

CASTER'S BLOG

A GEEK LOVE STORY

I am Ray Caster.
My life is an open book
written on the web.



AS TOLD TO
MARCUS ALEXANDER HART

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http://www.castersblog.com

User Info

Name: Ray Caster

Username: rcaster1138

Location: Sarasota, Florida, United States

Birthdate: 1978-09-11

Bio: Hi, I'm Ray Caster, and this is my blog. Um... I'm really bad at these bio things. How about this: You can picture me as four parts Harry Kim, three parts the Doctor, two parts Tuvok, one part Tom Paris, and zero parts Neelix. Screw Neelix.

Anyway, I have a pretty ordinary... okay, *pathetic* sort of life. My TiVo is my best friend. Well, that's not entirely true. Turbo Dan is my best friend. But as his name might suggest, Turbo Dan can be kind of, you know, *a colossal moron*. But he means well. I think.

I work at the main office of a credit union, which is about a thousand times less thrilling than it sounds. But at least my co-workers keep the day interesting. Between the homophobic loudmouth who sits next to me and the poetry-spewing Vogon in the HR office, every day is a bold new challenge in the field of not *blowing my brains out*.

So life kind of sucked. But then everything changed on the day I met that goddess from the auto parts store...

Interests: 132: '80s music, alienware, amiga, andrea barber, beer, blue states, captain janeway, computers, conspiracy, doctor who, doritos crackers, douglas adams, dr. pepper, dramatic irony, dvd, elf girls, email, fate, french accents, ghostbusters, gilligan's island, grace lee whitney, h2g2, haiku, hoaxes, homestarrunner.com, kazaa, kes, killing the riaa, lego, lord of the rings, love, misinformers.com, monty python, movies, mp3, mst3k, neil gaiman, office space, pabst blue ribbon, paranoia, piracy, plavstation 3. pointv ears. red dwarf. s1m0ne.

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CASTER'S BLOG

A GEEK LOVE STORY

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MARCUS ALEXANDER HART



An Outpost 132 Book

This book is dedicated to all of Ray Caster's LiveJournal friends. *Thank you for believing.*

Caster's Blog is a work of fiction. Any references to elements of the real world (including but not limited to people, places, events, and other works) are used solely to lend a sense of setting and historical context to the story. All characters are fictional and are not meant to represent any person living or dead.

The cover of this book is an homage to the cover of Douglas Coupland's *Microserfs*, designed by William Graef. It also includes design elements borrowed from LiveJournal.com and Mozilla Firefox (GetFirefox.com).

Ray Caster's minifig icon was created using Christopher Doyle's MINI-MIZER.
<http://www.reasonablyclever.com/mini>

This book was copy edited by Will DeRooy (WillDeRooy.com), though he should not be blamed for its intentionally casual adherence to the rules of style. Let the record show that Will fought valiantly to excise the word "alright" from this text.

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Saturday, November 26, 2005 - 1:32 p.m.

Introduction

Posted by: marcus132

Nine months ago Ray Caster disappeared without a trace. Letters sent to his apartment are returned as undeliverable. His phone is dead. Even his email bounces back with an ambiguously worded auto-reply. For all intents and purposes, on February 26, 2005, Ray Caster ceased to exist.

I'm sorry—I'm getting a little melodramatic. Maybe I should start at the beginning.

I first met Ray Caster in Sarasota, Florida in the summer of 1996. We were both college students who had reached the inevitable "bitter at the world" phase of our schooling, and our commiseration made us fast friends. After graduation I moved to Los Angeles, but we remained in sporadic contact over the years through email.

In 1998 I became the editor in chief of the comedy website misinformer.com. When my old school chum Ray Caster put in an application for staff writer, I hired him without a moment's hesitation.

This would prove to be a mistake.

Week after week Caster's submissions would run the gamut from simply "not funny" all the way up to "unforgivably hackneyed." The only thread of consistency that ran through Caster's work was the fact that I'd be ashamed to sign my name to anything that he wrote.

Every month we'd go through the same tense editorial tango. He'd submit a work of ostensible comedy forged of the same free-and-loose prose as a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fan fiction; I'd turn it back with notes for revision; he'd cry; and five minutes before the deadline I'd end up accepting the article as written. But Caster would have the last laugh on January 15, 2001 in the form of his breakout feature—[misinformer games sneak preview: Playstation 3 \(misinformer.com/ps3/\)](http://misinformer.com/ps3/).

In the years that have elapsed since its posting, Caster has never let me forget that his ridiculous PS3 article is the single most popular feature ever to appear on *misinformer.com*. To this day that one article uses up more bandwidth than everything else on the site combined. As if to rub it in my face, Caster parlayed his success into two follow-up articles on his fictional game console, each one better received than the last.

When *misinformer.com* shut its doors in February 2004, most of its staff writers turned to "blogging" to fill the void. The continued popularity of the PS3 article led an audience to [the weblog that Caster maintained at LiveJournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com). He made regular updates to this online journal for one year before seemingly vanishing into thin air.

The book that you are now reading is a record of that weblog. I have edited the content for the sake of narrative flow, but have left his, shall we say, "unique" grasp on style and punctuation intact. I have also excerpted some of the most relevant comments posted by his online friends.

At this point you're probably wondering why I, after being liberated from the chore of editing Ray Caster's writing, would ever voluntarily do it again. The answer comes in the form of an unexpected phone call I received last Thursday at three o'clock in the morning.

"Mggllho?" I said.

A tiny voice pushed its way through a storm of analog static.

"Marcus? Is that you? It's me, Ray! Ray Caster!"

The words stuck into my barely conscious mind like arrows.

"Caster?! Where are you?!"

"There's no time! This phone call is costing about a thousand dollars a second. Look, I need money."

"I'm a writer!" I chirped. "I don't have any money!"

"No, you wouldn't," he agreed. "Not the way you write."

Suddenly I remembered why I never mourned Caster's disappearance.

"Where are you?!" I repeated. "Where have you been for the past nine months?!"

"Shut up and listen to me for once! I need you to blook my blog."

"Don't you buzzword me, mister! It's too early in the morning!"

"Just publish my journal and sell it as a book! You can wire me the royalties!"

"Wire you the... Caster, what are you talking about?! Why do you need money so badly?"

Just then the noise on the line surged, allowing only three words to crackle through the earpiece before the phone went dead.

"It's a girl!"





Thursday, February 26, 2004 - 4:32 p.m.

Poetry Slam

Current mood: aggravated

Comments: 0

Every other Thursday I have to fill out an online timesheet and submit it to payroll. I've had to do this every other Thursday ever since I started working here at the credit union. I know I have to do it every other Thursday. *Everybody* knows that they have to do it every other Thursday. Yet for some reason, every other Thursday the harpy in the Human Resources office feels the need to email everybody in the company with a reminder in the form of "poetry".

I invite you to enjoy and critique this fine example of contemporary American literature:

*It's Oscar magic time again,
the best and the brightest,
or so it is said.
Billy Crystal is the host,
he surely has the most.
In time we'll forget who won,
we'll still remember his jokes and fun.
Before you go see Oscar stars,
be sure to submit your time cards!*

I'd start the critique, but my head is too busy exploding.



Saturday, February 28, 2004 - 9:35 p.m.

Another Saturday night...

Current mood: lonely

Comments: 0

I was supposed to go out with Turbo Dan and his friends tonight, but he never called me. He always "forgets" to call. I'm so sick of his crap.

So it looks like I'm going to spend another Saturday night ordering in some Hungry Howie's and playing "Wheel of TiVo".

I hope there's something good on there. I'm really in the mood for an old *Voyager* with Kes in it, but all I'll probably get is Seven of Nine, the freakin' golden child of Trek Babes. It's like the Wheel of TiVo has one space for "Kes", 10 for "Seven of Nine", and one for "Lose a Turn".

I don't get what people think is so hot about Seven. Sure there's the breasts, but big whoop de doo. Kes has breasts, but she doesn't need to go cybering them all up to get people to notice. Kes is a sweetheart. Plus, two words: pointy ears.

I can't put my finger on why, exactly, but I always figured that Seven of Nine smelled bad. I think it's because there's not enough contrast between the colors of her skin and teeth and hair. It's all this pale even yellow that seems to say "I have bad breath" to me. I'll bet Kes smells like cotton candy.

Of course, Kes has probably had sex with Neelix, which is one of the greatest travesties in the whole of the *Star Trek* universe. (Don't argue my "probably", alright? That "probably" means a lot to me.)

What the hell, I say. What the hell. Tom Paris is RIGHT THERE, Tuvok is RIGHT THERE, even that little puss Harry Kim is RIGHT THERE and HORNY and DESPERATE. But no, she goes for the lizard pig man. At least she broke up with him after "Warlord" and put a little bit of hope and purity and goodness back into the universe.

Well, whatever. If you didn't like that rant, then thank Turbo Dan for not calling me.



Tuesday, March 2, 2004 - 8:07 p.m.

Life as a Hard Drive

Current mood: indifferent

Comments: 1

Did you ever feel like your life is a new hard drive that has just been formatted?

Like your life is a finite amount of perfectly good magnetic storage, but there's absolutely nothing on it. No OS. No apps. No mp3s. Just an empty, sterile blankness spinning at 7200 RPM.

The drive isn't bad. It has no checksum errors. The bearings are not worn. But if you close your eyes and listen all you hear is a quiet, even hum of dull, meaningless white noise.

I'm not complaining. I'm not broken. I'm just blank.

Do you know what I'm saying? Have you ever felt like this?



halfwayhappy comments...

Sounds like the story of my life! Although I don't think I ever would have thought of being a hard drive... I just kind of envisioned it as a blank wall. That's really blank.



Thursday, March 4, 2004 - 3:26 p.m.

Win a Date with Turbo Dan

Current mood: hopeful

Comments: 3

I went out to Arby's at lunch today, and who do I run into but one Turbo Dan. He was sitting there eating his Arby-Q and he sees me and waves me over like we're best pals and he didn't completely blow me off last weekend when he said he would call so we could hang out.

So I go over there, and I say in my "guilt trip" voice, "So, did you have fun on Saturday night?"

He gets this far-away look in his eyes like he's trying to remember who his fourth grade teacher was, then he's like, "Whoa! Yeah! Me and Scottie and Mooker went out to the Beach House and got trashed with these four chicks."

I was all confrontational, like, "And... that's it?"

He was like, "Yeah, man, it was awesome. You should have been there. We had one too many chicks."

??? Yes! Yes, Turbo Dan! I SHOULD HAVE been there, you bastard! There was no hint of remorse in his voice for failing to call me to partake in these chicks, or even the slightest recognition of the fact that he didn't.

He's so clueless. It's like, okay, let me put it this way: If weed wanted to get high, weed would smoke Turbo Dan. He's not exactly the kind of guy who carries a day planner. So as I'm talking to him it suddenly dawns on me that he probably didn't intentionally ditch me at all, but just forgot that he even told me he'd call in the first place.

So I was like, "Yeah, sounds like fun. Are you going to do it again this weekend?" and he was like, "Yeah, man. Tomorrow night. I'll call you."

Ooooh, no you don't. I'm not falling for that one again. I told him that he should just give me the name of the bar and when they were going, and I'd just meet them there. Ha HA! Go me!

Oh my God... I just reread what I wrote, and now I feel like the biggest loser in the world for getting so excited about scoring a date with Turbo Dan. My life is so pathetic...



marcus132 comments...

Whoa whoa, there. Are you telling me that you missed a chance to hang out with three guys named Turbo Dan, Scottie, and Mooker?

So do you have any friends that aren't toughs from a 1950s greaser movie?



timb comments...

Where's Biff? And which one of those guys wears the 3D glasses all the time?



rcaster1138 comments...

Oh hahaaaa, you guys. Okay, when you're as popular as I am, you can't exactly go excluding people from your social circle just because of deficiencies in IQ, social graces, or ham-fisted personal nomenclature.



Saturday, March 6, 2004 - 12:37 p.m.

***Now how I wish I had someone to talk to,
I'm in an awful way.***

Current mood: depressed

Comments: 4

Last night I went to that bar that Turbo Dan told me he was going to be at. It was this smoky hippie place in a strip mall. A typical Turbo Dan dive. He said that he was going to get there around 8. I didn't have anything else to do, so I showed up around 7:30 and got a drink.

Then it was 8 o' clock. Then 9. Then 10. As the hours rolled by it became increasingly apparent that Turbo Dan was not going to show up. I felt like Linus waiting for the Great Pumpkin, except without the sense of naive hope.

In the end he never showed. Again. Turbo Dan gets an A for consistency, but an F for follow through.

Okay, now I know if you don't know me and you're reading this, you're probably starting to think that I'm a closet homosexual with deep running desires for an idiot named Turbo Dan. This is not the case. Even if I was gay, which I'm *not*, I wouldn't be interested in getting into Turbo Dan's ratty board shorts. So what's the deal with him then, right?

Alright, since it fits him so well, I'm going to continue my analogy from the other day about Turbo Dan being like marijuana. You know how they say that pot is a "gateway drug" that paves the way for its users to get into harder stuff? Well to me, Turbo Dan is like a "gateway friend".

I'm really awkward around people. I have no idea how to make friends. Turbo Dan, on the other hand, has no idea how NOT to make friends. Okay, true story: One time I went with him to Taco Bell, and there was this cute girl working the counter. When I ordered, I tried to kind of smile at her and be cool, but she just kind of stared at her register with these big glassy eyes. When I'm done, Turbo Dan comes up behind me and starts talking to her in his Keanu-Reeves-whoa-man-I-don't-have-

2-brain-cells-to-rub-together voice, and the next thing I know, she's laughing and smiling at him. 2 days later, I saw the two of them together at a movie. Swear to God. How does he do it?

So I found myself sitting at the end of the bar all by myself last night, and I felt completely alone in the world. I felt like I was a new fish being acclimated slowly into an aquarium. Like there were all of these other fish around me, and they could see me, and I could see them, but there was still a plastic bag around me that I couldn't escape. I was completely alone in a crowd.

There were lots of girls there, but I couldn't talk to them. Not by myself. I mean, how do you even start talking to a girl in a bar without Turbo Dan there to ease you into the conversation? I sure as hell don't know.



aerospace comments...

girls are tricky beings and frequently cause confusion. hang out with robots instead.



rcaster1138 comments...

You should get to work on that. If I could make a humble request, I'd like a robot Grace Lee Whitney circa 1966. Thanks!



webgodd_s comments...

Lose Turbo Dan. He's a shmuck. What about asking some of his friends (you mentioned them in another entry) to go to the bar with you instead?



rcaster1138 comments...

To an outsider, I'm sure hanging out with Turbo Dan's friends seems like a perfectly reasonable alternative. Although if you knew them, I think you'd retract the suggestion.

Scottie is like this totally hyper idiot. He's like Jim Carrey having sex with Carrot Top on speedball. After five minutes with him, you just want to punch him out and tell him to stop trying so hard to be funny. Just being in the same room with him can be exhausting.

