

MELVINS STAR IN:

WEST SIDE STORY!

IT WAS AS IF THE UNIVERSE HAD STARTED TO ANSWER MY PRAYERS

It was a scary thing. Not having a regular straight job that I secretly hate goes against my entire belief system. Not only that, I was tired of giving people the wrong impression. People seem to think (because I have stuff out, and have done all of this super cool and groovy stuff over the years) that I am doing this as my actual living. Why not try and make this a reality instead of something that I politely laugh and squirm a little at when I disclaim the idea? The decision was sudden. Carole (my girlfriend) believed in me and I went for it. I realized soon afterwards that the structure of having a job was something that I seemed to need. It was a bit of a shocking realization. A little while after all of that was decided, I was talking to Buzz about it over the phone. About one minute after we hung up, he called me back. The Melvins were at their practice space rehearsing. Dale made Buzz call me back. It seems that John Raymond (see MANCHILD 3) wasn't going to be selling merch on the band's upcoming tour. Would I like to be employed by the band for their upcoming month and a half summer tour? "A job" I thought. Then after a second I said, "let me talk to my girlfriend and I will call you right back". It turned out that Carole was fine with it. It's asking a lot of somebody, really. What a gal. I called Buzz back and said that I was in. This time, however, it was a job and it would be three times longer than the last trip I was on. I have never been gone for a month and a half. I wondered if I was going to suddenly freak out three weeks into things. Would I turn into an insufferable nervous wreck and an alcoholic that could barely keep his new found dangerous impulses in check? Would I be sent home? They have sent people home. Would I be next? I decided this wasn't going to happen and bought a ticket. In retrospect, it's hard to believe the timing and luck of it all. I was looking forward to it. In early July I got on a plane and flew out to the west coast to see just what I was going to end up doing. I still wasn't quite sure. Here is a collection of some of the highlights from the trip. Or... at least what I can remember.

LOS ANGELES IN STORE APPEARANCE AT AMOEBIA RECORDS

The first show on the tour was at Amoeba Records in Hollywood. It was certainly the biggest, most overwhelming record store I have ever been in. When I got there I greeted the rest of the folks on this trip: Tim Moss (the tour manager), Toshi (producer of the Melvins last three records and third member of the band Big Business); and straight from Moscow, Idaho (the youngest of all of us), Rikky. I still didn't know exactly what I was going to be doing, or that I was in fact going to be selling merch. Eventually, I figured out that yes, that is what I would be doing, just not that day. I should also mention that Dan Raymond (John's older brother) was also on the road with us. He is Buzz's best friend, and they go way back. It took me a week or so to figure Dan out. He was going to be showing me "the ropes" of selling the merch. So... that makes the total amount of people scattered in two touring vehicles nine. That was a pretty good amount. The place ended up being packed and everything went fine.

I saw a couple of old friends of mine- Rob and Carla. I used to be pen pals with Carla when we were kids back in California. I think I had a crush on her through the mail. It was so long ago. Rob and I go way back. In the end I felt bad because I could only give them about five minutes of my personal time. This turned out to be a reality all of the way through the tour. I would see old pals briefly and would have to beg off of really hanging out with them because there was simply no time. Rob slapped my back in an extremely weird and painful sort of way.

He seemed like he was almost mad at me for not being able to do anything with him. There wasn't much I could do, I had a job. Then we were out of there.

EUGENE, OREGON

So I am starting to personally meet some of the regular Internet posters on "theMelvins.Net" and I must say; as nice as they are, I am still a little creeped out by a few of 'em. Some of these folks are flying around the friggin' country to see the band like they are following the Grateful Dead. I always wonder about people being that devoted to someone's music that they would do that. Almost all of them are polite though. They love posters, too. Good thing I have lots of them.*

Nothing traumatic happened tonight; but I gotta say that Eugene Oregon has this really strong asshole vibe to it. It appears to be a town that combines the worst aspects of being both a "punker" and a "hippie". What is the difference between these two in this day and age anyway? You tell me. Maybe acting like a drunk, freeloading, smelly, non-bathing, prone to violence dipshit is somehow what ties things together here in Eugene. Pointless and meaningless, both inside and outside of the show. No, I do not have any fucking change, and please take a bath already.

