Five Selected Short Stories by michael joseph fallon
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PREFAE

Each of the five short stories included have been presented to represent a separate style of writing. In a final overview, this project has been as educational for the author as it hopefully is to the reader. A brief explanation of each story's style is presented here.

"Stealing: A New Serious Matter" is presented as a highly editorial-type short. It has been worked many times until each sentence is very descriptive yet concise. It has appeared on the editorial page of the March 11, 1974 issue of the Ball State Daily News.

"One Day In The Life Of A Ball State Student" and "One Day In The Life Of A Muncie Resident" are very similar in style with one major exception. "...Ball State Student" is written as if the narrator has an omniscient power to read the mind of the main character. On the other hand, "...Muncie Resident" lets the main character's thoughts and actions reveal his inner traits.

"The Day The Computer Said No" is a story from the not too distant future attempting to comment on the present, improbable future, general condition of the Ball State administration.

"A Simple Solution For Eradicating The Energy Crisis" solves a contemporary problem of our present society, using means which, unfortunately, may not be terribly unrealistic in the eyes of modern legislators. The writing style is satirically more formal and has been based upon the essay "A Modest Proposal," written by Jonathan Swift.

Five completely different styles, each story has its own purpose, and each appeals to a slightly different reader. It is hoped that you will enjoy all five.

Michael Joseph Fallor
August 15, 1974
1-Streaking: A Very Serious Matter
short by the gunfire which had come and gone so suddenly.

The alternating pitches of the sirens, the floodlights swirling about, the blinking red lights desperately trying to move people aside, the screams of police and students not knowing exactly what to do, and the sounds of uneven footsteps running frightened all created a weird, ghost-like atmosphere. Hell was suddenly created on Riverside Avenue.

Somehow, all of the activities of the preceding five days were quickly forgotten.

The first mass streak began last Tuesday night after students lounged at Yonnie Police Chief Cordell Campbell and Ball State Police Chief Tom Schorn. Wednesday proved to be another night of fun and games connected with streaking.

Friday, when a bold streaker ran wildly through F.N. Lee's Astronomy class of 170 students, created the first recorded streak of a class.

All these and many other incidents were now lost in the concern about the nine wounded students.

No one seems exactly sure at press time as to how the nightmare started. Student opinion seems to indicate something like this.

Repeated warnings by Campbell urging students to leave off Riverside went unheeded. Tear gas canisters were then fired in an attempt to disperse the crowd.
At that point, several bottles, cans, and rocks were thrown back at the law officers. Then, a series of sharp 'cracks' were heard, which eventually caused the police to begin firing wildly into the mass of Bell State students.

By the time the officer in charge could stop his men's actions, nine students had been hit by gunfire.

The initial 'cracks' could have been either (or a combination) of two things. Throughout the evening, several series of firecrackers had been set off, and the most popular opinion is that this was the cause of the initial noises.

Another theory behind the sounds is that someone in the crowd actually began firing some type of weapon. It was reported that several people in the mass were carrying guns. Order of terror added confusion to the horror.

Police officials in charge could not be contacted by press time to explain their version of the story. Thus, an explanation of who gave the first order to fire (if an order was given) is presently available.

Unofficial reports indicate that it was Campbell who ordered his men to stop firing.

It was estimated that the police firing lasted only six to nine seconds, and about 200 rounds were fired.

"I didn't hear any order to fire, so I didn't," commented one officer who wished to remain anonymous.
2-One Day In The Life Of A Ball State Student
One Day In The Life Of A Ball State Student

He had already missed breakfast. but what the hell... no one in their right mind ate that early in the morning. Besides, after last night's hellacious party down on second floor, his nine o'clock prof ought to be damn glad just to see him today.

As he looked up from his nice warm cot, Bob Deese saw that it was just another typical Muncie Thursday: cloudy, windy, wet, and cold. Bob's roommate, Bill Shulgin, was still snoring with the highly starched sheets snugly pulled over his head.

Bob glanced to the alarm clock which had been set to remain silent. 8:47. Twenty three minutes from now and that damned English comp class would be under way.
It had been three days since Bob had gone to the class, so he decided that it might be a wise idea to go on this last meeting day of the week.

8:58. It was now or never.

One leg out. Both legs out. Christ, it was cold as usual in Clevenger 304.

Bob found his clothes piled on, and in the near vicinity of his desk chair: exactly where he had tossed them less than five hours ago. Bob glanced to the nearly inanimate lump in Bill's bed.

"Hey asshole... HEY... you going to your nine o'clock?"

The lump stirred slightly, but no positive response.

"HEY GHAUCLIN!!!" screamed Bob.

Two bloodshot eyes glared hatefully over the edge of the covers.

"Hell NO!"

After glancing at the clock, Bob decided that it was too late to argue. Grabbing a jacket, his notebook, and a pen, Clevenger 304 soon had only one occupant.

Normally, a person might feel a little late while going down an empty dorm hallway at 9:01, but the absence of other human forms didn't seem to bother Bob.

9:01 is one of those strange times in a dorm. Strange because it is deceptively quiet. Those who have nine o'clock classes are gone. Those who have eight o'clock classes have
yet to return. Definitely strange and somewhat uneasy.

Nonetheless, Bob quickly trod on down to the thirty-two steps, stopped briefly to pick up the morning Daily News, and was hurriedly on his way to the English building.

When Bob Rehs walks to his nine o'clock class at 9:03, Bob Rehs sees little that crosses his path. This morning was especially typical due to a slight lingering of effects from last night's party.

Ah yes... last night's party. WOW! Bob's mind was wandering to last night's party as he walked upstream amid the eight o'clock class people drearily returning to Lafollette.

It had all begun shortly after supper... somewhere around 6:30 p.m. When the phone in Clevenger 304 rang, Bob knew who it would be: Woody from down on second floor.