On the other side of the coin, Mooker is like this totally burned-out, quiet little Rasta guy. He's more like an accessory than an acquaintance. In all honesty, I'm not completely sure he speaks English.

Sometimes it's easier to just be alone.



Tuesday, March 9, 2004 - 1:15 p.m.

THE SUPER HAPPY POST!

Current mood: happy

Comments: 4

As **halfwayhappy** pointed out in her blog, all anyone ever does in their online journals is gripe.

"It's amusing. It's almost formulaic. Gripe about school, and our mothers, about our college counselors, about grades, about friends, about weekend plans."

Or if you're me: Gripe about Turbo Dan. Guilty.

So here's my penance in the form of a SUPER HAPPY POST:

Today is the BEST DAY EVER! It is 66 degrees and SUNNY! It's ALWAYS SUNNY! Of course, it's always sunny outside, and I'm always in the office, but hey, this is not nature's problem, this is my problem, and you know what, I don't have any problems today, because this is my SUPER HAPPY POST! :-)

You know what ELSE makes me happy?! DORITOS CRACKERS! Have you seen these things! They're crackers, but they taste EXACTLY like Doritos! In a blind taste test, you couldn't tell the difference. I guess, you know, if it was some kind of "blind and also can't tell the difference between a chip and a sandwich cracker" test. Anyway, the reason they are so awesome is this: You can EAT THEM AND NOT GET ORANGE FINGERS! And while we're on the subject, ALI LANDRY also makes me happy. :-) :-D

You know what, Turbo Dan? I don't *need* you. I'm not hanging my social life on your erratic whims and THC-soaked cranium this weekend. I'm going to get outside and do something. IT'S SUNNY AND I'M GOING TO THE BEACH! And not just over to Lido Beach either. I'm going over to Siesta Beach. I'm going to the GOOD BEACH. You know why? Because the GOOD BEACH makes me SUPER HAPPY! :-D 8-D

I am SO HAPPY that I shall wrap this up with a summary in HAIKU FORM!

Going to the beach!
Doritos Crackers rock me!
Bite me, Turbo Dan!



timb comments...

Ray, have you been hitting the Prozac again?



rcaster1138 comments...

I'm high on life, man. High on... *life*.



marcus132 comments...

Caster, are you bipolar?



rcaster1138 comments...

I'm high on life man... high on...

You guys suck.



Wednesday, March 10, 2004 - 11:13 p.m.

The Precognitive Bastard: Turbo Dan

Current mood: aggravated

Comments: 2

This is unbelievable. I just got a phone call from Turbo Dan. He actually apologized for his failure to make an appearance at the bar last weekend. He said that on Friday afternoon he went to the auto parts store to get a new headlight for his Jeep, and he met this "amazing girl" working there named Shadow.

Pssst. Whatever! What kind of name is "Shadow"? I'll tell you what kind of name it is. It's a freakin' *cat name*. When I was a kid, my mom got me a black cat. I wanted to name it "Unlucky" but she made me name it "Shadow" because "Shadow is a better cat name."

Anyway, Turbo Dan said that he and Shadow ended up hanging out all night, and he lost track of time and yadda yadda yadda whatever. I don't care. This isn't the part of the call that has me so irritated.

The irritating part is that he had the NERVE to ask me to hang out with him this weekend. He's all like, "Hey, me and Shadow are going to go out to Siesta Beach to rent jet skis Saturday. You should come out there with us."

AAARRRG! DAMN YOU TURBO DAN! I was ALREADY GOING to go to Siesta Beach this Saturday! This was MY PLAN, not YOUR PLAN! It was a SUPER HAPPY PLAN! Now when I go out there this weekend and end up all by myself, AS WAS MY ESTABLISHED PLAN, I'm going to be haunted by this feeling that I was ditched again when he doesn't show up. AAARRRG! He's so FRUSTRATING, and the worst part is, he DOESN'T EVEN KNOW IT!

Does this make sense to anybody else, or am I just totally psycho?



anonymous comments...

You are absolutely right, and I agree with everything you say. Doesn't this make you crave for a semi-automatic 9mm Beretta?



rcaster1138 comments...

It's the best feeling ever when you ask the Internet, "Am I a psycho?" and the Internet responds, "No way! Go get a gun!"



Thursday, March 11, 2004 - 5:58 p.m.

HR Poetry Pain

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 2

Hey everybody! It's every-other-Thursday again! That means it's time to critique another timesheet reminder poem from Julie the HR Vogon:

*There's a lucky little man who
dresses in the color green.
This is the special time of year when
his pot of gold is sometimes seen.
If you should be lucky enough to see
the leprechaun make sure to say,
"Don't forget to submit your time sheets,
And have a Happy Saint Patrick's Day!"*

Oh man, that one hurts. You know, I had to read it *four times* before I figured out that there was a rhyme scheme and not just a series of random line breaks. Hey HR Julie, a little bit of meter of some sort might have been a nice addition somewhere in there.

Gah. Headache. Discuss amongst yourselves.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Tell her not to quit her day job.

Reading that made my butt cheeks clench. Not in a good way.



timb comments...

Her "cadence" makes me want to die.



Friday, March 12, 2004 - 8:48 p.m.

Here I go again on my own.

Current mood: optimistic

Comments: 0

I just bought one of those sport straps for my glasses, because I'm too blind to drive a jet ski without them, and I'm paranoid about losing them in the water. So I guess this means I'm officially committed to the idea of meeting up with Turbo Dan and his "Shadow" tomorrow. I'm so codependent...

Anyway, curiosity is killing me. I've GOT to see what kind of girl Turbo Dan managed to pick up in an auto parts store. I'm betting that she's some scary trailer trash mama with a missing canine tooth, smoker's cough, and a Whitesnake tattoo.

Plus I'd never forgive myself if I missed my chance to go up to her and say "So, I understand you know what evil lurks in the heart of man."



Saturday, March 13, 2004 - 8:38 p.m.

The Jet Ski and the Shadoe

Current mood: giddy

Comments: 0

I just had the most amazing day ever. Its retelling runs kind of long, so I'm going to summarize it with an enticing haiku:

Jet ski incident

Beautiful girl named Shadoe

Now I squint blindly

Okay, so this morning I went out to Siesta Key to that jet ski place that Turbo Dan told me about. Of course I didn't really expect him to show up, but since I was already planning on going to go to Siesta Beach of my own free will, I figured why not give him the benefit of the doubt?

Much to my shock and amazement, right on time Turbo Dan's rusty old Jeep comes rambling into the parking lot! He's at the wheel, looking like something out of *Lost in Space* in this weird short-sleeved ribbed wetsuit thing, and in the passenger seat... in the passenger seat was a breathtakingly radiant angel...

My God. I don't know how he does it. Every time *I've* ever gone to an auto parts store I've always ended up talking to some big fat redneck dude who tries to convince me that I need to change my spark plugs and oil and engine block, even though I just came in for an air freshener. Turbo Dan goes to buy a new headlight, and he comes out with a beach blanket beauty queen. Such is the nature of fate, I guess.

They get out of the car and Turbo Dan is like, "Hey man, this is Shadoe, that chick I

was telling you about." (I would later find it's spelled "Shadoe" like Shadoe Stevens, and not "Shadow" like my ex-cat.)

Let me try to describe Shadoe using my limited vocabulary and sprawling knowledge of pop culture: First try to imagine what Christina Aguilera might look like in an alternate universe where she was the all-American girl-next-door instead of a skeezy ho. Petite, lightly tanned, glowing. Her hair was a mass of a thousand dreadlocky, pale blond braids, vaguely reminiscent of those albino twins from *The Matrix: Reloaded*. Her eyes were like two emeralds set in '80s throwback blue eye shadow, and her teeth were perfect and white and Photoshopy like something out of an Aquafresh advertisement. She was wearing a pair of Daisy Dukes, a green flannel shirt, and a blazing don't-shoot-me-I'm-a-hunter orange bikini top.

For lack of any other coherent thought at that moment, I was like, "Enchanted to meet you, Shadoe. I once had a cat that went by that name." Before I could feel too stupid, she graciously giggled and said, "That's a strange coincidence, I once had a manta named Ray."

So the plan was that we would each rent our own jet ski, and then zoom around the bay, chasing each other around and whatever. But when the time came to actually rent them, we realized that jet ski rental isn't cheap like bicycle rental. In fact, it's **EXPENSIVE AS HELL!** We didn't have enough money to rent three, or even two, so we decided to just get one and take turns riding it. *Lame.*

So we all put on these mildewy life jackets and the rental guy starts up the jet ski. I've never ridden one before and was a little nervous, so I volunteered Turbo Dan to go first. As soon as he mounted it Shadoe kicks off her chunky pink sandals and was like, "Hey! It's a two-person! I want to ride with you!" So she jumps on and takes Turbo Dan by his Spandexed waist, and they go ripping off across the water.

I just sat there on the dock and waited and watched. I was trying to get some kind of feel for how the thing worked before I got on it. I didn't want to fall off and have to go home all cold and wet. Also I didn't want to look like a dorkass in front of this girl Shadoe.

As the stereotypical surf dude, I assume Turbo Dan had been on a jet ski before. He was doing this thing where he'd slice the tail around and this huge wave would shoot up. I would have thought that he was just doing it to try and get Shadoe soaked, but I don't give Turbo Dan's thought processes that much credit. Every time a boat went by he would gun it perpendicular to the wake and kind of skip the jet ski off the water all ESPN2 style. All the while I could hear Shadoe screaming and giggling in her angelic little voice. She waved to me every time they went by. :-)

After a while, Turbo Dan pulls it back up to the dock and they climb off. He's all like, "Your turn, dude!" So I carefully step onto the thing, and as soon as my foot touches it, it starts to slip away and roll like a log under a Canadian lumberjack. Turbo Dan grabs me by my arm before I plunge into the water. Shadoe giggles. I flush with embarrassment. *Rrrrr.*

Anyway, I finally get on the rolly little bastard and the rental guy shows me how it works. As soon as I'm ready to go, suddenly Shadoe jumps on behind me! Whoa! I had, of course, assumed that I would be on my own. It hadn't occurred to me that it was still a two-person jet ski, and she was still a second person. She grabs on to my hips and is like, "Alright, let's see if you're as fast as your namesake, manta Ray." How could I back down from a challenge like that? I squeezed the accelerator and we blasted away from the dock.

If you've never ridden a jet ski before let me tell you, it's amazing. I now know exactly what it feels like to ride a speeder bike, without Ewok interference. I suppose a motorcycle might be similar, but I think that the smooth surface of the water better simulates the repulsorlift than pavement. But I digress from the mainstream of this evening's symposium: a girl named Shadoe, and the way she was clinging tenaciously to my waist!

As visions of Endor flashed through my head, Shadoe held herself tightly against me. I could feel her body pressing up against my back, I could smell the sweet aroma of coconut and patchouli oil fluttering off of her skin. It was the most awesome moment that I have ever experienced, ever.

We were coming up on a big cabin cruiser full of rich old people, and Shadoe was all like, "Jump it! Jump it!" I was like, "Hell yeah! Hold on to your butts!" and I put it full throttle into the side of the boat wake, exactly as I had watched Turbo Dan do a dozen times before. Except it didn't happen exactly like it did when Turbo Dan did it. If there's one lesson that I should have learned from my vast library of experiences with Turbo Dan, it's that things NEVER happen for me exactly the way they do for him.

I'm not exactly sure what went wrong, but Turbo Dan would later describe it as the "most incredible wipeout" he'd ever seen. One second I'm king of the world, next thing I know this same world is a featureless blur and I'm soaking wet and cold and coughing up a lungful of salt water. From what Turbo Dan tells me the front of the jet ski hit the water at a weird angle and Shadoe and I just kind of flipped over the side. I don't really know how that's possible, but hey, who am I to doubt the eyewitness credibility of... okay, nevermind.

Anyway, luckily for me, Shadoe wasn't pissed that we had taken a header into the water as a result of my substandard piloting skill. In fact, she was still laughing, despite the fact that the water was really freakin' COLD! I get the impression she's the kind of girl who could have fun at a funeral. Good times. Except for one thing: My glasses were now somewhere at the bottom of Sarasota Bay.

Man, WTF? I was wearing that sport strap and everything, yet somehow when my face hit the water at 30 nautical miles per hour it didn't matter. They were gone. If you're new to my life, let me explain something: I've worn glasses since I was in the 5th grade. I was the first person I knew who had to wear them. Imagine if you will what you, with your normal human eyes, might see if you filled a diving mask with water and *then* put it on. That's what I can see without my glasses. There was no

way that I could drive the jet ski back to the dock.

So when we climbed back on the infernal machine and got it started again (there's a bracelet thing on there that cuts the engine when you fall off) Shadoe had to be the driver, and forgive me if you're way ahead of me here, but that makes me the passenger, aka *Holdy McGirltouch*!

We spent another 10 minutes or so cruising around the bay, me holding on to her sculpted pelvis, the gracious chill of the salt water masking the cold sweat flowing from my anxious palms. She was an even more balls-to-the-wall driver than Turbo Dan was, and as she cut circles around the bay I was required (and delighted) to hold her as tightly as I could. It was the second most awesome moment that I have experienced, ever, coming in right behind the one from a half hour before. This was a truly excellent day for me.

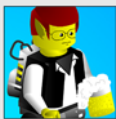
Our hour rental hadn't run out yet, but by that time we were so freezing that we went back to the dock and met up with Turbo Dan again. Shadoe wanted to go and get something to eat, so we all piled into Turbo Dan's Jeep and went to some crappy beach food place. We were still moist and shivering, but we had fun. Shadoe and I shared a basket of chicken fingers. The food sucked, but the company made up for it.

When we were done eating it was about sunset and Turbo Dan drove me home. I had to leave my car on Siesta Key on account of my eyes and their state of near total dysfunction. Shadoe sat in the front seat and she kind of leaned her head on Turbo Dan's shoulder and rubbed it there slowly like... well like my cat Shadow used to do to me. I admit, it made me bristle with jealousy.

Still, I don't know if it was the angry-white-boy punk music on the radio, or the way the dried salt felt on my skin as the open air blew over it, or the fact that I wasn't wearing the ol' Coke bottles, but for some reason I didn't feel like myself. I felt like I was *cool*.

Tomorrow I'll have to somehow get new glasses and then find a way out to Siesta to reclaim my car. I didn't even bother making transportation arrangements with Turbo Dan because, honestly, you and I both know he never would have showed up.

So I guess the day did have a little bit of a down side, but in the end, as I sit here hunched over and squinting two inches from my monitor, I still feel like I was the big winner of today. Today was a truly excellent day. Go me.



Sunday, March 14, 2004 - 7:18 p.m.

Fun Facts from Dr. Blindy

Current mood: blind

Comments: 0

Fun Fact #1: After you've gone a full day without your glasses, you suddenly realize

that Mr. Magoo cartoons were funny after all, you just had to "be there".

