glazed over with the thought of a five buck caffeine fix.

The coffee bar was located in an expensive bookstore in a Land Rover/take pets to psychologists part of town, filled with people with "Friends" haircuts and bank accounts longer than their social security numbers.

I hate this type on principle. Yet, I was suddenly forced to serve them espresso and really expensive

sandwiches that (still) tasted like dead raccoon. (Isn't it ironic? Don't ya think?) It was the kinda place where you wear a fancy apron and have to hide behind the espresso roaster to smoke.

I lasted a week. I did my job decently, considering the clientele—no spitting or head spinning; I even smiled (well, once). I was fired on the grounds that I looked weird and I might make people think about "unpleasant things." (the possibilities are endless!) I didn't really care, except for losing the free coffee/high octane speed fix. Gave me more time to read comics and play with eyeliner innovations and stuff.

I mean, you can't forget what's really important.

CHIP DANGER part eleven
DAREDEVIL SQUIRREL - 1997 - by Bill Burg

IT WAS GETTING COLDER. THE TREES WERE BARE, LIKE DARK FINGERS. MANY OF THE OTHER SQUIRRELS WERE GETTING READY FOR WINTER. I WAS GETTING NERVOUS...

IN SUMMER, SQUIRRELS SLEEP IN DREYS, MADE MOSTLY OF LEAVES. BUT IN WINTER WE NEED WARMER QUARTERS.

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I DON'T WANT TO SIT IN A TREE ALL WINTER!

WE WENT TO THE OLD SQUIRREL. SANFORD'S ATTIC WAS MORE CLUTTERED THAN EVER. I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW MANY ACORNS HE'D HOARDED. CHIP AND I HADN'T STORED THAT MANY BETWEEN US!

WHEN CHIP MENTIONED SPENDING THE WINTER, SANFORD BALKED, BUT KEPT LISTENING. I TOOK A LOOK AROUND HIS PLACE.

I OPENED ONE OF HIS BOOKS. I'D NEVER SEEN ONE UP CLOSE. WHAT DID THOSE MARKS MEAN, I WONDERED?

WHAT IS THAT GUY'S PROBLEM?

WHY WAS HE SO WORRIED ABOUT THOSE BOOKS? I WANT TO LOOK AT BOOKS!

CHIP, CONCENTRATE! HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LOOK AT BOOKS AND FIND A PLACE TO BE WARM ALL WINTER...?

CHIP..?

WHY ARE YOU SMILING...?

BUT THE FIRST TIME WE WENT IN, I NEARLY DROPPED MY SUPPLY...

CHIP LOOK OUT!

THAT'S HOW WE SETTLED ON THE LIBRARY. IT WAS TOO BUSY DURING THE DAY, BUT THAT NIGHT WE CAME BACK TO MOVE OUR STORE OF ACORNS INSIDE.

I SAW A HAWK ABOUT TO SWOOP DOWN ON CHIP. IT TOOK A MOMENT TO REALIZE THIS HAWK WAS DEAD. THERE WERE DOZENS OF BIRDS IN THE GLASS CASE, ALL STUFFED.

OH GROSS! WOW!

CHIP WAS IN HEAVEN. HE TORE THROUGH CORRIDORS OF BOOKS, JUMPED FROM SHELF TO SHELF, AND BOUNCED ON THE LIBRARY'S SOFT COUCHES.

WAHOO!!

BUT EVERY TIME I PASSED THE CASE WITH THE HAWK IN IT, I SHUDDERED. IT FILLED ME WITH DREAD AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHY!

I TRIED NOT TO THINK ABOUT IT.

The second half of Chip Danger begins January, 1998, only in The Guilfordian!

Campus Candid



Chris Catstrom

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