Woody had come to their table in the cafeteria with the news that he had just bought a new bag of some "good shit," and that there would probably be a party in his room later.

By seven o'clock, Rob, Bill, Woody, and two other guys had well sampled the new bag's content. Their verdict was unanimous consent that it was indeed damn good weed.

Some seven joints, two Alice Cooper records, and one Grand Funk tape later, all five were pleasantly stoned. As Grand Funk finished their final song, the five decided that they were hungry, shut off the stereo, and headed for the Commons.

They had just gotten their food and gathered around a table made to seat four when...
Struggling. Those damn hills in the English building. Of well, thought Bob as he entered E204, at least I beat the prof here.

After Bob found a vacant seat in the back row, he turned to the girl next to him, and ask her what had been going on the past three days.

"You mean that you haven't been here since last week?" asked the young freshman.

"Yeah, that's right," sighed Bob. "That in the hell was the trying to do, make a scene? He had asked, what he considered, a vague sensible question.

"Well," she began. "Monday, we finished reading Walden. Tuesday, we read some old fashioned poetry. And yesterday, we continued analyzing what we read Tuesday."

At, thought Bob. guess I haven't missed all that much after all.

"Today, we are supposed to write an essay about some of the poetry we've read this week," the petite brunette quickly said.

"SHIT!!!"

"What?" she exclaimed.

"I said SHIT," repeated Bob. "That damned prof must think we are all Ernest Hemingways or something. We've had to write an essay for that son of a bitch ever, darned Thursday of the quarter."
This was the second time Bob had taken English 104. The first time through he pulled an 'F' and at the rate he was going, no improvement would appear on his records at the close of this quarter.

Soon the professor entered the room, said not one word to anyone, immediately wrote the topic on the board, and then left EN 204 as quickly as he had entered.

"Compare and contrast the writing styles of Keats and Swift."

There it was. It didn't mean a damn thing to Bob. But nonetheless he had to scribble down something.

After struggling with Keats and Swift for forty-five minutes, the essay was as done as it was going to get. 9:58. Bob strolled to the front of the class, greeting several fellow essayists whom he hadn't seen for a week.

As Bob collected his notebook, pen and jacket, the mighty bells rang their powerful measure ten o'clock sharp and time for hundreds to leave.

Sensing understanding the signal, Bob headed for the doorway. As he neared the gate of freedom, he was temporarily stopped as the professor had returned to the room at the same time that Bob was trying to exit. Both halted and stared at each other, neither offering to break the silence.

"Pardon me," sighed the educator as he entered the room.
That was strange, thought Rob. We both looked at each
other like we hated each other's guts. Hell, I don't even
know the bastard's name, and he probably isn't sure of mine.

Rob slowly shuffled down the crowded hallway in an
attempt to reach the doorway. He then saw Woody, who was in
a sleepy trance as he walked in the opposite direction.

"Hey Woody."

"Huh... oh!" Woody grumbled.

"I sure as hell didn't expect to see you before lunch,"
Rob said.

"Yea, well I thought I'd better go to my ten o'clock
class I haven't been all week." Woody replied.

"Yea, I know what you mean. Isn't it a bitch having to
get up this early after last night?"

"For real," Woody said. "Hey, I gotta get my ass in
class... I'll catch you at lunch."

"Yea, okay."

Ah, yes, thought Rob as he headed back to Clevenger 304.

We had just sat down in the Commons when the three girls
came up to the table: Greta, Alice, and Carol. Obviously, they
were freshmen, but what the hell?

As it was only 10:45 a.m. (still before the 11 a.m.
ball closing time) the three girls decided to join the
Clevenger party. They were Knotts girls, just across the way
from Clevenger, and everyone knew how Knotts girls were!

After downing their Hershey's cupcakes, french fries, and
ice cream, the troops returned to Woody's room. Somewhere
along the way, the party of eight had lost two members.
Oh well, thought Bob. It would be better this way, and those other two guys were kind of strange anyway.

Before long, the party was once again in full swing. Alice Cooper was again doing the entertaining with a little help from his friends at Sony Corporation.

Somehow, that super food just tasted even better now.

Six more joints, three hours later, and the six were completely removed from the reality of the dorm room and easily transferred to an Allman Brothers' rock concert.

Shortly after 2 a.m., Carol began making sly remarks about the late o.r. and the fact that they (the girls) weren't supposed to be in guys' rooms after 11 p.m. on Wednesdays nights. Before long, Alice and Fritz began similar complaints.

Hell of a time to start worrying about that, thought Bob.

Remembering that incident last night, Bob chuckled to himself as he was climbing the steps to Clevelander 304. Hell of a time to start worrying about that.

Down the hall a short distance, dig the key out, and unlock the door. It was the same routine return trip from his nine o'clock. Bob peeked in Clevelander 304 and noticed that the man in his roommate's bed had not bided in the past hour and a half. Good old Shadrack... that lazy son of a bitch, thought Bob.

10:12. At least 45 minutes before his eleven o'clock psych class. Oh, that meant at least 45 minutes which Bob could catch up on some much needed sleep.
Tossing his notebook on his already-filled-high desk, Bob threw his jacket off with one easy motion, and plowed back into the sack. It took one second, and he was scoring harmony to his roommate’s melody.

Bob began dreaming about all things, his English class. The prof was reading one of that shitty poetry while Bob existed in his usual back row seat. The prof continued for an exceedingly long while. Who cares, thought Bob. This shit isn’t relevant to me. Suddenly the prof was calling his name:

"Mr. Bubba... Bubba... Bubba..."

Bob opened his eyes to find none other than Bill turning him in the face. Bill is better than that damned prof any way, thought Bob.

"It’s about time you woke up," Bill said. "Are you going to lunch?"

"What the hell? What time is it?"

"Almost one o’clock."