Today I had intended to ride the bus to my optometrist to get a new pair of glasses made, then on over to Siesta Key to pick up my car.

I thought to myself, "Hey, it's Sunday. Will your optometrist even be open today?" So I called them. Yes, they're open. Yes, a doctor is on duty today. Alright. Go me. Nothing can stop me now.

Fun Fact #2: SCAT buses don't run on Sunday.

D'oh! Out of pure optimism, I called Turbo Dan, but I just got his message. He's probably out with Shadoe somewhere. Lucky bastard. Anyway, I decided that as a Plan B I should at least try to find my old glasses before I have to go to work tomorrow.

As I was tearing apart my closet trying to remember if I even still HAVE my old glasses, I was reminded of that show *Finders Keepers*. Does anybody remember that show? It was a game show like *Double Dare*, and they had this big crazy-looking house, and the kids had to tear that bitch apart looking for prizes, or clues, or something. As fun as that looked on TV, it's not as much fun when it's your own apartment and you have to clean up when you're done.

Anyway, I ended up finding my old glasses in a big box of junk. The prescription is all wonky but, compared to nothing, it's a decided improvement. Plus the walls all bend in at the tops and bottoms now, so my apartment has that Seussian flair.

Fun Fact #3: No matter how confident you are in your abilities, never try to pee without your glasses on. Just take my word on this one.



Monday, March 15, 2004 - 8:52 p.m.

Sick of Public Transit

Current mood: sick

Comments: 0

The wheels on the bus go round and round...
round and round...
round and round...
the wheels on the bus go round and round...
ALL FREAKING DAY!

Man, I'm sick as hell today. I called in to work this morning and then went back to sleep for a few hours. Finally I forced myself to drag my ass out of bed and take my epic bus trip to Siesta Key to reclaim my car.

Today was my first, and hopefully last, experience ever with the SCAT buses. I had always avoided them in the past for fear that I would have to sit next to either Louis Armstrong, a pile of pet droppings, or both. It turns out the bus had neither. What it

did have was *78 million stops* between my apartment and Siesta Beach.

The hours and hours on the road gave me plenty of time to cough, sneeze, and wonder what kind of idiot goes out riding jet skis in the middle of March. I also couldn't help but think about Shadoe and feel like crap wondering if she's out there slaving away in some auto parts store today, also sick as a dog, and blaming me for it (because after all, it IS my fault). :-(

Anyway, I finally got to where my car was parked and, as luck would have it, it was still there and not even broken into or anything. I guess Siesta Key isn't really a hotbed of criminal activity, but still I get paranoid, you know?

So I figured since I was out of the office and out of the house anyway, I may as well get the glasses thing taken care of too. I drove to the optometrist using my old glasses, which was scary, and stupid, and something that I couldn't have defended doing in a court of law.

The whole way there I was leaning over the wheel and squinting and driving 20 miles per hour. Then it dawned on me: I'd become one of *them*. I've officially lived in Sarasota long enough to drive like a senior citizen. Go me.

Long story short (too late!), I now have a new pair of geeky emo-looking glasses. I think I look pretty swell in them, although I'm holding out final judgment for a day when my eyes aren't bloodshot and my nose isn't swollen and running like the Nile.



Tuesday, March 16, 2004 - 3:53 p.m.

Desperately seeking Shadoe

Current mood: inspired

Comments: 4

I'm back at work today. My throat still hurts, but I'm a lot better than yesterday. Although listening to the idiot in the cubicle next to me argue loudly on the phone with his wife isn't helping my headache.

As I'm sitting here in the sensory deprivation of my stark gray cubicle, I can't stop thinking about Saturday. Despite getting sick, I had SO MUCH fun. I'm still high from it. I feel like I have a spark inside that had I didn't have before. I'm all... I don't know. I can't stop thinking about that girl Shadoe.

I want to call her. I wish I knew her phone number. Or at least her last name. I know she works in an auto parts store where Turbo Dan bought a headlight, but a casual Yahoo! Yellow Pages search showed about 80 auto parts stores within 5 miles of his apartment. Not exactly useful.

My only hope is to somehow get her number out of Turbo Dan. I'd somehow have to ask him for the number, but not let on that I want to use it to ditch him and take her out myself.

Anybody have any suggestions on how I should go about doing this?



anonymous comments...

I can't believe that you're asking how to steal your best friend's girlfriend. What kind of bastard are you? Do you really think that she's just going to leave him for you and everything is going to work out happily ever after? Get a clue.



nostradomnatrix comments...

If you get someone else's chick to go out with you behind her boyfriend's back, rest assured that the same will happen to you later.



deech comments...

Duder. Look. Here's the deal. No need to get all sneaky. From what you've said, it sounds like Turbo Dan is out for a good time and not commitment.

So, it's easy enough.. just be all, "Whoa. Dude. Like, you and that chick doing the hookup thing or you just hangin' chill?" His answer should give you insight on how to proceed.

If he replies, "Naw, she's cool and all, but we're just dropping hat, you know?" Then you've got a good opportunity to say, "Sweet, Bro. Drop her digits on me so I can clap her on the jaw jagger, she's way sweetie."

Now, if he says, "Shaw, she's all up on it, man," or "Making the sweet nookie on my hang down, I'm diggin' it," then you've just been informed of his intentions. At this point, don't challenge his dominance of the female, simply back away slowly.



rcaster1138 comments...

I rarely know what you're talking about.



Wednesday, March 17, 2004 - 3:48 p.m.

I suck at life!

Current mood: discontent

Comments: 6

Wow. I guess the answer to yesterday's question of "How can I get Shadoe's phone number out of Turbo Dan" was "Don't steal Turbo Dan's girlfriend, homewrecker." This took me completely by surprise.

I am so bad at dealing with people and understanding how they work. I didn't think

that there could possibly be any kind of bond between them already that I could be breaking. I mean, he's known her for less than a week. It's not like they've been married for 25 years or something.

As **halfwayhappy** says, "I suck at life!"

Anyway, I wrote this haiku today:

Enigma of light.
A brightness from a shadow,
to end the long night.



deech comments...

What? I didn't say that! Steal her! Steal her!

Ok, what I really said was, and I want you to listen very carefully... be "honest" with your friend. I know it's a weird concept and kinda goes against all human nature, but trust me, it's a plan so wacky it just might work (as long as you don't let those meddling kids get involved)!



rcaster1138 comments...

There's only one flaw with your plan: If I ask him and he says that they're all into each other, then I'm done. Dead in the water. Kaput.

Of course there's the chance he'll say that she's fair game, but I think I prefer to live in uncertain denial than chance a concrete rejection.



halfwayhappy comments...

I think you have every right in the world to somehow steal Shadoe away from Turbo Dan. My idea would be to somehow snag Turbo Dan's phone and then quickly scan through his phone book and find her number.



rcaster1138 comments...

I never thought of checking his phone. That's so devious! You should be a spy!



halfwayhappy comments...

Thanks! Oh yeah- here's some inspiration! I'm probably going to mess this up, cuz it's like third hand now, but here's the main gist of it...

You can't expect a fig tree to produce apples.

Does that make sense? A fig tree produces FIGS. That's just what it does. It can't do something it's not capable of! And no one gets mad at the fig tree because it's not making apples... If they wanted apples so badly, they'd find an apple tree!

What I really mean is that you can't suck at life, because you're an apple tree, and I'm a fig tree. And only fig trees can suck at life. And you're an apple tree, so therefore you can't suck at life!!



rcaster1138 comments...

You may not suck at life, but you sure suck at analogies.



Thursday, March 18, 2004 - 7:44 p.m.

The tiny voices on my shoulders

Current mood: nervous

Comments: 0

After reviewing the comments from yesterday, I've come to a definite conclusion: I don't know what I'm doing.

Okay, here's my plan. It's Thursday, so I think Turbo Dan is working tonight at Circle K. I think I'll casually go in there as if I intended to pick up a Thirstbuster or something, and he just *happened* to be there.

I think when I talk to him face-to-face my path will become clear. I'll either:

* Listen to the little angel on my shoulder (aka **deech**), and I'll ask him man-to-man what the deal is with him and Shadoo and if I have a chance, or if I should just go home (and cry).

or

* Listen to the little devil on my shoulder (aka **halfwayhappy**), and declare that all is fair in love and war and be justified in borrowing his cell phone long enough to steal her number.

I'm making myself sick to my stomach with all of this infernal second guessing. Tonight I'm doing something about it. Wish me luck.



Friday, March 19, 2004 - 6:32 p.m.

A Date with Fate

Current mood: tired

Comments: 2

Man, I am so tired today. I must have gotten about 20 minutes of sleep last night. Despite this fact, there was very little that could have been done to make last night go any better than it did.

In haiku:
Went to Circle K
An unexpected surprise
Number eludes me

So what did you do, Ray? Plan A or Plan B? Sorry everybody, there was an unexpected variable in the equation. I was forced into taking Plan C.

When I showed up at Circle K last night Turbo Dan WAS working, and who should also be there, but Shadoe herself! She was leaning against the counter and drinking a strawberry soda. She was wearing this long flowing skirt and a midriff shirt with a sparkly iconic kitty on the chest. She was so cute.

My brain just kind of froze. I had worked through Plan A and Plan B like a thousand times in my head. Now those were all shot to hell, and I was left to think on my feet. I'm no good in this situation.

So I'm like, "Um, hi guys! What's going on?" Shadoe was like, "Nothing much, we're just hanging out." Suddenly I'm thinking "She likes Turbo Dan enough to just hang out while he's *working the night shift at Circle K*? This does not look good for me."

I didn't quite know how to work the situation, so I was like, "Sooo, you guys want to go and do something after Turbo Dan gets off work?" He was like, "Nahh. I just got in. I'm graveyard tonight." My brain was still all locked up and screaming "ABORT! ABORT!"

So I was like, "Okay, no problem. See you later" and I was about to leave, but then Shadoe is like, "Hey, I'll go do something with you."

:-D !!!!

It was like the clouds parted and the angels sang to me. I was totally smooth. I think I said something brilliant to the effect of "Duuhhh, okay!" Go me!

We didn't want to go out to a bar or anything, so we ended up doing what everybody under the age of 60 does in this town when they've got nothing to do in the middle of the night. We went to Lido Beach.

We walked down the beach and talked about various stuff for what seemed like forever. I am more convinced now than ever: She is an incredible woman. It turns out that she's even more intelligent than she is beautiful. Never once did the discussion degrade itself to the likes of reality TV, the Olsen twins, or why old people shouldn't be allowed to drive. It was all grade A, top shelf, intelligent

conversation.

She asked me what the last three books I read were, and I was humiliated to admit that they all had titles beginning with "Harry Potter and the". Her last three were *Stupid White Men* by Michael Moore, *Shopgirl* by Steve Martin, and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley.

I tried to make a reference to *Brave New World*, but I will not repeat it here, since said reference turned out to actually be from 1984. She was kind enough to point that fact out to my illiterate ass without sounding condescending.

I am now convinced that Shadoe is not only too good for Turbo Dan, she could quite possibly be too good for me.

Anyway, why is it that when it gets to be a certain time of the late late night and you're talking to somebody in the dim moonlight, the conversation invariably comes around to the state of the universe and our position within it? Maybe it has something to do with the infinite cosmos just spilling out forever above you. I don't know.

So we ended up sitting on a lifeguard stand and talking about life, the universe, and everything. She was lying on her back using my leg for a pillow, and she let me play with her braids. I think it was right then that I realized that every time I've touched her, it has suddenly been the best moment of my life.

We had a huge discussion on the nature of fate: Do we have any free will in the universe, or is an outside force calling all the shots? Personally, I've always firmly believed in fate. I think everybody has their specific place in the great novel of life, and it only seems chaotic and random from our vantage point because we don't know the whole story yet. I mean, if everyone could write their own destiny, then there wouldn't be any garbage men, right?

She, on the other hand, says that fate can't exist by a simple matter of statistical improbability. She said that all of the complex interactions of all of the people that I've ever met is far too elaborate a system for one being to mastermind in any kind of pre-planned way. Each and every day is made up of thousands of variables that can't be predicted or controlled, and it's madness to think that some outside force could have a specific destination planned for each of us that every tiny interaction would ultimately lead up to.

She does make a good point. I mean, if there is some being out there vicariously writing my life, he's got a pretty pathetic imagination.

Anyway, the sun was starting to come up by the time that I finally drove her home. She lives in this scary trailer park in Bradenton. I swear I heard somebody plucking out "Dueling Banjos" as I drove in. She said the neighborhood was a little rough around the edges, but it was mostly quiet retirees and the price was right. Her trailer was this old skool Creamsicle-colored thing that reminded me of something out of a

kitchen from the '60s.

She got out of the car and I was like, "I had a really good time tonight." She was like, "Yeah, I did too." At this point I just kind of blurted out "Hey, could I have your phone number?" In retrospect, I could have used some kind of segue into that...

Anyway, this is the only sucky part of the whole evening. She kind of doesn't make eye contact and she says "Oh... I don't have a phone."

I was like, "Oh. Okay then. I guess I'll see you around." I didn't know what else to say. WTF? No phone? That's such a lame excuse, especially coming from somebody as smart as her. She could have done way better.

I don't understand why she didn't want to give me her number. She said she had a good time. I don't think I was being too forward by asking for it. I just don't know. Maybe it'll make more sense after I get some sleep... sleep.... ZZZZZZZZZZZZ.....



webgodd_s comments...

Being a trailer dwelling and very poor individual myself, I honestly think she could be telling the truth. She's probably just ashamed that she can't afford to have phone service and doesn't want you to think less of her for being poor. Not that you would, it's just that she doesn't know that.



rcaster1138 comments...

Whatever. Everybody has a phone. Not having a phone is like not having electricity. It just doesn't happen in this day and age.



Tuesday, March 23, 2004 - 5:22 p.m.

The Blake Show

Current mood: amused

Comments: 0

I can't decide if the guy who sits in the cubicle next to me is to be pitied or merely laughed at. Either way, he puts on a good show.

He's this total retard named Blake. He's your typical mid-40s, ex-jock asshole type who's put on a few extra pounds around the gut, yet he still thinks he's going home after the homecoming game to score with the head cheerleader even though he's really going home to ESPN and his estranged wife.

His wife just called him and I could hear his side of the conversation barked over the cubicle wall. I have no idea what they were talking about, but it was kind of hilarious:

Yeah? How in hell should I know if we need one?

Well how much is it? No, how much? Jesus! How much MONEY does it COST!?

50 bucks! Fuck that! Tell him we don't need it.

What? Well I don't care what HE says! Tell him that we don't need it.

Look, I can take care of it MYSELF! Tell him that we don't need it!

...

No. No. No no no no! Jesus!

...

Look, let me talk to him.

What? I don't care if he has to step on the carpet, give him the phone! Okay?

Hello? Yeah, we don't need... Linda?

God damn it, I don't care! LET him step on the carpet!

Don't you talk to me like that!