*NOTE: When I got home from tour, I posted some of this stuff on my blog and was surprised to discover almost a month later that some of the very same people I refereed to as being "weirdos" were not very happy with this characterization. I was bashed about a little on the Internet which made me feel sort of bad. When this happens (which it does once a year or so) I suddenly don't have the stomach for any of it. Believe it or not, I sometimes want to be thought of as a nice person, because that is basically what I am. I'm really (REALLY) not out to hurt people. As I read on and saw what it had turned into, I felt less bad. One poster commented that they were afraid that all they were doing was proving my point. And the point is? I don't know anymore.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Buzz and I got to tonight's venue early. With the help of these three young guys that worked for the club, the five of us unloaded the van in record time. We ended up hanging out with these three guys for a long time while we waited for everyone else to arrive in the other van. We had a really good time talking to them. I think all three of them were in their early to mid twenties, and all three of them were really cool. One of them ended up being the sound man and he was a bit of an SST records fan. Another one was sort of a death metal guitarist with an open mind. Talking to these guys was really nice and it sort of gave me hope for the young kids of the future. It was similar to that unbeatable feeling of turning someone on to some cool shit that they might have never heard of. They seemed pretty interested in what we had to say. We told stories about the eighties music scene that we fell in love with and how it had changed our lives. Buzz explained his guitar set up to the guys and what he used and he let the death metal guy play his guitar through his shit. It was cool. I know all of this might sound kind of stupid, but most of the interactions I have had on the road have been pretty predictable. This was just a nice change of pace. Plus, they brought us coffee. It's always the little things that stand out. Sorry, no stories here about doing blow off of a stripper's tits or whatever.