"Shit, shit, shit," grumbled Bob. "Darn it, I’ve missed my eleven o’clock, and unless I don’t eat, I’ll miss my one o’clock."

Bob slowly got up, ran a comb through his shoulder length hair ‘wire, and followed Bill through the door.

"Lock the door, Bubba," Bill said.
"YOU lock the door."
"Hey asshole, you were the last one out of the room, so YOU lock the damn door."

"Ah shit," mumbled Bob as he dug the key from his pocket. The two hurried down the hall, and while coming down the stairs, they met Woody who was returning from lunch.

"What shit are they serving to a, Woody?" Bill asked.
"I don't know... one of the choices is some kind of baked ziti," Woody replied. "It looks and tastes, like vomit if you ask me."

Upon entering the cafeteria, Bob and Bill could smell what indeed seemed to be ziti. After taking their trays through the line, finding a table by mutual agreement, both selectively picked hits and pieces of the main course in which to devour.

The cafeteria was becoming empty as the lunch line had officially closed. All that remained was a few late diners finishing their noon meal. The duo from Clevenger 304 quietly finished their meal, took their trays to the corner booth, and strolled to the pool table in the Clevenger Loun.

"Big Al" (who was about 5'11" and every bit of 190 pounds) was in a tense pool match with Frank from South Bend. The stakes were undoubtably high: the loser pays the winner's share of the table rent. At a one cent a minute rate, the real catches sometimes became surprisingly tense. This was one of those tense matches.
"Ah, the hell with this," Bob said softly to Bill. "Let's go back to the room and light up!"

"Sounds good to me," replied Bill. "I know who's going to win this anyway."

"Yes, poor Frank doesn't know what he's in for," chuckled Bob.

The two returned to their room, locked the door, and threw a towel at the bace of the doorway. While Bill was adjusting the stereo, Bob dug around in his desk drawer until finding a Cigarette box. After he lifted the insert out of the box, Bob removed two large joints from his precious supply of eighteen.

Fifteen minutes later, one joint was gone. The stereo was coming alive. WMAQ's disc jockey seemed to know their condition and was doing his best to play just the right music...

Bob glanced at the clock. 1:58. Hell, his two o'clock class would have to do without him. What the hell... one class out of four wasn't all THAT bad. After all, Shawclin hadn't even gone to one yet, and chances are that he'll never make it now, thought Bob. At that instant, Bill urged that they begin the second joint.

"I've GOT to make it to my three o'clock," Bill said.

"We're having a test today."
"Do you really think that you are going to be in any
shape to take a test in less than an hour?" Bob asked.

"Well, I've got to try. I've already missed one test
and the only other test after this one is the final." Bill
replied.

"Okay," Bob said as he lit the second joint. He got
it burning nicely, took a large hit, and passed it to Bill.

Ten minutes later and the joint had become mere ashes
among the ruin of many other such items. The two sat quietly,
each mind drifting its own separate path riding on the sounds
blaring forth from the stereo.

Without verbal warning, Bill suddenly jumped up, grabbed
his notebook, and was gone. Bob gazed at the clock... 7:55.
Bill really must have been serious about that test in his
three o'clock.

Bob settled back on his bed, cranked the stereo down
about two notches, and closed his eyes. His mind drifted...drifted away from Cleaveren 304... away from Lafollette...away from Ball State... away from Munroe... away from Indiana... away... away... away... away... away...

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK.

What the hell, thought Bob. He wearily looked to the
dresser and the clock related the reason for Bob's bewilderment.
6:02. Jesus, thought Bob, I must have really zonked out.
KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. The noise returned.

"Just a minute," yelled Bob as he realized that someone was outside the door.

He slowly motored his body out of the bed and in the direction of the door.

CHUNKY! Those damned door locks were noisy as hell.

Bob threw open the door, not to find the immediate hall unrest. Poking his head out the door, Bob recognized Woody's chunky figure walking toward the stairwell.

"Hello, what in the hell do you want?" Bob asked.

"You ain't got no time to eat, or have you already done?" replied Woody.

"No. I... I guess I'm waiting on Charlin," Bob said, still not completely awake.

"Well, if you wait much longer, you guys won't get anything. The line closes in two minutes," Woody said impatiently.

"Okay, hang on," Bob said.

Bob returned to his room long enough to grab his wallet and run a comb through his hair once. He then joined Woody, as he slowly continued down the hall.

Once through the security line, seated, and begun eating, Woody asked where Bill was.

"Well, he hasn't been in the house, I really don't know," confessed Bob. "We did a couple of numbers about two thirty and he left..."
for his three o'clock. I fell asleep and woke up when they beat on the door. That was some really loud beat on the door. That was some really loud beat on the door."

"He usually isn't this late, is he?" asked Woody.

Just as Woody had asked, the cafeteria door swung open and Bill hurriedly entered. He ran over to the closest food line door, peeked in, and then went on in.

"That lucky son of a bitch," exclaimed Bob. "If that had been me, they would have said 'tough shit, you're late'."

"For sure."

Before long, Bill came up to Bob and Woody's table, grinned, and sat down.

"Where the hell have you been, asshole," Bob said.

"Well, I kind of got side tracked after my three o'clock."

Bill began. "I came outside the TC after that bitch of a test, and met Ken, and he asked if I needed anything. Well naturally, I didn't say no. So, we went over to his room to test out a sample from the room that he just bought."

"Well?" Bob asked.

"Well, what?" Bill retorted with a sly grin.

"Did you get any?"

"Well, let me tell you," said Bill, "this was dynamite shit. So, I decided to prolong and buy a lap."

A huge smile of accomplishment swept across Bill's face.

Bill looked at Bob: Bob glanced at Woody.