Don't hang up! Don't you dare hang...

...

(Phone slams down)

BITCH!

What in the hell is he talking about? I might be concerned for poor Linda's well-being if I thought for a second that he wasn't all bark and no bite. Well, she *did* marry him, so maybe I should be concerned about her for a whole different set of reasons.

In other news, Shadoe, Turbo Dan, and I are going to see *Dawn of the Dead* tomorrow night. And for the record, it was Shadoe who called me about it. :-) I checked the Caller ID box, but the number was Turbo Dan's. :-(



Thursday, March 25, 2004 - 5:36 p.m.

Thursday Poetry Critique

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 3

It's time for another bit of joy from HR Julie:

*The month of March is here again,
Lucky for us, the weather has been,
good enough to take the punch,
out of the fact that this is Frozen Food Month!
So submit your time sheets and stay warm,
and be glad you've avoided the winter storms!*

Ow ow ow! This is the most obtuse theme yet! Frozen Food Month?! WTF? St. Patrick's Day I can get behind. The Oscars, okay, whatever. But Frozen Food Month? Nobody should be writing poetry about frozen food unless they are a penguin, or perhaps Mr. Freeze.

The subject matter was nearly enough to throw me off of the fact that she rhymed "punch" with "month". Uh uh. No way. Bad HR Julie. Bad!



nostradomnatrix comments...

Will SOMEONE please wrap her hands in duct tape so she can't type?

Or, barring that, nail her wrists to a board she carries across her shoulders?



timb comments...

This is an abomination against God.

I'll send you my Dr. Octagon CD if you promise to force her to listen to it. She needs to learn the elusive art of slant-rhyming.



rcaster1138 comments...

That's the advanced class. We need to start her off with stuff like: Bat rhymes with cat. Mouse rhymes with house... PUNCH doesn't rhyme with MONTH you FREAK!



Sunday, March 28, 2004 - 10:59 p.m.

No more room in Hell

Current mood: happy

Comments: 0

I went and saw *Dawn of the Dead* on Friday with Shadoe and Turbo Dan. Holy shit, that was a scary movie. Before the opening credits even rolled, I was already freaking out. On the inside of course. One has to keep up appearances when trying to impress a girl. I think I might have crushed my fillings though.

Shadoe and I were sharing a popcorn and it was sitting on the arm of the chair between us. When (something happens that I'm not going to tell you because it's a spoiler), she just like, did this weird jump thing like your cat does when you turn on the vacuum cleaner. The popcorn flew off of the chair, and then THAT scared her, so she did like this double jump freakout thing and practically ended up in Turbo Dan's lap. It was hilarious.

By the end of the movie, she was so freaked out that she was crushing both my hand AND Turbo Dan's hand. I think she might have broken my pinky. It was so worth it though. Any excuse to touch the girl...

After the movie we were hanging out behind the theater in the parking lot talking. It was late and there was nobody around. Then another movie must have let out, because this huge group of people pours out of the theater. My heart just exploded

with adrenalin and I very nearly started running. On a subconscious level I had assumed that they were a pack of bloodthirsty zombies. How messed up is that?

Oh, I almost forgot this other funny thing: When we were buying the tickets, Turbo Dan goes up to the window and says "Three children for *Dawn of the Dead*." The girl working there goes "Um, you guys aren't children." He just gives her this big dumb Turbo Dan smile and says "We're all children, on the *inside*." She kind of looks at him with this weird smitten grin and then sells him the tickets for children's price! LOL! Sometimes it's nice to have a Turbo Dan on your team.



Thursday, April 8, 2004 - 5:27 p.m.

Thursday Poetry Critique

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 3

HR Julie is all over the map today.

*I hope you weren't an April fool,
and that your daylight savings was neat.
Next week is for paying your taxes,
but today is for submitting time sheets!*

Not one, not two, but three boring non-holidays are represented in this one. I've never seen April presented in such a painful manner.



marcus132 comments...

This may have been an intentional slight, so as not to offend those of the non-Catholic persuasion, but she failed to mention that this Sunday is Easter. She missed an opportunity to write about baskets, bunnies, and our one true Lord rising from the grave to devour brains in favor of April fools, daylight savings, and taxes. That's just sloppy.



timb comments...

Caster, I hope you are aware that your frequent postings of HR Julie's "poetry" to public entries in your journal is in direct violation of the Geneva Convention.



halfwayhappy comments...

Do fool and taxes rhyme? Are they supposed to?



Friday, April 9, 2004 - 2:24 p.m.

Duck Hunt

Current mood: cheerful

Comments: 0

Last night Shadoe and I were hanging out at Turbo Dan's place. He lives in this unfinished apartment over some random family's garage, and every time I go there I feel like I'm visiting Mike Seaver's pad.

Anyway, he just bought an old Nintendo from the Goodwill and he was so excited about it. All he wanted to do was play *Duck Hunt* all night long, which was stupid at first, but just got more hilarious the longer we drank.

For some reason Shadoe could only shoot with accuracy if she stood up, so every time it was her turn she became some kind of cowgirl ninja, leaping around and firing off shockingly accurate rounds into duck after 8-bit duck. It was the hottest thing I've ever seen.

I, on the other hand, can't aim a light gun for crap. I think I hit two ducks the whole night. That stupid dog was laughing at me in my dreams last night.



Saturday, April 10, 2004 - 7:47 p.m.

Ray, a drop of golden sun

Current mood: giggly

Comments: 6

Last night I did something that I swore I'd never do. Something that has always filled me with equal parts fear and loathing. The worst thing to come from Japan since Rodan.

Karaoke.

Needless to say, it was all Shadoe's idea. If anyone else on Earth had suggested this course of action, including my own mother as her deathbed wish, I wouldn't have gone. But for Shadoe... well, you and I both know I'd do anything for Shadoe.

It was me and her, plus Turbo Dan and his hyper idiot friend Scottie. Scottie is this total ADD freakout boy. He's always "on". I don't think I've ever seen him without words spewing out of his toothy jaws. And he always refers to me as "Casterbater". I fucking hate that guy.

Anyway, he's exactly the kind of moron that karaoke was invented for. As I was sitting there with butterflies in my stomach waiting for my inevitable turn at the mic, he was up there like, 28 times. He's so annoying. And the worst part is, he was totally trying to mack on Shadoe. He kept giving her "shout outs" from the stage. Whatever.

When it was my turn I sang "Me and my Shadow". Oh yeah, I'm subtle like a mix tape, baby. It didn't turn out as well as it could have, considering that I didn't actually know how the lyrics went before they came up on the screen.

"We're closer than smog when it clings to LA - We're closer than Bobby is to JFK"

WTF? I guess the song isn't as romantic as I had imagined it was.

When Shadoe was looking through the songbook she was all annoyed. She was like, "I don't know any of these songs! Who the hell is April Lavine?" Finally she found one that she knew and she wouldn't tell anybody what it was. When it was her turn she got up there and sang that "Doe a Deer" song from *The Sound of Music*. It was soooo cute!

Here's the best part, every time she sang "Ray, a drop of golden sun" she pointed at me! :-) *hehehe!* It made me feel so awesome, especially after Scottie had been trying so hard to get her attention and totally failing. Go me!

After that (and quite a few drinks), she just kept calling me "Sundrop". :-)



webgodd_s comments...

I may be mistaken, but I'm fairly sure karaoke translated to English means "revenge for Hiroshima".

So is Turbo Dan officially going out with Shadoe now?



rcaster1138 comments...

Turbo Dan is most certainly NOT going out with Shadoe! At least, you know, not any more than I am. The three of us have been spending a lot of time hanging out together.

We're like that show with the two guys who hung out with that chick and nobody scored with her, but you could so tell that she wanted to do that one guy. I'm that guy. Turbo Dan is the other guy.



deech comments...

She so digs you, but I think she's playing two sides of the fence here. She gets her "spontaneous and crazy" from Turbo Dan and her "serious and intelligent" from you. As long as she's dating both you and Turbo Dan she gets the best of both worlds. Too bad the sex is falling on his side of the fence.



rcaster1138 comments...

HEY! Shadoe is NOT having sex with Turbo Dan! What's with you people? It's totally that show! You know! With the chick and those two dudes! She wouldn't sleep with a guy like Turbo Dan! Eech! He's so dirty!



marcus132 comments...

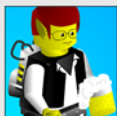
Karaoke is the best thing to come from Japan since grown women dressed like Sailor Moon. Anyone who claims not to like it is just lying to themselves.

Admit it, you had fun even though you *were* third wheeling with the happy couple.



rcaster1138 comments...

SHUT UP! THEY'RE NOT A COUPLE! I HATE YOU!



Thursday, April 15, 2004 - 3:39 p.m.

Can't live with 'em...

Current mood: nauseated

Comments: 1

That guy Blake who sits in the next cubicle just came over here and started talking to me. We're not friends or anything, but sometimes he acts like we are. Whatever.

Anyway, he just comes over and kind of puts his elbow on top of the cubicle wall and leans way down on it so that his shirt lifts up and I'm suddenly eye level with half of his hairy gut hanging out. *shudder*

I'm like, "Um, can I help you?" and he sighs real big and is like, "Women, right? Can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em. Right?"

I panicked. I thought I saw the way out and I ran for it.

"I can live without 'em," I said. He busts out this huge single "HA!" looks me up and down and goes "So what, you're some kind of fag?"

And right then a little piece of my soul died, because I knew there was no easy escape from this conversation. Then he proceeds to spend the next HALF HOUR transparently bitching about his wife, attempting and failing to mask his subject through vagaries and bad hypotheticals about "women".

And his gut was hanging out at me the whole time. *shudder*

I'm going out right now and buying a harpoon gun for the next time he decides he needs to share.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Why doesn't this segment of the population die out?

This is how I KNOW Darwin is on a beach somewhere, drink in hand, and not answering his damn pager.



Saturday, April 17, 2004 - 1:52 p.m.

The pathetic boy next door

Current mood: disappointed

Comments: 1

Last night me and Shadoe and Turbo Dan went to go and see *Kill Bill: Vol 2*, but by the time we got there the show was already sold out. The next one wasn't for like another two hours, so we ended up going to see *The Girl Next Door* instead.

I think the movie can be summed up in one phrase: "My pants are tight! My pants are tight!" Man, I'd like to borrow a pirate ship and plunder the booty of Cuthbert Island, if you know what I'm saying.

So there's this one scene the movie where Elisha Cuthbert's character (a superhot former porn star) takes her new high school loser dork boyfriend to this kegger party. Once they get there, all the jocks immediately go into action to separate the hot chick from the nerd, and then try to threaten and bully him into leaving the party without her. Aside from the parts that involved a hot chick, I could relate, as I've been there a thousand times.

But instead of leaving, the nerd walks right back up to his megahot date, steps between her and the jock trying to pick her up, and just kisses her. Kisses her hard and wet and good. Without a word, the jock just kind of looks at them and then walks away, defeated.

The moment spoke to me. I so wanted to do that with Shadoe right there and then.

It's like, Shadoe is sitting there between me and Turbo Dan. Again. Like always. We're totally like the two dudes and the chick from that show, who are always together, and there's the obvious sexual tension, but nothing ever happens. (God, what is that show?!) *I* know she came to the party with me, but every jock in the place still thinks he has a chance because I'm too shy to "mark my territory" or whatever.

I wanted to make that bold, romantic, movie star gesture that says "I don't care what the jocks say, I'm not leaving this party, because you mean more to me than

anything else, Shadoe."

From that point on, I don't remember much of the movie because my brain was locked in an intense and furious struggle with itself. Should I do it? Should I just lean over there and kiss her? Is this the time? The moment? Will she kiss me back like Elisha Cuthbert kissed her nerd, or will she just think I'm an idiot?

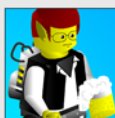
Before I could come to a decision I had worked myself up so much that I was sweating profusely. I could feel the beads raising on my forehead and under my armpits. My heart was beating so hard I could feel the blood running through my ears and I was starting to get short of breath. I must have looked like I was on crack or something. I knew this was not to be my night.

So after the movie I just quietly went home, alone, again... with nothing but downloaded Maxim jpgs of Elisha Cuthbert for comfort...



deech comments...

I'm telling you, you need to just take Shadoe out on your own. Just take her out for \$DEITY{possessive} sake!



Wednesday, April 21, 2004 - 4:09 p.m.

Where's my harpoon gun?

Current mood: angry

Comments: 3

Holy shit, I'm seriously about to snap.

Blake has been in his cubicle muttering to himself and laughing all day. Like, these big bursts of LOUD laughter, like he's watching *The Simpsons* over there or something. He's not on the phone. Maybe he's reading something? I have no idea what the hell he's doing that's so much goddamn fun over there, but it's really annoying.

But wait! That's not all! He just comes over here and he's all sweaty and pit-stainy. He's got on this big stupid grin and he throws his greasy hands in front of my monitor and bellows "Hey, quit looking at all that MAN PORN, Gay Ray!" Then he laughs loud and walks away.

Oh yeah, have I mentioned that since the "Can't live with 'em" incident, he's been calling me "Gay Ray"? Yeah, it just keeps getting funnier every time he does it. Bastard.



nostradomnatrix comments...

What he's doing is sexual harassment. He disgusts me.



rcaster1138 comments...

This is sexual harassment? But I'm *not* gay. Doesn't he have to grab my butt or something for it to be sexual harassment?



nostradomnatrix comments...

Sexual harassment is creating an environment that makes people feel sexually threatened, having their sexuality called into question (such as this, or being called a "fag" because a guy refuses to go to a strip club with his coworkers), or having to endure things like listening to coworkers talk about sexual stuff in the office.

I realize everyone is all up in arms about being "PC", however... it is an office, and there is a huge difference between being PC and just having some basic manners.



Thursday, April 22, 2004 - 5:02 p.m.

She just shows up

Current mood: confused

Comments: 2

At the gentle urging of my pal **deech**, last night I made a clear and decisive move to ask Shadoe on a "date" rather than just "hanging out."

I don't have her phone number (as she claims to have no phone), but I do know where she lives. So I went there. The windows were all dark and nobody answered the door. She must have been out somewhere. I waited around for a while, but then decided that if I was just sitting in my car outside her place when she got home I'd look really stalkery.

On the way home I stopped at Circle K and asked Turbo Dan for her number. He said he didn't have it. I was like, "So if you don't have it, how do you get in touch with her when we're going to hang out?" He was like, "I don't, she just shows up."

Just shows up? Ouch! Man, she never "just shows up" at my place. :-(Then again, I guess she technically doesn't know where I live. Still, ouch.



timb comments...

It makes sense when you consider that Turbo Dan works at the Circle K near her place. Does Shadoe even have a car? If you tell me she drives a Dodge Shadow, I'm going to drive to Sarasota just to smack you.