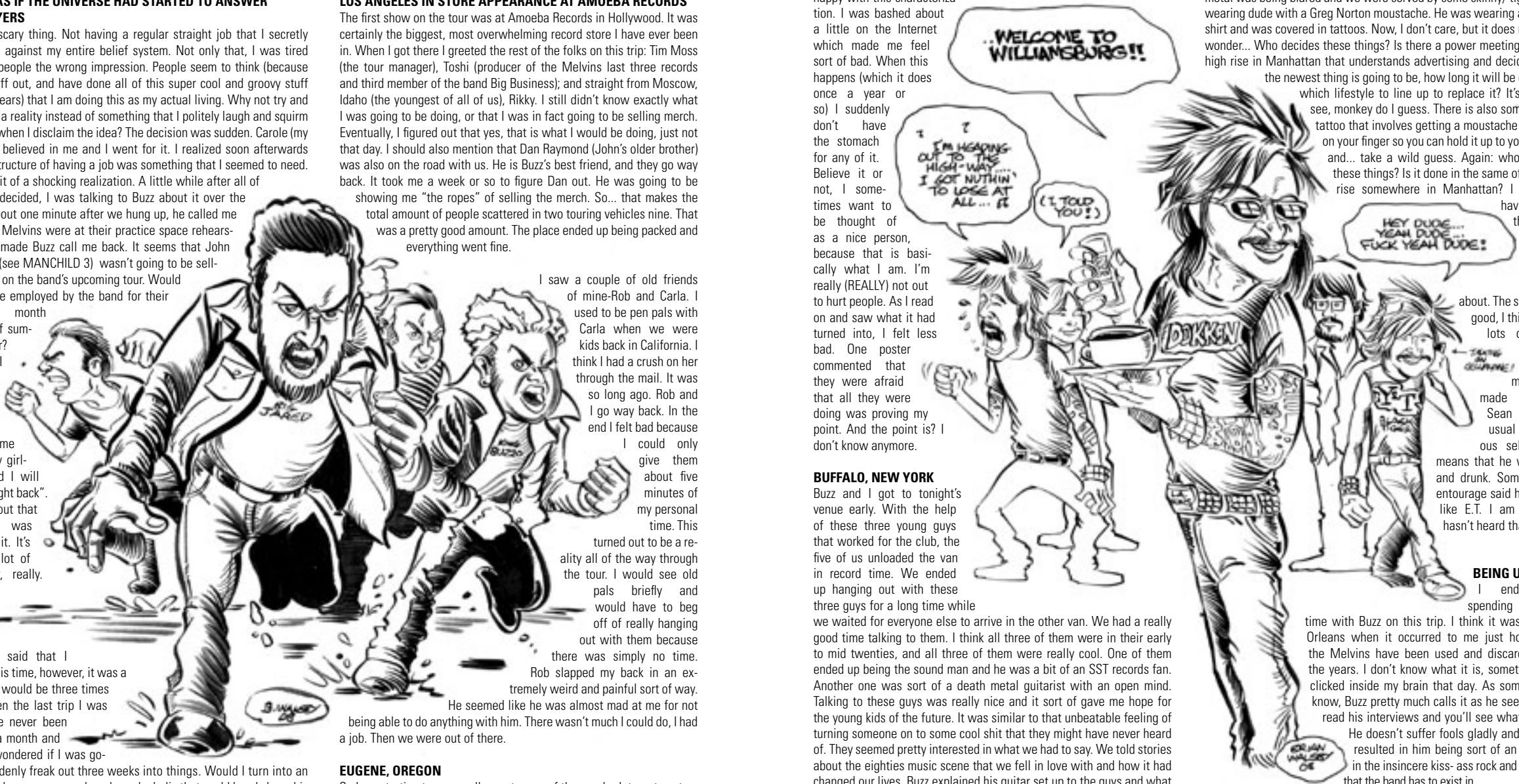
WILLIAMSBURG, BROOKLYN

Where are the god damned Sweathogs when you need 'em? I have heard funny stories about this place. You know: how it's a hipster infested zone or whatever. What does that even mean though? Better question: why should I care? I bet Vinnie, Epstein, Boom Boom and Horseshack would be pissed though. This place IS like... the epicenter of hipster cool. The Sweathogs would gladly kick all of these people's asses! Judging from the little time I had to walk around here, it means that every dude sports a moustache, wears tight clothing, has lots of tattoos, and has to wear an ironic "heavy metal" T-shirt that is three sizes too small. Sean Livingstone lives here and as I met him for coffee before the show, I was warned. We walked into a coffee shop and sure enough: lousy heavy metal was being blared and we were served by some skinny/ tight pants wearing dude with a Greg Norton moustache. He was wearing a Dokken shirt and was covered in tattoos. Now, I don't care, but it does make me wonder... Who decides these things? Is there a power meeting in some high rise in Manhattan that understands advertising and decides what the newest thing is going to be, how long it will be cool, and which lifestyle to line up to replace it? It's monkey see, monkey do I guess. There is also some sort of tattoo that involves getting a moustache tattooed on your finger so you can hold it up to your mouth and... take a wild guess. Again: who decides these things? Is it done in the same office high rise somewhere in Manhattan? I probably have better things to write and to complain about. The show was good, I think. 'Sold lots of stuff. 'Sold a lot of my home-made posters. Sean was his usual hilarious self which means that he was nice and drunk. Some of the entourage said he looked like E.T. I am sure he hasn't heard that one.

BEING USED

I ended up spending a lot of time with Buzz on this trip. I think it was in New Orleans when it occurred to me just how often the Melvins have been used and discarded over the years. I don't know what it is, something just clicked inside my brain that day. As some of you know, Buzz pretty much calls it as he sees it. Just read his interviews and you'll see what I mean. He doesn't suffer fools gladly and this has resulted in him being sort of an anomaly in the insincere kiss-ass rock and roll world that the band has to exist in.

It wouldn't be totally out of line for me to suggest that Buzz more or less gave Dave Grohl his entire career. Buzz called Dave up years ago and put him in touch with his friends Nirvana after they fired Chad Channing. You could say it. I could say it. I will. I said it... So everything that Mr. Foo Fighter has done could be traced back to that one phone call; his "big break", by all accounts. Dave Grohl seems like a totally cool dude.