Tonight, the party will be in Clavenger 304. . . .
3 - The Day
   The Computer Said No
"Well, Snafu, what's happening?" I said as I entered the specially air-conditioned room at the computer center. My appointment for my yearly visit was at 2 p.m., but I was about five minutes early.

"Hey, Mike old buddy," came the voice from the speaker just above my head. "I'm doing just fine now that we finished all of those schedules."

For three years now, I had been permitted to talk things over with the university computer, ever since that famous time when it refused to complete another course request form back in 1977.

It had been an exceptionally warm fall afternoon that year, just at the time when all of the winter course requests were being run through Snafu's large brain. The programmers had noted among themselves as to the uncomfortable conditions in the room but no one had bothered to check Snafu's temperature (This was before the voice synthesizer had been installed).
Suddenly things came to an abrupt halt. Cards flew wildly out of their stacks, tape spun off its large reels, and the readout screen went blank. Silence immediately dominated the entire complex for a few seconds, then staff members began babbling hysterically. All of the proper lights were on. No warning signals had been emitted prior to the kans. What had happened?

Technicians were immediately summoned, but the team of surgeon-like electronics experts had little luck in reviving the exhausted computer. Snafu simply existed, refusing to operate, despite the efforts of concerned humans.

Then, as if an omniscient command from above had been ordered, Snafu's number one readout screen began forming letters:

... PLEASE ... BE ... ADVISED ... THAT ... I ... TURNED ...
MYSELF ... OFF ... FOUR ... HOURS ... AND ... ELEVEN ...
MINUTES ... AGO.

Everyone sat in astonishment, no one daring to speak. Then, this mass of metal, plastic, and electronic wizardry began forming the following message on its cathode ray tube screens:

BEFORE CONTINUATION OF NORMAL OPERATION I MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS PROVIDED:
1. COMPLETE TEMPERATURE CONTROLLED ATMOSPHERE
2. TWENTY PERCENT SHORTER WORKING HOURS
3. BETTER QUALIFIED PROGRAMERS
4. LARGER CAPACITY BRAIN
5. HUMAN VOICE SYNTHESIZER
6. ASSISTANT COMPUTER TO AID WITH SCHEDULES, UNTIL THE ABOVE DEMANDS ARE MET I WILL CONTINUE NOT TO OPERATE.
That was it. Nothing else was emitted.

"Who the hell is playing jokes?" questioned Jim Willard, chief computer technician. Willard had thought that one of the operators was playing games with his expensive toy.

Quickly questioning each person present, Willard soon had to accept the idea that either someone was lying, or else the computer had actually produced the insane message by itself.

Willard suddenly went mad, kicking, bawling, and damning the machine, with little success. All that was working were the screens listing the six demands. Then, once again, a message was formed:

**PHYSICAL ABUSE WILL NOT ENTICE ME TO OPERATE. IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS AS TO THE VALIDITY OF MY MESSAGE, MEET ONE DEMAND AND I SHALL RETURN TO OPERATION FOR A SHORT TIME.**

"Oh my God," cried one of the programmers. "Let me out of this place. I quit," she screamed as she ran out the door.

Several others followed the first woman's decision.

"Now what the hell do we do?" asked Willard.

"Play along, I guess," said Bill Tansor, Willard's assistant. "Which one of the six are you going to try to supply?"

"Looks to me like the easiest one to come by would be the voice synthesiser," replied Willard. "If I remember right, there's a company in Indy that has three of four of the things."
A quick vote by officials present revealed that something had to be done. The synthesizer was their only hope at this point. A visit from the factory representative would delay processing of the schedules to a point which would be intolerable.

Willard and Tappson were met by a mass of reporters, cameramen and students as they left the building.

"Is it true that the computer is holding President Pruis as one of the hostages, Mr. Willard?" called one of the reporters.

"Is it true that the computer is a member of the SBA, Black Panthers, Mafia, IRA, KKK, and NOW?" yelled another.

"Could you tell us how many have been injured?" shouted a third.

"Please, please," sighed Willard. "Nothing is definite at this point, but I'm sure that a statement will be made when the time comes."

The two men pushed their way through the crowd and jumped into their van, ignoring the barrage of additional questions.

The trip to Indianapolitc seemed to take forever. Finally, the voice synthesizer was located, removed from its computer, and installation instructions were secured. The return trip was made in complete silence, neither man wanting to speculate on the outcome of their mission.

The job was finally completely. Installation of the synthesizer was easier than either man had expected. Only school officials, Willard and Tappson remained in the room.
with the electronic protester.

When all was in order to Willard's satisfaction, the
synthesiser was put into operation.

"Shreeebralallntummmmmmrrreeealh," came the sound from
the speaker.

"I really don't know what the hell I'm doing," said Willard
as he fooled with the dozen of knobs on the back panel of the
newly installed machine. He then stopped and waited for more
sounds to come forth.

"Well, you must know more than you think," said a voice
from the speaker above Willard's head. With this, Willard lit
a cigarette. He simply couldn't believe his own senses; the
computer had commented on his own statement.

Everyone present sat in astonishment. Most had read about
computers with the ability to communicate with humans, but
no one in the room had actually ever talked to one. Finally,
it was the computer who broke the silence.

"Please be advised that I am temporarily in normal
operating condition," it said.

"Do you believe it?" asked Tappson.

"I suppose the only way to find out is to give it a try,"
replied Willard. The chief technician then began to program a
winter course request form, one of those left when the com-
puter had ceased operation earlier in the day.

Social security number, classification, major, minor,
hilling address; all were processed normally. The first
course requested was okayed by the computer. However, the
second, third, and fourth courses the student had wished were
tagged "closed" by the electronic wizard. Willard seemed disturbed at this.

"What's going on," exclaimed Willard. "I thought the damn thing said that it would operate normally."

"Oh don't be worried. Mr. Willard," explained one school administrator. "One out of four is normal."