If I were you, I would burn a mix CD for her. The mix CD is an art unto itself and it takes more effort and is much more personal than a bouquet or a box of

chocolates. Plus, you'd make good use of the 18 gigs of illegal music you're harboring on your external hard drive. You criminal.



amayasumi comments...

how about this. tape a map to her door like a treasure hunt. you could send her around to a bunch of places and have little cute and/or romantic things planned for her with the map finally ending at your house. that way she'd "just show up" for you!



Monday, April 26, 2004 - 3:22 p.m.

Treasure Hunt

Current mood: happy

Comments: 3

You guys are the most amazing people on the Internet. Seriously. The suggestion **amayasumi** made on my last entry was dead on. On Saturday afternoon I acted on her treasure hunt idea.

So I go to Shadoe's place and, ironically, I find myself actually thinking "DON'T be home! DON'T be home!" Luckily for me, she wasn't home. I taped my note to the door and then booked it out of there.

timb made a good point: I didn't know if she had a car. So to be safe I directed her to something that I knew she could walk to.

"At the Circle K
No one buys the cereal
Find the next clue there."

In all the time I've been frequenting that particular Circle K, I think the entire sell-through has been limited to fountain drinks and magazines. I taped the next note on the front of a dusty box of "limited edition" *Hulk* cereal, anticipating that nobody would be buying that crap. (If you're wondering, I took into account the potential complication, and made sure Turbo Dan wasn't working that day.)

And... so on and so forth from there. I'm not going to write out the whole thing for your amusement. Get your own stalker. ;-)

I had the clues end in this skunky little public park not far from her place. Ideally it would have been the beach, but if she didn't have a car that would almost certainly have ended up bringing Turbo Dan into the equation, which would have been disastrous. I waited there reading my brand-new copy of *Brave New World*. Oh yeah, if there's one thing I'm all about, it's the details.

So after about two hours I'm starting to think that something has gone wrong. I actually had myself convinced that somebody had bought the box of *Hulk* cereal,

and Shadoe just ended up taking the first note to Turbo Dan's house with a visible "WTF?" hanging over her head.

But then, just when I was about to give up and go home, she showed up! She was riding this really girly hot pink bicycle with a banana seat and those big chopper handlebars. That chick has style in everything she does. It had a little pink license plate with her name on it and everything.

Anyway, she was wearing khaki slacks and an embroidered polo shirt complete with name tag, aka her work uniform from the auto parts store. I jumped on that and was like, "It's about time. I called for a price check three hours ago!"

She laughed despite the fact that my joke made no sense, which is always a good sign. She said that when she saw the note she got so excited about the mystery that she didn't want to waste time changing her clothes. I was like, "Well I hope you're not disappointed with what you found at the end" and she was like, "Not at all! I've been waiting all day for somebody to make a good 'price check' joke."

A girl who tolerates my bombed comedy. I'm so in love.

We hung out for a long time and talked about *Brave New World*. This time I was ready, with thoughts and opinions and everything. After a week of office dullards and TiVo, it was like a bucket of cold water being splashed on my brain. It was exhilarating.

At one point I decided to try to play dumb for a minute just to see what would happen. I was like, "I know the treasure hunt was fun, but it's not exactly the most efficient way to meet up. Could I have your phone number for next time?" She kind of rolled her eyes and was like, "I told you, I don't have a phone." I was like, "How can you not have a phone? Everybody has a phone." She was like, "Aborigines don't have phones." And I was like, "Okay, everybody in *America* has a phone." Then she tells me all about these places in New Mexico that she read about where people live "off the grid", completely detached from civilization.

I'm finding that it's impossible for me to best her in any sort of battle of wits, so I gave up. She put her hand on my leg and was like, "If it bothers you so much, just give me your number and I can call you from work." Wooo! Go me! :-)

After it was dark and the bugs started swarming us we put her bike in my trunk and I took her home. It turns out that she doesn't have a car. I pointed out the irony that she works in an auto parts store yet didn't actually own one. So that's no phone, no motorcar. She's only one step away from being like Robinson Crusoe, as primitive as can be.

I got the bike out of the trunk and she was like, "I had a great time. Let's hang out more, okay?" And I was like, "Okay! Call me!" I wanted to give her a kiss, but with the bike in the way and everything it just wasn't going to happen smoothly, so I aborted.

So I guess now I just sit back and wait for her to call. I can't wait! :-)



deech comments...

I feel the need to point out that the "shy guy wants to give you a kiss but can't" bit is only cute for so long, and you may be pressing your luck this far. Next time you gotta get that kiss or you risk falling firmly into the "friend" abyss, and I tell you, there's no lovin' to be had there.

"Let's hang out more, okay?" is girl code. You had permission and you aborted. Don't let it happen again or I'll hurt you.



aerospace comments...

damn! where can _i_ find a guy to make up a treasure hunt for me?



rcaster1138 comments...

Check the pirate saloons down by the old docks. Those guys are all about the treasure maps.



Wednesday, April 28, 2004 - 2:11 p.m.

"Bye Victoria, I love you."

Current mood: curious

Comments: 3

Whoa! Something weird just happened.

Okay, Blake was on the phone arguing with his wife Linda all morning. Again. There's nothing weird about that, it happens just about EVERY FREAKIN' DAY.

So, like usual, I put on my headphones and cranked it up until his voice was nothing more than Charlie Brown's teacher waa-waaing in the background. That was like, two hours ago.

So just now I get up to go to the bathroom and he's still on the phone, but he sounds all hushed and pleasant. I'm thinking "Sweet. They've reached a truce. Maybe he'll shut up for a while." Then, just before he hangs up he's like, "Bye Victoria, I love you."

Victoria?! Who's Victoria?! I think I suddenly have a little bit of leverage for the next time he starts busting out the "Gay Ray" shit. ;-)



timb comments...

Ooh! Unless his mom's name is Victoria, (and then, unless he calls his mom by her first name) I smell a dirty little affair! Good ammunition to have. Caster, prepare to blackmail!



amayasumi comments...

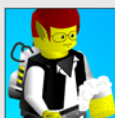
grins karma's a bitch, isn't it? ~.^



seinjunkie comments...

The only other possibility might be a daughter. Maybe he has a daughter from a previous marriage?

I guess you could say that if he doesn't have an ex-wife to explain Victoria now, Victoria is going to explain why he has an ex-wife later on. :)



Thursday, April 29, 2004 - 7:10 p.m.

All Mixed Up

Current mood: productive

Comments: 4

I'm taking **timb**'s suggestion and working on a mix CD to give Shadoe. Here's the playlist so far. What do you think? I'm new at this.

"Almost like Being in Love" - Frank Sinatra

"You're the Inspiration" (Theme to *Karate Kid II*) - Peter Cetera

"Tongue Tied" - *Red Dwarf*

"When I See You Smile" - Bad English

"Witch Doctor" - David Seville

"Waiting for a Girl Like You" - Foreigner

"You Make Me" - Weird Al

"Love and Affection" - Nelson

"It's Like it was Meant to Be" - Strong Bad



nostradomnatrix comments...

You are so goddamn sweet. You make me feel all squirshy. What a lucky gal to be getting this sort of attention!

I don't know if you like *The Princess Bride* at all, but the theme song is so ... mooshy. You can even call her Buttercup, for you are truly her Westley.



marcus132 comments...

Ahem. The theme to *Karate Kid II* was "Glory of Love."

You should include "You've Got a Crush on Me" by The Donnas.

"You've got a crush on me, and it's easy to see, that you write about me in your diary..."

It's so appropriate, in a reverse psychology kind of way.



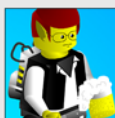
aerospace comments...

i don't want to rain on your parade, but this sounds like a worked over version of some "love hits of the late '70s/early '80s" compilation. i'd suggest less sappy stuff, more just general upbeat, happy things, something she could listen to to get into a really happy mood.



gozer2048 comments...

I'm totally agreeing with **aerospace** on this one. This sounds like the set list from my 8th Grade semi-formal. Yick.



Friday, April 30, 2004 - 2:21 p.m.

It's a Jump to Conclusions Mat, where you can *jump* to *conclusions*.

Current mood: silly

Comments: 2

Ha ha ha! Okay, I just slipped off my headphones so that I could reach the cabinet behind me, and I hear Blake on the phone sounding all stern:

"Victoria, this is not up for discussion. I said no."

As soon as I hear him, suddenly I turn all Gladys Kravitz. I'm practically holding a glass up to the wall to make sure I don't miss a word of it...

"I don't care what your mother says, *I* said NO and that's the final answer!"

Ha ha ha! WTF? I had no idea he had a kid. A kid named "Victoria" no less. Now I've got this image in my head of idiot Blake and his psycho wife in some crumbling duplex in Palmetto raising this prim and proper little British monarch.

"Victoria! The Bucs game is on! Get daddy a brewski!"

"Oh father. Wouldn't you rather watch the cricket match and have a spot of tea?"

It looks like **seinjunkie** wins the prize on that one. So much for my blackmail fuel.

Anyway, on a completely different subject, I think the advice you guys gave me on the mix CD is dead on. I'll post my new and improved playlist in a little bit.



marcus132 comments...

He only said that he didn't care what her mother said. He didn't say he was her father...

"But Blake, this will never work. I think we should stop seeing each other, okay?"

"Victoria, this is not up for discussion. I said no."

"But my mother says it's wrong for a twelve-year-old girl to be dating a married man! Won't you reconsider?"

"I don't care what your mother says, *I* said NO and that's the final answer!"



rcaster1138 comments...

You are so sick.

Anyway, the mix CD is burning now. I just got a call from Turbo Dan. He's getting his posse together to see *13 Going On 30* tonight. I shall give it to her there.

Here's the final track list, if you're wondering:

"Everybody to the Limit" - Strong Bad

"Drop Dead Gorgeous" - Republica

"Ana Ng" - TMBG

"Why Can't This Be Love" - Van Halen

"You've Got a Crush on Me" - The Donnas

"Pop Goes the World" - Men Without Hats

"Tongue Tied" - *Red Dwarf*

"Shadows of the Night" - Pat Benatar

"Bicycle Seat" - Timb

"Ray of Light" - Madonna

"Let's Go Crazy" - Prince

"Do-Re-Mi" - Julie Andrews

"You're the Inspiration" (Not the theme to *Karate Kid II*) - Peter Cetera



Monday, May 3, 2004 - 7:56 p.m.

Matty! It's Thriller!

Current mood: happy

Comments: 1

Mooker for the block

13 Going On 30

Mix CD dispatched

So on Friday night we all went and saw *13 Going On 30*. It was alright. It's an entirely new concept that hasn't been done since *Big*, *Vice Versa*, *Like Father Like Son*, *Freaky Friday*, or...

The main character's name was "Jenna Rink", which sounds almost like "generic", which I can't believe is a mere coincidence. At any rate, Jennifer Garner is cute, and she's worth watching for an hour and a half (even in *Daredevil*).

I met up with the other folks at the theater. Shadoe always rides in with Turbo Dan, since they live so close to each other and I live on the complete other side of the theater. It kind of sucks, but it really doesn't make any sense for me to go get her when he's right there. Anyway, they had Turbo Dan's friend Mooker with them too.

Mooker seems like an okay guy. I don't know him very well. He's one of these total Rasta guys with the little mirrored glasses and that big hat that makes his head look like a hacky-sack and everything. He barely ever talks but he's got one of those deep, booming laughs that lets you know he's friendly, even if he doesn't entirely understand what's going on. Apparently Scottie was supposed to come too, but he had some other thing to go to. Thank God. I fucking hate that guy.

That girl that Turbo Dan scammed for children's price tickets a few weeks ago was working the box office again. He was *totally flirting* with her to try to get free tickets. It was kind of hilarious, because she was obviously still in high school. I thought it was funny but Shadoe looked all disgusted, so I had to side with her and put on my disapproving face.

Anyway, he didn't get all the way to free, but he did manage to get us children's price tickets again. Heh.

After we got past the ticket ripper guy, I ducked into the bathroom for a minute before the movie. When I got into the theater, Shadoe was sitting between Turbo Dan and Mooker. D'oh! Leaving them before we were seated was a stupid move on my part. Given the chance, why would Mooker *not* sit next to Shadoe? To make matters worse he fell asleep halfway through the movie.

After the movie when we were about to leave I gave Shadoe her mix CD. She was all surprised and happy, and she gave me a big hug. I made a date with her to see *Kill Bill: Vol 2* later this week. Go me! :-)



deech comments...

You better kiss her on that date, or Unca Deech is gonna come whip up on ya.



Wednesday, May 5, 2004 - 5:25 p.m.

Worst. Date. Ever.

Current mood: bitchy

Comments: 5

I did not kill Bill
I almost killed Turbo Dan
Hits on ticket girl

Okay, so Shadoe and I went on our "date" last night. Nothing could have happened to make the night go worse.

When I went to her place to pick her up, TURBO DAN WAS THERE! I was like, "What are *you* doing here?" and he looked at me all squinty and dumb like and was like, "*Kill Bill*, right?"

Apparently when I said "we" as in "me and Shadoe" should go to see *Kill Bill*, I had been misinterpreted as "everyone who is currently with us" should go to see *Kill Bill*. I have no idea why Turbo Dan thought that I was going to break with tradition and pick up BOTH of them at her place and not JUST HER, but that's what ended up happening.

The movie was, eh, whatever. I admit, I'm not giving it a fair chance, and I probably would have liked it more under different circumstances.

But wait, there's more. You know "children's price ticket" girl from the box office? Well last night Turbo Dan laid on the charm in thick greasy layers, and we finally got those free passes that he's been scamming for. Great. So not only is he on MY DATE, but he also scored us free tickets. Way to make yourself look like you're all that, Turbo Dan. Although to her credit, Shadoe didn't seem impressed by his blatant swaggering.

We saw the 10:20 show, so after the movie was over the theater was pretty much closed. As we're leaving, the box office girl comes out at the same time. I've seen her a bunch of times in the past, but never in her street clothes. She had that look like... what do you call those kids who wear the big pants and the mechanic shirts and emo glasses and trucker caps? Well it turns out she's one of those.

She's all "Hey, did you enjoy your free movie?" and Turbo Dan is all like, "The only thing that could have made it better is if you had been there too." Gag.

I had to get up to go to work in the morning, plus I was pissed off, so I was anxious to get going, but he just kept flirting with her. He kept calling her "Floyd" because that's the name that was embroidered on her shirt. She told him that her name was actually "Tory" and he was all, "Like Tory Sinclair?" She obviously didn't know what he was talking about and she kind of laughed it off. I just IMDBed it. Porn star. Unbelievable.

Whatever. I hope they hook up and have a nice life together. Maybe it'll get him the hell out of MY life for a few minutes.



nostradomnatrix comments...

That is a PERFECT outcome. I think **deech** would have to agree that Turbo Dan SHOWED HIS ASS. Oh, did he show his ass.

This is what you want, hon! I'm serious! It's the "Here's a little more rope" technique. Don't worry about a thing. Just be the Zen Master of Not Showing Your Ass While Letting Him Show His Ass and you just see what happens.