CHIP ON MY SHOULDER.

WHEN I WAS A MUCH YOUNGER PERSON, I SEEMED TO PUT A LOT OF STOCK IN MY INVOLVEMENT IN THE LOCAL MUSIC SCENE. MAN, I WAS REALLY SUIVY.. I HELD THESE PETTY LITTLE GRUDGES AGAINST OTHER MORE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE AND NO MATTER IF THEY HAD GOOD LUCK OR (USUALLY) A STRONGER WORK ETHIC, I FOUGHT SOME QUIET BATTLE AGAINST THEM IN MY HEAD. SO NOW WHEN I LOOK BACK AT IT, I JUST HAVE TO LAUGH AT MYSELF. I REMEMBERED HOW I FELT ABOUT CORROSION OF CONFORMITY CHANGING, & HOW MAD I WAS.



1991 WAS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS. CHAPEL HILL HAD MUSICALLY EXPLODED AND ALL OF THE NEARBY TOWNS WERE ALSO SWALLOWED BY THE HYPE...

I DIDN'T LIKE ANY OF THOSE BANDS ANYWAY. NOT MY KIND OF MUSIC. SAID ENOUGH, RIGHT? BUT I SEEMED TO SEE THE IN FRUSTRATION WHEN MY OWN BAND SEEMED TO KIND OF FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS... AND WORSE OF ALL EVERYBODY IN THE CHAPEL HILL BANDS WERE ALL REALLY NICE PEOPLE!

I RESERVED SOME OF THIS CHIP ON ONE'S SHOULDER WRATH TOWARDS SUPERCHUNK... LOOKING BACK IT WAS JUST RIDICULOUS...



MY FEELINGS TOWARDS RYAN ADAMS WERE ALSO REALLY WEIRD. IT WAS HARD FOR ME TO GET OVER THE FACT THAT HE WAS THE MOST BIOTED PERSON I EVER PLAYED WITH, SO I RESSENTED HIM FOR LEAVING OUR BAND TO PLAY IN WHITESIDE TOWN. BY THE WAY I THINK THAT STUFF WAS A BUNCH OF BULLSHIT. I WAS AT WAR!

I CERTAINLY WASN'T THE ONLY OPINIONATED PERSON TO DO THIS STUFF. I REMEMBERED ALL OF THE TIMES I'D DRINK COFFEE WITH OTHER UNMINDED SEMI-BITTER GUDDIES AND DISCUSS THESE THINGS LIKE IT ACTUALLY MATTERED!

NOW I LOOK BACK AND WONDER JUST WHY I CARED SO MUCH ABOUT ALL OF THAT SHIT! IT FEELS SO LONG AGO AND I CERTAINLY DON'T THINK ABOUT SUPERCHUNK LIKE THESE DAYS. IT WAS PASTY DUMB. IF I LEARNED ANYTHING TO PASS ALONG, IT IS THIS: BE HAPPY DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING, AND DO NOT GET CAUGHT UP IN ANYTHING ELSE... YOU'LL BE ALL THE BETTER BECAUSE OF IT... TRUST ME!



RE-LIVE EIGHTIES HARD-CORE IN THE YEAR 2003!

WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN? RUPTURED COCKA MAMMIE RECORDS PROVES YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD TO "FUCK THE SYSTEM". WITH OUR NEW LINE OF REFORMED HARD-CORE GREATS, ONLY WITH NEWER NAMES AND AN OVERALL ATTEMPT TO APPEAL TO THE NEARLY FORTY YEAR OLDS WHO MADE UP THE "CORE" OF THEIR ORIGINAL FANBASE! IT MIGHT BE TWENTY YEARS LATER, BUT SOCIETY STILL STINKS!



700 SECONDS

"I STILL BELIEVE (KIND OF)" C.D.!

WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT HARD-CORE HEROES 7 SECONDS WOULD RE-FORM UNDER THE MONIKER 700 SECONDS? LEAD SINGER KEVIN MINUTES (NO LONGER SECONDS) STATES "WE'RE GETTING UP THERE IN AGE, AND IT NOW TAKES US 700 SECONDS TO DO WHAT WE USED TO DO IN 7 SECONDS." BUT DO THEY STILL HAVE IT?! ON SONGS LIKE "YOUNG TILL I GET OLD", "DEHARD ADULT", "SKINS BRAINS AND DENTURES", "COUGH TOGETHER, ROCK TOGETHER" AND "NOT JUST KIDS FUN" 700 SECONDS SHOWS US THAT WE ARE ALL STILL DOING IT "FOR THE KIDS"... KIND OF..



MIDDLE AGED THREAT

THE LEGENDARY WASHINGTON D.C. QUARTET FORMERLY KNOWN AS MINOR THREAT HAS REFORMED WITH A NEW TWIST! BAND LEADER IAN MACKAYE DECIDED THE ONLY WAY TO RE-FORM HONESTLY WOULD BE TO WRITE SONGS CONCERNING THE STRUGGLES OF MIDDLE AGED LIFE. "WE'RE STILL KIDS AT HEART, BUT WE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THAT BEING AN ADULT CERTAINLY FUCKING SUCKS AT TIMES, BUT YOU HAVE TO FACE UP TO IT." AND ON SONGS SUCH AS "PRUNE JUICE DAYS", "SMALL CAR, BIG PAYMENT", "SAAB STORY", "LOOK BACK AND COUGH", "GUILTY OF DRIVING A SUN" AND THE SOON TO BE CLASSIC "NOT YOUR STEPPING (GALL)STONE", MIDDLE AGED THREAT HAS IT!

OTHER NEW RELEASES:



ADULT BRIGADE
"WHAT DID THE REVOLUTION CHANGE?" DOUBLE C.D. THE STERN BROTHERS ARE BACK, AND BETTER THEN EVER!



POST-ADOLESCENTS
"I STILL HATE CHILDREN" C.D. TONY CADENA & RICK AGNEW, BOTH WITH CHILDREN, STILL PROVE TO THE WORLD THAT THEY DO INDEED STILL HATE CHILDREN. EXCEPT THEIR OWN, THAT IS...



YOUTH OF YESTERDAY
"THE SPIRIT IS STILL BORROWED" C.D. RAY GAFFO & CREW ARE BACK, WITH A NEW BATCH OF EVEN MORE UNORIGINAL SONGS!



SEMI-NEGATIVE APPROACH
ANGRY COOL DUDE JOHN BRANNON & COMPANY LASH OUT IN SEMI-ANGER ON THEIR NEW RELEASE! "I'M NOT QUITE AS PISSED OFF, BUT STILL A LITTLE..." BRANNON SAYS!

SARAH RYCZEK.

I HATED MY JOB. I QUIT AMICABLY BUT QUICKLY AND TOOK ANOTHER JOB. I TOLD THE NEW JOB THAT I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE DURING THE INTERVIEW AND THEY HIRED ME ANYWAY.



THIS WAS A SWANKY LAW FIRM WITH THE PSEUDO WE'RE CASUAL ENVIRONMENT WITH LOTS OF FANCY CRAP AROUND, FREE FOOD, ALL THAT SHIT THAT BIG COMPANIES TRY TO CON YOU WITH BECAUSE THEY WORK YOUR FINGERS TO THE BONE.



NOT THE JOB. I WORKED THERE FOR TWO DAYS. I GOT LAMBLISHED BY SOME IMBECILIC WAYS. I TOLD ME I WAS WORKING TOO SLOW. I HAD TO HAVE A SIT DOWN MEETING TO PROMISE THE BOSSSES I WOULD TRY AND LEARN FASTER, AS IF THAT WAS EVEN POSSIBLE.



I SAT IN ON A GROUP MEETING THE NEXT DAY. WHEN THEY INTRODUCED ME TO ANOTHER NEW HIRE, A WOMAN NAMED SARAH WHO DIDN'T KNOW SHIT EITHER, AND EVERYONE LAUGHED AT US.