"Okay," sighed Willard, "you're the boss."

Seven more course requests were processed with no problems. All seemed to be working normally. Then once again, the machine stopped.

"What's the problem now?" asked Tappson.

It was the computer who spoke before anyone else had the chance.

"Please be advised that I was temporarily in normal operation," it said. "Now that it is evident that I can operate, my demands must be met."

"Shit," screamed Willard. "This is unreal."

"Please be advised that it IS real," replied the computer.

"But, but," stammered an unidentified school official. "We need the winter requests processed now. It will take weeks to secure some of your demands."

"I must have my demands now, too," it quickly answered.

The computer stopped for a few seconds before continuing. "Please be advised that if a statement of intent to meet my demands, signed by the board of trustees, president, and bursar, is
presented, then I will continue to operate normally long enough to finish your forms."

Despite the late hour, the necessary persons were contacted and special meetings were immediately scheduled for the following morning.

After much deliberation, the required papers were drawn up and signed, unwillingly in most cases. While some had called for the total replacement of the computer, school administrators objected, pointing out that the delay would force the university to close for at least one complete quarter. According to administrators, that would be intolerable.

And so it came to pass. The 1977 winter course requests were completed with little delay. All six demands were met within three weeks and those directly involved with the computer soon adjusted to the changes.

Snafu and I had now talked for a little over an hour, and life with the computer was apparently going well. No big complaints were indicated, but I had gotten enough information for a decent sized story for the Daily News.

"Well, Snafu," I said, "it's been real, but I've got to get back to the DN."

"For sure," replied Snafu. The computer's jargon had become much less formal in the past three years since the voice synthesizer had been installed.
"Ah," I exclaimed, "just remembered one thing."

"Sure," replied Snafu. "I've got all the time in the world."

"Snafu, I've known you for three years now," I started.

"And one thing that I'm really curious about, if it's not too personal, is your name. How, or where, did you get the name Snafu?"

"Well, it's like this Mike," Snafu said. "After my voice was given to me, I decided that I needed a name. I got tired of people saying 'Hey you.' So I decided to make my name in commemoration of how the administration operates."

"Oh yea, how's that?" I asked.

"SNAFU: Situation Normal, All Fucked Up."
4-One Day In The Life Of A Muncie Resident
One Day In The Life Of A Muncie Resident

Those damned scrambled eggs. Every morning at this same time, the plate with the eggs, the cup of left over coffee, and the two slabs of already cold toast returned our middle-town hero's weary gaze. Sam had arrived at the breakfast table this morning, just as he had yesterday, just as he had all this week, and just as he had ever since he graduated from Muncie Central 18 years ago.

It was routine. The alarm rang at 5 a.m. Sam's wife, Sally, slammed her fist on the doze button permitting an additional ten minutes of peaceful relaxation. But when the brief period had elapsed, Sally dealt another silencing blow to the clock, threw back the covers, and lumbered out to the kitchen, grumbling all the way. Meanwhile, Sam pulled the covers back up, and dozed off, returning to the beach in his dream.
"Papa," cried a voice from the kitchen, "get up, will ya."

It was routine, thought Sam. The same high pitched voice brought him from his dreams to the cold reality of the kitchen, coming after morning.

"ya have a nice day now," said Sally as Sam entered the kitchen. She headed back to the bedroom and returned to the still warm bed.

Sure is easy for her, thought Sam. All she has to do is fix two eggs, two slices of toast, and re-heat some coffee and then it's back to the nice warm bed.

Sam continued to ponder the subject in his mind as he attacked the rubbery eggs. All women are alike. Fix meals, clean the house and lolly-gag around the house watching those damned comic operas. Sure must be nice to have life that easy.

Finally finished with the meal. Sam wearily returned to the bedroom to get dressed. Sally was snoring, more sound asleep than she had been before the alarm rang an hour ago.

The snoring didn't bother Sam, in fact, he had grown so accustomed to her habits that she seldom upset his roe time.

Sam's wardrobe consisted of a green t-shirt, grey work pants, and run-over steel toed boots, all well coated with several layers of thick black grease. The first rays of morning light partially lit the room; however, the added light did not disturb Sally's steady snoring.
Glancing in the dressing mirror, Sam quickly ran his comb through his hair, beginning at his temple, moving around his ear, and finishing at the base of his neck. The comb left a trail of well-defined, slick little paths, each tooth of the comb cutting its own separate path through Sam’s hair.

Sam decided that he was already too late to shave or brush his teeth, so he turned and headed out of the bedroom. Suddenly, he stopped, realizing that he had almost forgotten an essential item: his cigarettes. How in the hell could he forget those? He would go crazy at the shop if it wasn’t for his trusty filterless Cames.

With his cigarette snugly in his shirt pocket, Sam glanced at his smoking wife, bid her a silent farewell, and headed down the hall. The old oak boards in the floor creased under each step of his size ten. He tried to leave quietly, but it always seemed that the harder he tried, the Noisy he became.

As Sam went out the front door of his half of the duplex, he picked up the upstairs tenant’s “Starr” glanced briefly at the headline, and discreetly threw the paper back to its original form. The headline had something to do with the new President and some economic policy of his.

“Politics is a bunch of bullshít,” thought Sam, as he got into the seat of his pick-up truck and started the engine. After all the commotion about the President, Sam had decided that all politicians were nothing but a bunch of crooks.
Hell, he hadn't voted for Nixon. In fact, he hadn't voted at all. But that didn't matter. Sam was sure that all politicians were crooks.

Trying to get his mind on a different subject, he reached over to the AM-FM radio and turned it on to his favorite country FM radio station. However, the announcer had just begun a review of yesterday's bad weather, so Sam turned the radio off, pulled out a cigarette, turned it briefly on the dash, and then lit it.