It doesn't feel fantastic right now. But you just watch and wait!



deech comments...

I think I would have to agree that Turbo Dan "Showed his ass".

Seriously, next time he pulls stupid shit like that just relax, shoot Shadoe a "meaningful glance" to show that the ass showing has been marked, but then just let it go and have a good time anyway. She'll appreciate that you're not a hothead, which is a big turn off for most chickas.



rcaster1138 comments...

I've been rolling my eyes at Turbo Dan's behavior for years. Little did I know that I could profit from it!



seinjunkie comments...

If Shadoe is anything like you say she is, she doesn't buy into Turbo Dan's crap and is merely a spectator, just like you are.

Don't worry, the right opportunity will present itself and you'll be able to make your intentions crystal clear to her: one on one.

Or you could have her do another treasure hunt, if you know what I mean. ;)



deech comments...

... and this time have it end in your "pants" ... and maybe you'll have "sex".



Thursday, May 6, 2004 - 6:00 p.m.

The date is set!

Current mood: nervous

Comments: 5

I just called Shadoo at the auto parts store and made a date, for real, with *just her*. We're going out to dinner tomorrow night at Tommy Bahamas. I think she'll dig that place. It's next to the beach and it's all *Gilligan's Island*, but classily so.

I'm going to kiss her tomorrow night. I'm afraid of what **deech** will do to me if I don't.

After dinner I want to ask her to be my steady girl. Or like... God, what did I just say? "My steady girl"? I sound like I'm asking out Joanie Cunningham. Maybe I should ask for her father's blessing while I'm at it.

Can you guys please help me? How does a guy ask a girl to be in an exclusive relationship? I guess you can probably tell, I've never really done this before. I don't even know the language, let alone the syntax. Jesus, my palms are sweating already just typing this. I so need help.



amayasumi comments...

well... "i really like you shadoo. you're a wonderful person and a great friend. i was wondering if we could be more than friends?"

or..... "i'd really feel honored if you'd be my girlfriend."

how about if she likes weezer saying "if i'm buddy holly i'd like you to be mary tyler moore."



rcaster1138 comments...

I'm familiar with the Weezer song, of course, but did Buddy Holly and Mary Tyler Moore even know each other? She was married to Dick Van Dyke, right?



aerospace comments...

before asking her to be exclusive, you should kiss her. gauge her reaction. if she seems confused or unsure of what just happened, maybe you should try for a few more one on one dates with her before asking her to be exclusive.

maybe it's just me, but any dating phrase using the word "steady" sounds out-of-date to me. but maybe she digs that?



rcaster1138 comments...

Yes, I agree that "steady" sounds out of date. Much like someone who might be asking out a girl from *Happy Days*, you see.

I'm "hip", I'm "with it."



aerospace comments...

tucka tucka tucka "give daddy a hug"



Friday, May 7, 2004 - 7:29 p.m.

Here I go!

Current mood: excited

Comments: 0

I'm leaving now to pick up Shadoe for our date.

I have a good feeling. I feel like this is going to go perfectly. I don't know why, I just have this feeling. :-) Although on the other hand, I'm so nervous I think I'm going to puke.

Wish me luck! I'll let you know how it went later tonight, or with any luck, *tomorrow morning*! Oooooooh, just kidding. ;-)



Saturday, May 8, 2004 - 4:24 a.m.

heartbroken

Current mood: ...

Comments: 5

This was the worst night ever I wanted to wait until morning to write up the whole thing for you, but I'm a littel bit totally drunk, and I can't sleep and because I can't stop thinkign about it. I don't feel like going into all the details. They hadrly seem important now.

I picked up Shadoe and she was wearing a red dress and she was so so beautiful and so perfect. We went to th erestaurant and all was good at first. We talked about stuff and laughed and hwere havign a really good time. I was so happy, and I was thinking "This is it, this is the time fo r the first kiss!

Then she was all smiled at me ans was like, "You're so much easier to talk to than Turbo Dan. Weve been dating fr 2 months and I still can't tell if he really likes me or if he's just using me for sex."



aerospace comments...

oh fuck.

what the hell?? didn't turbo dan say there was nothing going on between them when you asked? did you even ask? mother of hell.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Thinking of TD with her is, to me, akin to a child scribbling on the Sistine Chapel with a crayon. I'm sure you were totally grossed out and mortified. I'm so sorry you had to hear that.

Game ain't over yet, Rocky. You gotta get back in there and finish this, one way or the other. Go by there today, take her out again, do whatever. The shock of what she said will be gone soon... the horror... the abject nausea from what she said... and then you must continue.

And may I recommend you touch her face instead of focusing on kissing her. The girl's life is obviously bereft of tenderness, and you're such a tender creature.



halfwayhappy comments...

insert words of encouragement here

Keep after her... Tell her your feelings for her, and if she laughs in your face, so what? Promise her that you won't leave her alone until she's yours. Don't give up just yet. Girls love being pursued, and they love being swept off their feet. =)



seinjunkie comments...

Take this opportunity to strengthen and further deepen your relationship with Shadoe. I know that staying on a friend level might be hard and it could seem like the elephant in the room to you, but, if you are someone she knows she can run to with problems or for support you'll fill an emotional void that Turbo Dan doesn't seem to be filling.



deech comments...

For God's sake, don't listen to **seinjunkie**! You set yourself up as "just a friend" now and you'll spend the next x years as the emotional dumping ground where she complains about crappy guys.



Tuesday, May 11, 2004 - 7:01 p.m.

Thank you for being a friend...

Current mood: blank

Comments: 2

Hi everybody. I'm still alive. Sort of...

First off, I'm sorry about the last post. I didn't mean to be all drama queen. I would have deleted it, but by the time I got up the next day you had all pretty much read it already.

You guys are the best friends ever. I was dreading clicking on that comments link, expecting the worst. I was expecting everyone to put into words how stupid and useless I was feeling, but you guys were all there for me. Thank you. :-)

I've been in kind of a daze for the past few days. Turbo Dan called last night. I let the machine get it and then sat there halfway between rage and despair as he casually invited me to go out with him and Scottie the hyper idiot.

His voice had that familiar, oblivious tone to it. Like nothing in the world was wrong. I'm sure he has no idea what I'm feeling, or that I'm feeling anything. As usual, he has no idea of the depths of depression he can put me through with his casual detachment from reality.

I haven't talked to Shadoe since Friday night. I know that I'm almost stuck in the "friend zone" and I'm giving her some time to realize how much she misses having me around before I storm back into her life. Okay, honestly I'm just scared to try to get in touch with her. I suck at life.



gozer2048 comments...

Get back in there and finish this. Tell her how you feel. Get it all out there, and then it's up to her. If it's a "no", it will suck, sure, but it's much better than the agony of wondering and being all frustrated while either hanging out "as friends" or avoiding her. And it's not going to be a "yes" unless you take the chance. So do it.



deech comments...

Ray, listen to the Sumerian god.



Saturday, May 15, 2004 - 11:38 p.m.

A weird day

Current mood: weird

Comments: 2

She's a library
She's Robinson Crusoe
Shadoe is my friend

This afternoon I finally got my guts together and decided to go over to Shadoe's place and tell her about, you know, everything. It was a weird day, so I'm going to try to document all the weird details right now before I forget them.

Okay, so I knocked on the door and I could hear some big band type music playing inside. She answered the door and was all like, "Hey! Where have you been this week! Come on in!" and whatever.

This was the first time that I'd seen the inside of her trailer. It had kind of a college-y vibe to it. There wasn't too much furniture, just a futon and some secondhand stuff. Actually not that different from my apartment. The thing that made it different was this: books.

Just, a million books. I'm talking like, my school library didn't have this many books. There were books on the table, books on the floor, books in stacks, books with boards across them making shelves to hold other books... it was book madness. I've got about one shelf in my computer desk full of books, and half of them are HTML and Java reference, and the other half are Harry Potter and Doctor Who. I feel like such an illiterate retard.

Anyway, we talked for a while about her books. I looked for ones that I had read, and didn't really find any. She pointed out ones that she thought I'd like and explained why. Just like always, talking with her was "enlightening" rather than just "lite". I realized at about this point that she is the only person in this city that I actually have conversations with, and don't just grunt out the minimalistic answers that I'm required by society to provide.

Then we talked about the record. It was a guy called Glenn Miller, who I also didn't know. I liked it though, and a few of the songs sounded kind of familiar to me. I asked her what she thought of the songs on the mix CD I made her. She sounded all apologetic and said that she hadn't had a chance to listen to it yet. That kinda hurt, but it would all make sense later.

Anyway, the records she had weren't like the Weird Al records I had as a kid. They were like, really thick and heavy. She said they all came with her record player when she bought it at the Goodwill a long time ago. It had some kind of spring mechanism or something, and when you cranked it up for a minute it would spin for the whole length of the record. The speaker was built in, and it had a lid that closed on it that made it completely portable. It was really cool.

So about this time it starts getting dark, and she starts lighting up a bunch of candles. So of course, I take this as a sign. Wouldn't you? Jesus. Okay, I'm getting ahead of myself.

So she starts lighting up all these candles, and I'm thinking "Candles = romance! She's trying to start something up! Go me!"

When she's done with the candles, she sits down on the futon, which was transformed into Autobot couch mode. I sit down next to her. We continue to talk, but she's changed the record and now the music is some jazzy thing. Louis Armstrong or something. I don't know, I'm a retard about anything earlier than about 1982 as far as music goes.

So then I did it. I finally did it. I leaned in, closed my eyes, and gave her a big kiss right on her sweet, soft lips. I felt a spark. It was like when you're all full of static electricity and you touch the banister, except it started in my stomach and arced to my chest. My fingers went numb for like, 4 minutes.

But when I kissed her, she didn't kiss me back. She didn't freak out and jump away or anything, but she like, didn't participate. It was like kissing somebody who is asleep but trusts you. I don't know how to describe it.

She was all like, "Ray, what was that all about?" and I was all like, "Shadoe, you are the most beautiful and intelligent and (with a gesture around the room) decidedly most well read woman I've ever known, and I've wanted to be close to you since the minute we met."

She kind of looked troubled, but happy, then hurt, and then kind of a revolving Man-E-Faces mechanism of the three. She said that she thought I was really sweet and a great guy and yadda yadda and blah blah blah blah *just friends*.

I was like, "But what about all of these candles?" and she looked puzzled and was like, "They were for light?" and I was like, "But candlelight is supposed to be romantic! Why candles?" And she was like, "Didn't you know, I don't have electricity."

Well that's it then. She actually is Robinson Crusoe. No phones, no lights, no motorcar. Not a single lux-u-ry. Except she probably wouldn't even get that reference, seeing as how she's more likely to have actually read *Robinson Crusoe* than to have watched *Gilligan's Island*.

So anyway, since the heart was already open, I decided to dump the whole thing out. I told her about how strongly I feel about her, and how Turbo Dan is more of a player, and how if she didn't even know if he liked her or not, how could she know that she liked him?

She didn't really answer. She looked all, I don't know, like a captured animal. She said how much she liked me *as a friend* and how she'd never want to lose that, and how I was so valuable to her and everything, and how she didn't want this to make things weird between us, and... you know, whatever.

Well you know what, Shadoe? Things are now weird. I don't want to lose her either,

and I'd rather have a continued friendship than to lose her altogether. Still, how can I pretend that I don't want more, when more is the thing that I want most in the world?



aerospace comments...

that "just friends" shit is awkward for everyone involved.
total bummer, but you get major ups for making the move.



deech comments...

Now that it's out in the open, do not just crawl into your little "friend house". That's very important.

Continue to take her out. Show her a good time, get drunk with her, do nice things for her. Make sure she knows that you're trying to win her. Do **not** let her make you an emotional dumping ground.

Overall, this is good, the lines of communication are open. Keep doing that special sort of "Ray-magic" (but keep the "Ray-Sauce" put away).



Saturday, May 22, 2004 - 9:35 p.m.

To be a friend, but not to be "a friend"

Current mood: melancholy

Comments: 1

She's not underage
Tension with the girl I love
I'm a drama queen

Hey everybody! Sorry I've been MIA this week. Long story short, work completely kicked my ass, and then Blake pissed in the wounds with his telephoned marital bliss, and then HR Julie sprinkled them with the salt of bad poetry. I don't want to be a whiner, so I put it all in that little black bottle that I call **my soul**.

Last night I went on another date with Shadoe. Sort of. Well, sort of a double date. Sort of. Well... okay, let's start at the start.

deech pretty much said "Don't wuss out now, you're totally in the zone, bro." So between the shitty work week and his advice, when Turbo Dan called last night and invited me to go out with him and his people to get wasted, I was into the idea on so many different levels.

I guess I was early getting to the bar, because Scottie was the only one there that I knew. He's all like, "Hey Casterbater, have you met Turbo Dan's new hotness?" I'm thinking "He's met Shadoe on at **least** 2 different occasions while I've been there.

Am I that invisible that I don't even show up in his memories?" Then again, he probably has ADD or something, so it shouldn't really bother me. At any rate, suffice it to say, I fucking hate that guy.

So Turbo Dan finally shows up, and as I expected, he's got Shadoe with him, but as I did NOT expect, he also had that girl Tory from the movie theater with him. It was like a set of *Odd Couple* bookends or something. There's Shadoe on one side, all slender and blond and doe-eyed, wearing these tight leather pants (my *god*), and on the other side is Tory, all dark and freckly and bespectacled, looking like a 15-year-old auto mechanic, wearing those gigantic hoodlum pants and a big black Oxford shirt.

As soon as they come in, Scottie is all over them. He gives Turbo Dan this big manly bear hug thing then kisses Shadoe on the cheek like they're friends from the Olde Country or something. Then he takes Tory's hand and he's all "Hey Turbo Dan, from what cradle did you pluck this one?" Turbo Dan is like, "Dude, this is that girl I was telling you about before. This is Tory." Scottie steps back and looks her up and down all theatrically and is like, "Tory, huh? Is that short for statu-tory?"

I admit, it was the first time I ever laughed out loud at something Scottie said. Tory's rebuttal was a double-deuce middle finger.

So we go to get drinks and, of course, the bartender asks Tory for ID. Turbo Dan is like, "Come on man, be cool" but Tory was like, "It's no problem. I get this all the time." She goes fishing in the big wallet chained to her pocket and gives the bartender her driver's license. He looks at it, then looks at her, then back at it. Then he repeats like, 20 times. Finally he hands it back and is like, "What can I get you?"

Through the whole thing, Shadoe looked like somebody was piling burning logs onto her back. Her expression was like 20% "I hope this works out for her" and 80% "I hope it's a fake ID and she gets her ass thrown out." When the bartender finally cracked, Shadoe's face collapsed and she immediately ordered a trio of straight-up tequila shots.