THAT NIGHT I "WORKED" AFTER EVERYONE LEFT. I GOT ALL OF MY SHIT OUT OF THE OFFICE, WENT HOME, GOT DRUNK AND SENT THEM A "FUCK YOU" E-MAIL TO EVERYONE AT THE FIRM WHOSE E-MAIL I COULD REMEMBER AT TWELVE FIFTEEN IN THE MORNING.



THE FUNNY THING WAS THAT THE MANAGING PARTNER (WHO WAS LIKE A THOUSAND YEARS OLD) WAS STILL IN THE OFFICE WHEN I LEFT AND WHEN I WALKED BY HIS OFFICE HE WAS STANDING THERE ON THE PHONE WITH HIS PARTS OFF. HE WAS PROBABLY HAPPY THAT I DIDN'T COME BACK ALTHOUGH I DID MENTION IT IN MY E-MAIL.



LUCKILY, I WAS ABLE TO GET MY OLD JOB BACK WITHOUT TOO MUCH HAGGLE BUT THAT WAS SERIOUSLY THE WORST WEEK OF MY LIFE.

TONY CADENA.

I USED TO WORK IN A MEXICAN RESTAURANT IN AN ARMPIT OF THE WORLD CALLED GUENDORA. IT WAS OWNED BY A KOREAN IMMIGRANT & HIS HIGH SCHOOL DAUGHTER. SHE RAN THE SCHEDULING, SOMETIMES CAUSING FOR US WHEN WE WERE TOO HUNGRY TO WORK, AND HE RAN THE JOINT DAILY FROM NINE A.M. UNTIL ONE A.M.



THEY WERE MY NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS AND OFFERED ME THE JOB SINCE THEY KNEW THAT I WAS UNEMPLOYED.

ANYWAY, IT WAS FINALS WEEK, & I HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO WORK THE NIGHT BEFORE FINALS. THIS MEANT I HAD THREE FINALS IN ONE DAY. I HAD ASKED FOR THE WEEKEND OR GO I COULD STUDY BUT I WAS SCHEDULED TO WORK ANYWAYS. I CAME IN AND ASKED THE DAUGHTER TO RESCHEDULE AND I WOULD COME IN AFTER MY FINALS. IT WAS A DEAL, BUT IT WAS THE BEST COMPROMISE I COULD THINK OF.



I WAS CLAMORING, I WENT BACK & FORTH WITH HER ABOUT THE SCHEDULE & MY TESTS FOR A FEW DAYS, AND FINALLY SHE SAID:

"YOU'LL NEVER FINISH SCHOOL ANYWAYS, WHY DO YOU INSIST ON ARGUING ABOUT THREE TESTS THAT YOU ARE GOING TO FAIL?"



AND WITH THAT SHE CLOSED THE DOOR. I STOOD THERE DUMFOUNDED, & WALKED BACK TO MY HOUSE.

IT HIT THE WALL BEHIND ME AS I RAN OUT THE DOOR.



I WAS ONLY THERE TO PICK UP SOME MONEY FOR INCIDENTALS. AND THAT'S WHAT INSURED MY PAYING FOR GOING TO COLLEGE. IT WAS A FUCKED, HORRIBLE HIGH STRESS JOB BUT I NEEDED THE \$ 3.50 AN HOUR, SO I JUST DEALT WITH IT.



HIS DAUGHTER SAID: NO! YOU MUST WORK. I DON'T CARE ABOUT YOUR TESTS, I MADE A SCHEDULE AND YOU NEED TO FOLLOW IT!



I EXPLAINED AGAIN MY CRISIS BUT SHE SAID SHE WAS TOO BUSY WITH HER OWN SCHOOL WORK TO RESCHEDULE & THAT I NEEDED TO GO IN & STOP BEING SO LAZY.

NEEDED TO SAY, I DIDN'T SHOW UP BUT I DID STOP BY ON MY WAY HOME. THERE SHE WAS ALGEBRA BOOK OPENED ON THE COUNTER, BARKING ORDERS & BEING BITTER. I WALKED IN AND ORDERED A SODA.



BY THE WAY... I EVENTUALLY EARNED A MASTERS DEGREE.