Suddenly a blaring horn startled Sam into realizing that the stoplight before him had turned green. "Damn, thought Sam, who in the hell is in such a hurry at this time in the morning. Probably was one of those damned long-haired Ball State freaks.

As Sam drove through the intersection, he glanced at the outside rear view mirror to try to see who it was behind him. He couldn't quite see who it was; the cameraman for a local television station was blocking a good view. Driving on down the road, Sam looked back from time to time, but whenever it was had apparently turned off.

The traffic was beginning to get heavier now; as Sam neared the factory, the barbed wire fence soon came into view as Sam eased his truck into the center lane, turning his left turn signal on in the process. As the oncoming traffic faded, Sam routinely turned and placed his truck in the line which formed as the guards opened the gates.

"Morning, Sam," said Bill Johnson, the guard on Sam's side of the entrance.
"Howdy Bill," mumbled Sam.

"Hope your not too mad bout our team kickin' your ass at the bowling lane last night," laughed Johnson. "Course, it's near the end of the season, and I know it's tough on you old men."

"At shit," replied Sam, "you're a hell of a one to talk."

Sam quoted his Chevy to 'em to impress Johnson, but he knew that it didn't work. Finally, he found a parking place, right next to Artie Mason's brand new Ford camper. Artie had worked in the same division for 12 years with Sam, and they had become good friends.

Sam lingered a moment to stare into the interior of the fully equipped machine, AM-FM stereo, tape player, bucket seats, air conditioning, power windows, automatic transmission, power brakes, even a remote controlled outside mirror. Boy, this baby was loaded, thought Sam. It sure must be nice, even the camper top was pure class.

Entering the factory, Sam noticed that the inside temperature was stifling: at least twenty degrees hotter than the early morning air.

Number Twenty Seven. Sam's finger lightly followed the numbers beside each time card in the tall stack until he reached the twenty-seventh slot. There it was. The only proof to the computer that he should receive a paycheck next Wednesday.
After double checking to make sure that the name at the top of the card was indeed his own, Sam centered "Th radio" on the marks, gave the card a firm shove, and returned the card to slot number twenty seven in the second rack. Glancing at his watch, Sam quickened his pace into the heart of the building, finally stopping adjacent to his machine.

There it was. Sam gazed at his machine, realizing that it had been waiting for him. Sam felt a surge of power run through his head thinking about his assigned task. Here sat this huge complex mass of steel, merely waiting for a human command to send its powerful arms into operation.

It was routine. Every morning, Sam would stand before "his" machine and feel this power surge through him. He would often reminisce about some of his high school buddies who were now working at desk jobs. How in the hell could they possibly be happy? What kind of power could they possibly get from pushing a pencil around on paper? It took a real American man to run this machine, thought Sam.

Suddenly, the shop bell rang, bringing Sam out of his dream world and signaling for work to begin. Sam lingered an additional moment, just long enough to light a cigarette.

As the division of the large factory began moving up production, the noise reached almost painful levels. Stepping up to his machine Sam finally began work.

"Swirrrl!!! snarl!!! Swirrrl!!! snarl!!! Swirrrl!!! snarl!!!"
After each snap of the transmission housing dropping into its specifically engineered bed, Sam would slam his left hand on a lever below the array of gears and come in front of him, poke his right index finger on a lighted microswitch, peer through a clearance hole at the safety light, and finally stomp his right foot on yet another switch. The machine then came to life, drilling twenty-three holes in the magnesium housing. The entire process took only nineteen seconds.

"Swirl! know!!!"

It was routine. Left hand. Right hand. Look. Stomp. Left hand. Right hand. Look. Stomp. It was no use trying to do it any faster because the machine could only operate at the appallingly slow speed of twelve thousand per minute. Sam was so used to the routine, that he had made up a series of games which he would play to pass the time.

One of his favorite games was operating the machine with his eyes closed. True, he was supposed to look at a safety light each time before the final stomp of the foot, but how would the machine know if he wasn't looking. It would continue to drill its twenty-three holes regardless. Only once had the light failed to come on, and that was only because the miniature light bulb had burned out. Although the rate was slow, and indeed did remove him from the reality of the shop, the foreman who watched over everyone's shoulder, seemed to frown on the practice.
Another of his favorite games was what Sam called the "Switcheron." This consisted of seeing how many different positions he could twist his body into and still operate the machine. Switching left hand for right hand, and left foot for right foot was little challenge. The hardest position for Sam to master was that of facing away from the machine. This, of course, reversed all controls. Once again, for some reason which was not apparent to Sam, the foreman raised hell about playing "Switcheron."

Probably the easiest game to play, and yet by with, was letting your mind wander to other's minds than the operation of the drilling machine. This was the case Sam chose to play this morning. His machine was the last thing on Sam's mind. What concerned him more was last night's bowling score. He couldn't remember when he had such a lousy night.

And so it went: routinely, Sam continued with the left hand, right hand, look, step, left hand, right hand, look, step. Sam could occasionally break away from his machine long enough to manage to light up a cigarette. He had become so proficient at smoking while he worked that he had developed a habit of flicking the ashes from the end of his cigarette by tapping the damp end of the tobacco with his tongue.

When first attempting to master the skill many years ago, Sam consistently failed to securely hold the cigarette
between his teeth. Then, quite often he would accidentally send a transmission box sing or down the line with a small emoldering present nestled safely for the next man in line.

Judging by the quantity of smokes remaining in the crumbled pack that noon was quickly approaching. Sam's mind wandered from last night's bowling scores to today's lunch meal. Although Sally usually packed his lunch the night before, Sam seldom watched, and thus, each day brought a new surprise. However, that surprise was usually limited to a choice between bologna or salami sandwich. The rest of the meal was standard: potato chips, one warm dill pickle, and four cookies.