So we got a booth and started our drinking in earnest. Turbo Dan and Scottie were sitting on either side of Tory (who I would later find out is actually, despite her looks, 23 years old), just bombarding her with attention. Meanwhile Shadoe sat on the other side with me, somehow thrown away from their collective vision like yesterday's garbage. I couldn't believe it. On the one hand I was happy that Turbo Dan was firmly asserting his non-interest in her, but at the same time I could tell that he was psychologically kicking her ass without even knowing it. Having been on the receiving end of that so many times, I knew how it felt. I felt so bad for her.

She got up to go back to the bar and I shot the rest of my drink and followed her. While we were at the bar she looked like she was going to cry. She was all like, "What is he doing with her? What's going on? Is he mad at me? Was it something that I did?" I tried to draw the fine line between "not letting her dump on me" and "not just being an ass who acts like he doesn't care". I was like, "I don't think it's

anything to do with you. You've got to understand that Turbo Dan just has a short attention span."

She was like, "What can I do to get him to notice me again?" I was like, "What you've got to do is realize that he's not worth the trouble." After I said it, I realized it sounded cold and jealous, but it was the truth. Even if I **wasn't** in love with Shadoe, I've known Turbo Dan a long time, and the advice was legitimate. He's not the relationship type.

For the rest of the night, Shadoe was kind of detached and cold to everybody. The other idiots just kept flirting with the pseudo-jailbait while Shadoe sat outside of their narrow, predatory field of view, drinking hard. I mean HARD. But she didn't lose it. Her tolerance for alcohol must be through the roof, because I wasn't drinking half what she was and I could barely focus my eyes by the time she said she was "feeling tired" and politely excused herself to take a taxi home. I walked her to the door, and she was like, "I'm really sorry about dragging you into all of this, Sundrop."

Okay, now remember, I was loaded at the time, so this sounded like a clever thing to say. I was like, "I don't like it when you call me Sundrop, because sun destroys shadow." She gave me this weak little smile and was like, "To the contrary. Without sun there can't be any shadow at all."

I was like, "But shadow can only coexist with sun when something is standing between them."

Then, thinking I had been incredibly profound and dramatic, I touched her cheek and walked back into the bar. She never came back in. I spent about another hour watching Turbo Dan and Scottie try to out-alpha-male each other, and then took a cab home myself.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Looks like Turbo Dan's doing the old "Show, Don't Tell" technique. That's awesome for you. Sad for her though. But she needs to see it.

"But shadow can only coexist with sun when something is standing between them" actually WAS extremely profound. Touching of the cheek even. **melt**



Monday, May 24, 2004 - 6:15 p.m.

Ass chair!

Current mood: dirty

Comments: 2

It's office gossip time!

Holy crap. This morning when I came in to work Blake's cubicle was totally filled

with stuff. Like, personal stuff. Like, he's got all kinds of boxes of clothes and like, lamps and crap over there. Behind his desk, there's this skanky-looking orange chair from the '70s.

He catches me looking at his stash and he's all like, "Bitch threw me out." Great. Thanks for sharing.

I don't know the details, but I guess he and Linda are "separated", whatever that means. I hope it means that he can't yell at her on the phone all day anymore. I DOUBLE hope it DOESN'T mean that he's going to be yelling at lawyers instead.

So I go into my cubicle to find an identical orange '70s chair stuffed behind my desk. It smells like decades of ass and spilt beer. I was like, "Um, Blake, is this your chair?" He comes over and he's like, "They didn't both fit in my cube. You can hold on to it until I find someplace for all my shit."

WTF? I'm thinking "Oh, *can* I? Thanks! I'm *honored*!" But I didn't say anything out loud.

Sure he's an asshole, but whatever. I can hold on to his ass chair for a few days. It's not *that* inconvenient, and it's easier than trying to make him take it back.

It sure smells like ass though. Why is this my life?



hawk_one comments...

Guys like Blake are the motivation behind the "home office" concept.



deech comments...

No. JUST SAY NO!

"Sorry Blake, but your chair smells like three day old ass. I don't want it."

Or, if you want to be polite about it.

"Fuck you and your fucking chair... bitch."



Saturday, May 29, 2004 - 9:03 a.m.

Hell's Office Party

Current mood: discontent

Comments: 3

Some big boss guy at work just retired yesterday. There's like, 37 levels of micro-management between me and him, so I don't really know anything about him except he's old, bald, and has a big sunny office just down the hall from my dismal little cube. Anyway, they had this "going away party happy hour" thing down in the

lunchroom after work yesterday. Ordinarily I avoid this crap like the plague, but hey, free booze, right?

Never again.

I go in there, and it's just like, 4 loud people who all think that they're hilarious fun machines, and 25 who are just uncomfortably hanging by the walls and nursing drinks. I quickly fell into the ranks of the latter.

Okay, so in a typical day, I get about 4 or 5 stupid, pointless emails that are sent to whole departments or to the whole office. Since I don't actually know any of the senders of these pointless emails, I spent the party entertaining myself by trying to match the faceless names to people who were there. There was this enormous fat lady with a piercingly annoying laugh and hair that failed to leave the '80s. She *had* to be HR Julie. I avoided her.

I finally left the party when Blake got himself liquored up and started getting a little too embarrassing. He was calling me Gay Ray again, and he was pretending to flirt with me. Ha ha. Man, that guy is a ball of laughs. I just kind of ignored him for a while, but when he grabbed my ass and exclaimed "I think this fruit is ripe!" it was time to go.

And this is why I'll never go to another office party again.



nostradomnatrix comments...

You have to do something about him.

He grabbed your ass. If you were a woman you'd be in court by now. So do something about that douchebag.



rcaster1138 comments...

I don't know. I mean, sure I'd like him to get in big trouble, but the idea of reporting him to HR makes me feel like the wussy little schoolyard snitch. I'll have to take care of it myself somehow.



gozer2048 comments...

There is absolutely no reason to put up with this crap. If there is anyone higher up the ladder or even in HR that you're comfortable talking to, give them the low down. Putting up with his shit just encourages him to keep walking over you.



Friday, June 4, 2004 - 3:26 p.m.

Hot Literature Club

Current mood: intimidated

Comments: 0

Her trailer is hot
She's a kind and graceful brain
Do I deserve her?

So it's been almost two weeks since I've seen Shadoe. Or any of the Turbo Dan gang for that matter. I've been keeping to myself. I've been kind of hoping that if I kept my distance Shadoe would come to me. Well, she never did, so last night I finally cracked and went over to her place. I miss her a lot.

When I got to her trailer I realized something: If you live in a metal box with no air conditioning in Florida it gets insanely hot inside. The door was open when I got there and heat just poured out of it in waves. Not exactly knowing the etiquette, I knocked on the open door, even though I could see Shadoe lying on the futon right there in the front room.

She was barefoot, wearing a halter top, clearly braless (YOW!), and this thin, gauzy skirt. She had on no makeup, and her braids were all pulled back in one of those fabric rubber band things. It must have been well over 90 degrees in her place, but she still managed to look cool and comfortable as she lounged there reading a book and drinking a warm glass of tap water.

She seemed happy to see me and invited me in and apologetically gave me my own glass of warm tap water. I asked her what she was reading. She said that all our talk about *Brave New World* had put her on a Huxley kick, so she was reading *Ape and Essence*. She said that it was written like a movie and super weird and she wasn't sure if she liked it or not. I had nothing to add on the subject of literature, as usual.

I told her about how much I liked talking about books with her, and I asked her to recommend another good book to read and discuss. She started looking through the stacks of books around the room and was like, "You're really into science fiction stuff, right?" I was like, "Yeah, I love sci-fi!" and she was like, "Do you like the old school? Have you read any Jules Verne?"

For a brief second my heart swelled as I felt like, for once, I could add something to the discussion of literature that she hadn't planted and hand-watered in my brain. I boldly said "I love Jules Verne! I read *The Time Machine* when I was in high school."

Alright, to be honest, I haven't read *The Time Machine*. I've only seen the movies. I was so hoping that she wouldn't call my bluff that it took me totally by surprise when she graciously and unpretentiously told me that *The Time Machine* was by H. G. Wells.

I kind of laughed it off, but her correction really touched off something inside me. It was one of those things that makes your stomach feel like you just went over the top of a roller coaster even though you're standing still. It made me seriously wonder for the first time: Is she just completely out of my league?

Seriously, look at the facts. First and most obviously there's the physical. She isn't just "pretty" or "cute", she is absolutely drop-dead gorgeous. If she was a foot and a half taller you would already know her, because she would be a supermodel of Turlingtonian proportions. It's something of an unbalanced equation to see her standing next to a suntanned stud like Turbo Dan, let alone a skinny white nerd like me.

I'm not beating myself up here, I'm just stating hard facts. Anyway the obvious beauty gap isn't what puts her out of my league. Hot chicks have been known to hook up with weird-looking dudes. Look at Billy Joel and Christie Brinkley, or Billy-Bob Thornton and Angelina Jolie, or Julia Roberts and Eraserhead. Okay, so maybe it can't happen permanently, but it can happen. No, the thing that really makes me insecure is the one-two punch of her mind and her grace.

She is SO MUCH smarter than me that it must hurt her to come down to my level. She usually speaks so far above me that I can't even venture a guess as to what I'm supposed to say, and when I do manage to get something out it's usually laughably wrong. And that's where the grace comes in.

Most people (admittedly, myself included) love to be able to shut somebody down when they say something stupid. But when I say that I love Jules Verne's *The Time Machine*, she not only knows enough to correct me, but can do it with the perfect smiling pitch of voice and mannerisms that somehow let me know what the right answer was without making me feel like I was ever wrong.

I've spent my whole life trying intentionally to make people look stupid with my impressive knowledge of pop-culture trivia, and now along comes somebody who not only knows more than me, but knows about things that are actually worthwhile to know. And she doesn't lord it over me, but instead gently nestles her corrections into my brain.

Sure I love her, how could I not, but the thing is: Do I even deserve her?

I'm sure as hell going to keep trying. She gave me her copy of *Journey to the Center of the Earth* to read. I'm going to dive into that ASAP. If I can't be her intellectual equal I'm at least going to try not to be her idiot sidekick.



Wednesday, June 9, 2004 - 5:35 p.m.

The chair came back, it just wouldn't stay away

Current mood: crazy

Comments: 2

I think Blake's orange chair is made of boomerang.

Ever since he stuffed it in my cubicle I've been trying to get rid of it, yet it keeps coming back. At first it was frustrating, but now it's just kind of hilarious in a way.

First I put it back in Blake's cubicle after he went home one day. Of course, his cubicle is still full of his crap, so the only place for it was right in the way of his door. The next morning when I got to work it was back in my cubicle. Blake laid on the "Oh come on, can't you be a pal and just hold on to this for a while" act.

For about 5 seconds I was going to say "Look asshole, we're not pals, and I'm not your storage locker", but then I remembered that after I got that off my chest, he'd still be sitting next to me, and he'd probably just be a bigger bastard knowing that I don't like him and his crap. I decided not to make waves and make my life more difficult.

A few days later, after Blake had gone home, I put the chair next to the big garbage cans over by the copy machine. I figured, hey, what could I do if the cleaning staff *happened* to pick it up and throw it away?

The next morning it was back in my cubicle. Blake came over and told me to "quit being cute" and putting the chair back in his cube at night. I guess the cleaning staff matched the chair to the one that was already in his cubicle and returned its mate.

So basically I totally blew this whole operation. I should have just thrown the stupid thing out in the dumpster to begin with and then claimed I didn't know where it went. But now that he's seen me try to ditch it twice he knows I hate it, and if it disappears I'll be on the receiving end of a vindictive ass clown's grudge. Honestly, I'd rather keep the stupid chair.

Well, whatever. I got a garbage bag out of the janitorial closet and covered it up. Now at least it doesn't stink. Go me.



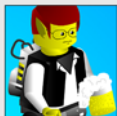
webgodd_s comments...

I know it sounds like "I'm telling!" but is there a way you could ask your supervisor to tell Blake not to store his stanky-ass shit at work? I mean, I can see holding on to some documents or other small pieces of paraphernalia, but furniture? There's got to be a rule against that sort of thing in an office.



rcaster1138 comments...

There probably is a rule, but since nobody else seems to want to enforce it, that would still make me the snitch if I started trying to report him or something. Eh, whatever. It's not so bad with the bag over it.



Friday, June 11, 2004 - 12:33 p.m.

Voulez vous coucher avec moi?

Current mood: enthralled

Comments: 3

I scream for ice cream
Dimes are worth more than nickels
Learned Shadoe is "bi"

Last night I went over to Shadoe's place to hang out. When I got there the door was open and she was laying on the floor with a cold watermelon Icee balancing on her forehead. LOL! I wanted to come up with some clever remark about brain freeze but I was laughing too hard to say anything. She started laughing too and was like, "I'm sorry, I think the heat in here is starting to make me lose my mind."

I diagnosed that she needed 100 CCs of ice cream, stat. So we went over to Dairy Queen and basked in cold chocolate soft serve and cool ketchup scented air conditioning. We sat in a suspiciously sticky booth and talked for a long time. I'm about halfway through *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, so we talked about that a little, but not too much, as she didn't want to ruin it for me.

Speaking of which, I want to ask you guys something before I talk to her about it and look dumb, just in case I'm missing something here: The narrator of the book is engaged to his beautiful cousin. I thought at first that Jules Verne was just using the word "cousin" to mean "close friend" or something, but almost every time he refers to her, he specifically calls her his "cousin". Is this guy having sex with his uncle's daughter? Was this not frowned upon in the 1870s? Gross.

Anyway, the whole time we were talking I was distracted by some people at the counter behind her. They were obviously European tourists. They had that weird sense of sunburned wonder, like the Dairy Queen was all strange and exotic. They were going through a strained pantomime with the frustrated teenager at the counter trying to get around the language barrier long enough to order some DQ Dogs.

So Shadoe is in the middle of telling me how the movie *I, Robot* looks like it has absolutely nothing to do with the book, when suddenly the scene at the counter starts to get loud. The cashier was doing that thing where you talk louder so that someone will suddenly understand English. Apparently the tourists were refusing to pay for their whole order for some reason. They started yelling back at the cashier and counting on their fingers as if to show the idiot that their math was right. I

recognized the numbers as French.

Meanwhile, Shadoe is still in the middle of telling me about *I, Robot*. She gets this irritated look and she's like, "God, hold on a second." She slides out of the booth and goes over to the counter, and then she just starts SPEAKING FRENCH TO THEM! WTF? She starts translating back and forth between the tourists and the cashier like she's some kind of envoy to the United Nations or something.

Apparently there had been some confusion about American coins, as their value doesn't correspond to their relative size. I couldn't believe that all that commotion had been caused over what couldn't have been more than a few cents' worth of discrepancy, but even more, I couldn't believe that Shadoe SPEAKS FREAKIN' FRENCH!

When she came back to the table I was like, "You didn't tell me you can speak French!" And she was all modest, like, "Oh, yeah. Well, I'm not really that fluent anymore." I was like, "You sounded pretty fluent to me!"