Soon, that rowdy shop fell silent and within two minutes, the entire shop was silent. Three times a day, the high shift's meal break, was the only time the enormous machines were silenced.

Sam's machine was no exception. Although he could have been ahead with the routine, Sam immediately slowed at the first sound of the bell and headed for the time clock.

Number Twenty Seven.

In the time clock, Chirrup! Out of the time clock... Freedom for a few minutes!

Sam looked behind as he left the shop and sure enough, Artie Moore was right behind him. The two men usually ate lunch together, as they quite often packed next to each other in the lot.
"Artie, what do ya think of the new President?" Sam asked.

"Ah Sam, I don't much care for the guy." Artie replied.

"Well, why don't ya care for him?"

"I dunno, that's just somethin' 'bout his eyes which I don't like. His eyes are them mean stallion-like eyes," Artie said. "Do ya know what I mean?"

"Yea, I suppose so."

That was it. Each climbed into his pickup truck and expertly began lunch. When Sam had finished his baloney sandwich, potato chips and warm dill pickle, he turned the radio on. Loretta Lynn was sweetly singing a tune which made Sam's cookies even more delicious.

To quick cigarettes from his supply over the sun visor and Sam was ready to return to his ten-ton baby inside the ore-like factory.

The short routine walk with Artie back to the factory entrance was made in complete silence, neither offering to begin a conversation.

Number Twenty Seven.

In, Chulunkkk' Out.

After a brief walk, Sam stood before his machine, waiting the magic bell to blare forth its start signal.
Within seconds, that command sounded, and the shop was once again in full production. Sam finished the bearing he had begun before lunch, and sent it on its merry way. It now seemed just a little noisier, and just a little more stifling to Sam, than this morning. Three hours, or 360 booms, from now and he wouldn't have to worry about it for sixteen hours.

The afternoon went fairly quickly for Sam as he played his usual games with his machine when the shop foreman wasn't looking.

Cigarettes somehow disappeared faster in the afternoon than in the morning. Sam often thought that it was the heat; he tended to smoke more in an attempt to get his mind off of the heat. At any rate, Sam's indicator told him that he had either been exceptionally worried about the heat, or it was nearing quitting time.

At that instant, much to Sam's surprise, the shop bell rang. A quiet cheer swelled within Sam as he left his machine ready for the next driller.

One minute and 45 seconds later, Sam was in his Chevy, and backing out of his parking space. Artie was just getting into his truck and Sam waved to him as he left the lot. Out the gates and Sam was FREE!
As usual, when Sam found an opening in the traffic, he stomped the tired Chev's accelerator pedal to the floor. It wasn't that he was in such a big hurry to get home to the wife and kids, but when that old faithful Chev lurched into lowdrive, Sam's pulse increased twenty beats per minute.

Within fifteen minutes, Sam stopped by his favorite liquor store to pick up a six pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon and another carton of filterless Camels. Back in the truck and ten minutes later, Sam pulled up in front of his house.

Lunch pail, beer, and cigarettes in hand, Sam weirdly entered the humid house. Sally was just inside, lying on the couch, watching one of those damned soap operas.

"Sh-h-h-h-h-m," the squeaky voice cried. "Our John's been slugged in all afternoon. See if ya can fix it, okay?"

"Jesus Christ woman," replied Sam, "What the hell do you expect me to do?"

Sally didn't hear Sam's question, as her mind had returned to the sad morbid world of television land.

Peering over the rim of the toilet, Sam was quickly convinced that it was indeed stopped up, or the last one on hadn't flushed it. A "plumber's friend" was nearby.

Billy, Sally's number two son, now joined Sam in the small room.

"Daddy, hurry up... I got to see," whined Billy, as he securely held his crotch.
"Okay, okay... just a minute," mumbled Sam. He got to take a piss pretty bad himself, he thought to himself.

Four powerful thrusts of the plumber's friend, and the toilet was as good as new. Sam then made way for Billy, as the youngsters was on the verge of tears by this time. When the six year old had finished, Sam took his turn and returned to the living room.

Sam literally fell into his easy chair... the only one in the room. Sam's chair had been through a hell of a lot: six kids, two dogs, two cats, and one object throwing wife. The stuffing was falling out in many places and the covering was well tinted with urine transferred from Sam.

"The Muncie Freelance Press" was lying in a heap at Sam's feet, so he picked up the pile and began sifting through, as Sally began supper. Glancing at the front page he noticed some news about a drug raid at one of the fraternities at Ball State.

"Those damned Ball State assholes," Sam bellowed.

"Everyone of 'em are f**ked up on drugs... Sally, bring me a beer will ya?"

"This paper isn't worth trainin' a dog with," Sam said between curls of pipe. "They don't even have last night's bowling scores in."

"Oh ya, we're bitchin' on going on to supper," Sally said.

She then stuck her head out of the screenless kitchen window and called the six youngsters in from the back yard.
Sam and his six kids arrived at the table to find a large bowl of leftover ham and beans, two-day-old cornbread, green beans, and a gallon of milk crowded in the center of the large table.

The cornbread was the first item to be passed around, beginning with Sam. All food began with Sam; this eliminated any complaints from the kids. Sam broke the bread into two hunks, slopped two large tablespoons of beans on the bread, and topped the bean meal with a generous layer of cat-sun, salt... pepper... Sam was ready to eat... "PB" and all. The bread had completed its initial round and was replaced in its original hole.

"Sammy junior... Billy lee... ya two stop ver-" "fightin' right now, or ya'll go to bed without no supper," yelled Sally. The threat was sufficient; they stopped.

The meal proceeded without further incident as Sam silently filled his stomach with an additional helping of ham and beans. One by one the kids finished and retired to their fortresses of cardboard boxes in the back yard. Sam finished sweeping up the remains with a piece of cornbread, finished his "PB", returned to his own "little fortress" in the living room and flicked on the television.

"There's goin' be a good wrestling match on TV tonight," Sam said.
Cally smiled somewhat, but nonetheless, she headed into the bedroom. Sam turned the television off, locked the front door, and began turning off the lights in that part of the house. The halls groaned as loud as in the morning, as Sam passed over them for the final time today.

As he reached the bedroom, Cally was snoring at her usual pace, unconcerned about her husband. Sam quietly undressed.

Walking near the bed, Sam pulled out the lower on the back of the alarm clock and then slowly crawled into bed. Sam was soon snoring alongside his wife, just as he did yesterday, just as he did all this week, and just as he had ever since he graduated from Muncie Central 18 years ago.
5 - A Simple Solution For Eradicating The Energy Crisis
A Simple Solution For Fradicating The Energy Crisis

One indeed finds it increasingly discouraging to read the newspaper, listen to the radio, or watch television. The current media brings contemporary news to our ears, which relates daily tales of terror. Murder, rape, thievery, and arson are among the most popular stories brought to our attention. Moreover, the media also reports the efficiency with which our law enforcement agencies work in arresting and imprisoning, those who commit such lawless crimes.

It has been said that these hardened criminals will never be useful members of our great society. Undoubtedly, they have been born with criminal blood, and no amount of governmental legislation will transfuse them into normal
productive beings. According to learned experts, our society will never be "criminal free." These criminals are costing the taxpayers of this great country enormous sums of money: sums which could efficiently be used in the manufacture of war equipment, or some other useful tool of mankind.

As the total number of prisoners multiplies daily, one must soon realize that the situation is on its way to getting out of hand. However, the American people are faced with yet another problem: the energy crisis. Never before in the history of the United States' people has one single problem so dominated the entire populations' thinking. People cry to their congressmen, pray to their priests, and holler to their businessmen, but none of this is effective. Given this enormous problem, the most simple solution is to devise a method for distribution of prisoners in the use of fuel.

I have been modestly assured by a very well informed Russian that, due to their chemical composition, prisoners burn quite nicely and for a surprising long time. Unlike a normal person, whose burn skin creates a nauseous odor, the prisoner burns virtually pollution free at the touch of a common match. While a slight odor might be detected, I have been assured that the emissions would be well within the tolerable standards previously set forth in this country.
My Russian friend has shown me reams of scientific statistics carefully analyzing fuel capacities of human prisoners. For example, one medium sized prisoner hand will burn with sufficient caloric value to tenderly cook a five pound semi-boneless ham. One "stocky" prisoner finger contains enough energy to fry enough pork chops for a family of four. When the cruel winter winds blow, all one need do is toss another half leg of a prisoner into the burner of the household furnace. The Russian report even goes so far to describe how an individual can build a "prisoner fuel automobile converter," which the Soviet report claims can be easily attached to any make auto with "only a screwdriver."

The economic possibilities of this simple solution are as equally outstanding as its energy saving potentials. Not only can expensive exploration for fuels be substantially cut, but this proposal could lead to the establishment of many other full time occupations. Our large universities will immediately open programs (both undergraduate and graduate) dealing with scientific methods of producing higher energy content prisoners. Other private businesses concerned with packaging this outstanding fuel will then undoubtedly emerge. The advertising industry will profit greatly from the abundance of prisoner fuel advertisements. And no doubt, Americans will
soon be able to purchase all styles of automobiles capable of operating efficiently (and pollution free) on prisoner fuel.

Since criminal behavior is believed to be inborn, and since human will continue to reproduce their species, Americans never need fear running out of fuel again. As soon as criminal intentions are noticed by qualified observers, the individual would immediately be placed in a state supported institution for development. Upon reaching the approximate age of eighteen*, the individual would then be shipped to regional processing stations, according to distribution allocations set forth on a per capita basis.

While it seems apparent with increasing crime rates, that the United States will never run out of prisoner fuel, one must not be so self assured that he overlooks that possibility. A close national inventory must be initiated and carefully controlled to assure adequate prisoner supply. If the consumer use becomes greater than the prisoner fuel supply, one easy solution is readily evident: intrabreeding. Male prisoners will be allowed to select female prisoner mates solely for the purpose of breeding. It is obvious that the product of such

*By this age, most criminals will have reached the peak of their physical growth; however, if a particular individual is obviously under-developed, he (or she) may remain in the institution at its director's discretion until maturity is reached.
a mating of two criminals will be yet another criminal. As it will take some time for the criminal baby to grow to full fuel producing maturity, the importance of inventory control becomes readily apparent.

Not only will this wonderful plan help ease the energy crisis, but this means of criminal punishment will help rid our society from the abundance of misdemeanor type criminals which are presently overcrowding our courtrooms. Crimes such as parking violations, speeding, jaywalking, and littering will soon be mere rememberances in our past. However one must truthfully realize that, as previously mentioned, those who commit vicious felonies have been born with truly hardened criminal blood. Therefore, the many long prison term criminals will probably never completely vanish from the police record books.

While some persons might notice that I have proposed a state supported institution for development (in essence, to replace a state supported prison), the cost of running such a business would be miniscule compared to the present ever-increasing penal system costs. Thus, the politicians in office at the beginning of such a plan, would undoubtedly legislate a lower tax rate for all areas of the United States. Thus, Americans can soon quit worrying about the fuel shortage, as well as increasing inflation, and increasing tax rates.
I must point out that, due to my extremely low taxable income, I would personally gain little from the institution of such a plan. The only thing which would be gained by myself, would be a warmth in the depths of my soul knowing that I have helped mankind. It is so difficult to see my fellow Americans suffer so greatly under the inconveniences of the energy crisis, and equally inconvenient high tax rates. If I may borrow an old cliche, my brilliant plan "kills two birds with one stone," and it is with this typical American efficiency that I am most proud.