She told me how her parents are both multi-lingual, and they taught her French alongside English when she was growing up.

She speaks freakin' French. Sweet Jesus, is there any possible way that this woman could be any hotter?!



timb comments...

Maybe if she spoke it IN BED!



webgodd_s comments...

Gomez: "Oh Tish, that's French..."

Morticia: "Oui."

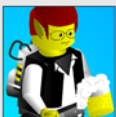
(Kisses from hand, up arm to face ensues...)



deech comments...

FALSE ADVERTISING!

Here I was all excited about her being bi and you were just being clever.



Tuesday, June 15, 2004 - 4:38 p.m.

Come in, and pull yourself up a chair...

Current mood: silly

Comments: 0

Today I realized that if I stick my foot into the back of Blake's chair I can make the

seat flap up and down like a big orange mouth.

I took a marker and drew big eyeballs and teeth on its trash bag cover, and I've been having little conversations with it all day.

"Hi Chairy!"

"Hi Ray!"

"Why don't you come over here and sit on me?"

"Hey now! Shouldn't you at least buy me *dinner* first!"

...

At this point I'm not sure what's more pathetic: that this amuses me so much, or that I feel the need to share it on the Internet.

Speaking of Blake, unfortunately for me, he's getting back to his old self as far as yelling on the phone goes. Today I unintentionally learned that the reason all his crap is still in his cubicle (and mine) is because he's been sleeping on his sister's dining room floor since his wife threw him out.

And then suddenly I don't feel so pathetic anymore.



Thursday, June 17, 2004 - 5:31 p.m.

Oh to be a father

Current mood: blah

Comments: 4

God, I am so quitting my job. I can't take this shit anymore.

All day Blake has been on the phone arguing with his wife, or ex-wife, or whatever the hell she is. I can already see the roots of an ugly custody battle starting to brew in such lovely phrases as "Go ahead and let her stay out all night with God knows who. Raise her to be a slut just like her mother."

Jesus. My headphones don't have a volume loud enough to make that shit go away. But at least it wasn't long after that when I received this week's bundle of joy from HR Julie:

*It's Father's Day so be glad
and give a new tie to your dad!
He always made you mow the grass
and now you've grown up to have such class!
So Sunday don't forget your pop,
and today put in your time card before you leave the shop!*

Ouch. It's like the cherry on top of a headache sundae. I've never been fond of Father's Day to begin with, but now it suddenly seems so much worse.



webgodd_s comments...

What's wrong with Father's Day? Did you have a bad experience with your dad or something?



rcaster1138 comments...

No, it's nothing like that. I'm sure my dad was great. Let's just say it's kind of a depressing story and leave it at that.



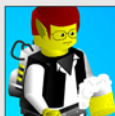
greatbiggary comments...

Dude. What's the deal with your dad, and why haven't I already heard all about it? I think it's time you spilled some back story, Mr. Secrets.



timb comments...

I'm with Gary. I can smell the dirty dirt bubbling near the surface. What's on your mind?



Monday, June 21, 2004 - 2:57 p.m.

Crappy Father's Day

Current mood: gloomy

Comments: 1

Yesterday was bleak
I told her "the Dad story"
I hate Father's Day

Yesterday morning Shadoe came over to use my phone. She wanted to call her dad for Father's Day. She was so cute, she had a little phone card and everything because it was long distance (Her parents live in California). Of course I didn't let her use the card. I told her to consider it my Father's Day gift to her dad.

When she was on the phone I went into the other room to give her some privacy. Through the wall I could hear the murmur of her voice and it sounded upbeat and laughy, but when she got off the phone she almost immediately broke into tears. It kind of freaked me out.

I was like, "Hey, what's wrong?" She just kept wiping her eyes and saying she'd be okay in a minute. She said that it was no big deal and kept apologizing over and over again for "acting psycho". Finally I got her to tell me what was bothering her. She told me all about how her father has been battling pancreatic cancer for the past few years, and now he's in pretty bad shape. She said that every time she talks to him she's afraid that it's going to be the last time. It was so sad. :-(

To change the subject she started asking me questions about what I did for my dad for Father's Day. Yeah. She went there. :-\ I usually try to avoid "the Dad story". It's not a *bad* story, it's just so melodramatic. It makes me self-conscious when I tell it, like I'm trying to dig for sympathy or something. Whatever. Since you're so damn interested I guess you can judge for yourselves. I know some of you have already heard this story, so feel free to jump ahead.

Okay, I guess first I should say that if you didn't know, I grew up in south Jersey, where winter is for real. One cold and bitter February day my dad never came home from work. After a while my mom started to worry and she started calling around to see if she could find him, but with no luck. It was almost midnight when the police officers showed up at the front door. They said that my dad had lost control of his car on an icy road and hit a tree. When they found him he was wearing a rented tuxedo and holding a single red rose in one hand and a love letter to my mom in the other. If you haven't guessed already, yes, it was Valentine's Day.

Evidently he had been on the way home to surprise Mom and take her out somewhere expensive. The police said that he wasn't wearing his seat belt, apparently because he didn't want to mess up his tux. (If there's a moral to the story, that's it right there.) They said that when they found him his lungs were crushed, but it was obvious that he had tried to pick up his gifts and get out of the car before he passed away.

At least that's the way Mom tells it. I've always wondered how much she's embellished the story over the years. I don't really remember. It was 1983. I was 5 years old. So now you know: That's why I've never been fond of Father's Day, but more so, why I loathe Valentine's Day.

When I told Shadoe "the Dad story", suddenly she seemed to feel worse for me (just like everybody who hears it always does), but much better about the relative health of her own dad. So that made me feel pretty good. I didn't want her sympathy, but I didn't really refuse it either. I felt like a creep playing the "dead father" card, but at least it helped her appreciate what she's still got, I guess.

She was okay for the rest of the day, but when I dropped her off at her trailer I could see that sadness creeping back into her eyes. I offered to hang out for a while, but she said she was fine and she was just tired.

So yesterday kind of sucked. Even so, it's probably one of the better Father's Days I've had.



deech comments...

I've... uh... got nothing to say about that...

manly punch to the shoulder



Wednesday, June 23, 2004 - 4:25 p.m.

The meaning of life

Current mood: content

Comments: 1

The meaning of life
Make a difference to someone
I think she likes me

Last night Shadoo and I were hanging out, and when it got late we ended up going out to the beach and sitting on that same lifeguard stand that we did the last time. She was like, "Hey, this is our spot!" It made me feel good to know that we have a "spot". :-)

I guess her dad was still heavy on her mind, because she talked about him a lot while we were sitting there. She told me all about how her parents used to be like, serious activists when they were younger. She said they worked with Greenpeace and the Peace Corps and stuff before she was born, but for as long as she can remember they've been "retired hippies".

Once we got talking about that we kind of realized how useless we actually are ourselves. I mean, we both realized that we've never really done anything to make a difference in the world at all. She was really beating herself up over how her parents used to save the whales and whatever but all she does is schlep fan belts and hang out with her friends.

I guess I can relate because my mom is a nurse. Who knows how many people are alive today because of her help. Meanwhile I'm sitting in this crappy office everyday, putting up with all kinds of pointless shit and just rotting away from the inside out.

So one thing led to another, and we went down that slippery slope until we were talking about the big philosophical question: the meaning of life.

She said that the more she thought about it, the more she thought that the meaning of life was to simply leave the world a better place than it was when you started. She said that not everybody can save an endangered species or end a war or whatever, but everybody can make some kind of positive difference, even if it's just to one person.

I was like, "Well then your life is a success, because my life is so much better now than it was before I met you." She blushed and was like, "Aw. You're sweet" and she patted my knee.

This might be kind of pathetic or weird, but I swear, at that moment the first thing I thought of was you guys. I thought "I'm going to write about this, and **deech** is going to be like, 'And you didn't kiss her! WTF?! I turn my back on you, forever.'"

So I did. I leaned over and kissed her right on her sweet little pink lips. They were soft and warm. She kind of half-laughed and went "Knock it off."

It was so weird, because this should have been really crushing, but it wasn't really. She said it in that *way* that she does. That same way that she corrects me about literature without making me feel like a moron. In a way that only she can, she somehow said "Look, I don't want you kissing me," but made it sound like, "Hey, s'no big deal. You're cool." I don't know how she does it.

I didn't press the issue. Since she had denied me with such grace there wasn't really even an awkward lapse in the conversation. It was so innocuous. Like I had sneezed and she had said "Bless you." It could have certainly been much worse than that. On some level she obviously likes me. Go me! :-)



deech comments...

Muhahaha!

And thus I integrate myself into your life.

wiggles fingers

You will now and always think of **deech** before you kiss a girl... FOREVER!
Muhahahahaha!



Thursday, June 24, 2004 - 8:51 p.m.

Shadoe's Birthday! Aaa!

Current mood: distressed

Comments: 3

Aaa! You guys, I have a crisis!

I went over to Shadoe's today, and there were two birthday cards in the mail on her table! It turns out that this Saturday is her birthday! As in, the day after tomorrow! Aaa!

I really want to do something feet-sweep-her-offingly special for her birthday, but I don't have a lot of time here. What should I do!? If I'm going to organize something I need ideas and I need them fast, people! Help!



amayasumi comments...

a homemade ice cream maker is my super perfect idea. when you use it your hands get really cold which gives you a great opportunity to take her freezing red hands and warm them up for her. holding, kissing, breathing on em... whatever works! ~.^



timb comments...

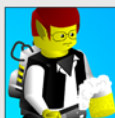
Remember that the most meaningful gifts are made, they aren't bought.



marcus132 comments...

I'd say try a theme park. Amanda and I always have loads of fun when we go to one. You get lots of hours to just hang out and talk and bond and whatnot while you're in line separated by short adrenalin rushes on the rides. Plus, if you're lucky, they might still have some rides where the seats are configured so the girl has to sit between your legs.

And if Shadoe's as literate as you say she is, never, ever let her hear you say "feet-sweep-her-offingly".



Monday, June 28, 2004 - 6:12 p.m.

Ups and downs

Current mood: happy

Comments: 1

This was a weekend of ups and downs, both figuratively and literally.

On Saturday I took Shadoe to Busch Gardens for her birthday like **marcus132** suggested. We had so much fun! They've got some insane roller coasters there, and Shadoe was completely hardcore about them. She was showing no sign of slowing down, even as I was trying my best not to throw up all over her shoes. Good times.

They have this cheesy "Africa" theme there, so we spent the whole day pretending to be on safari. She was like, "The attention to detail in recreating this authentic African village is incredible, right down to the soft pretzel vendor and the Michelob on tap." Ha! Well, theme parks are so much better when there's beer involved. Take notes, Disney.

At the end of the day, we were both wiped out from all the authentic African adventure, and when I dropped her off, SHE KISSED ME! Okay, so it wasn't huge, and it wasn't on the lips, but it was a kiss! She kissed me on the forehead and told me that she had an amazing birthday. Go me! :-)

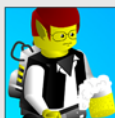
So I go home all happy and what do I find? The down side of the weekend. All the clocks in my apartment are blinking 12:00. I'm thinking "Okay, there was a power outage. No big deal." So I go around turning everything back on and resetting everything, and when I try to turn on the computer nothing happens. It's completely dead. I don't know if the power supply got fried or what, but it's hosed. So it looks like I'm only posting from work for a while until I get it fixed. :-)



seinjunkie comments...

Cool! I went to Busch Gardens in Tampa a few years back and the best part was riding the Montu. It was my first inverted coaster and I must have ridden it ten times by the end of the day.

As for your computer, if you checked the outlet for power and it works, but you see no LEDs on the motherboard, then it sounds like it's your power supply.



Tuesday, June 29, 2004 - 6:55 p.m.

Grr...

Current mood: bitchy

Comments: 4

So last night I snuck into the IT department and "borrowed" a new power supply to replace the burned-out one in my computer. I walked out of the building with it and the dopey security guard at the door was like, "Z'at a bomb?" WTF!? Nothing about "are you stealing that?" just "is that a bomb?" Yes, Mr. Crack Terrorist Alert Force, I'm making little square bombs with Molex connectors. I feel so much safer with him on the job.

Anyway, I put it in my dead computer and nothing. So I guess that wasn't the problem. At this point it looks like my motherboard is dead. Sucks!

To add another little bit of sunshine to my day, Blake has apparently just discovered *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. All day he's been coming over and making hilarious cracks about stuff in my cubicle, calling me "Ray's Eye for the Straight Guy". I hate him.

I was like, "If it looks gay in here, maybe it's because of this stupid orange chair! I'm going to just throw it away and man it up in here!" He was all like, "Ha ha. Don't even joke. I've had those chairs since college, they're all man."

Gah! He kills me! Like I'm supposed to care about shit from his dorm room?! I just don't get it. That guy has some serious issues. Or maybe I do.



timb comments...

Man, I would have vandalized and thrown out that chair weeks ago. You're a smart guy but you let people walk on you too much. Don't be such a pushover. Time to get proactive. Either that or quit whining.



rcaster1138 comments...

I know, I know. You're right. I need to start acting out or start shutting up.



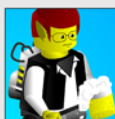
amayasumi comments...

just say "look blake i agreed to take the chair for a short period of time. now get it out of here before i shove it up your ass. you have 24 hours." then in about 25 hours send it to the dumpster. i'm not even kidding.



rcaster1138 comments...

I know, I know. You're right. You're both right. I need to stop putting up with this shit...



Wednesday, June 30, 2004 - 6:07 p.m.

Company property

Current mood: pissed off

Comments: 0

I'm such a pathetic criminal. Even the Barney Fife idiot at the door downstairs can thwart my larcenous schemes.

Okay, so on Monday I "borrowed" a power supply from the IT department to try to fix my dead computer. The guard just let me walk out of the building with that with nothing more than an annoying joke. Unfortunately it turned out the power supply wasn't the problem.

Luckily for me, most of the people in this office don't know what to do with computer components unless they're cute and run off of USB, so the IT guys keep their raw goods in an unlocked closet. So last night after hours I "outsourced" a motherboard. My personal motto is: "Never buy anything you can steal from work."

Now I didn't have a static bag or anything, and I didn't want to damage the mobo, so I didn't stuff it in my bag when I left. The guard at the door sees it in my hand and he's all "Whoa whoa! Is that company property?"

No, Sherlock Holmes, I just brought this in as a status symbol to impress all of my friends.

Instead of saying "No sir!" like a criminal mastermind would have, I go "Um, yeah, but I'm just borrowing it. They said it was okay." And he's like, "Who said it was okay?"

So now I'm stuck in a stupid lie, and I'm like, "You know... that IT guy... the one with the glasses." He grabs the phone and he's like, "What's his extension?" I'm like, "I don't know. I think he's gone home for the night anyway." So he's like, "I can't let you take that out of here without a signed equipment removal form."

WTF?!?! This was the exact same idiot who watched me walk out with a power

supply the day before, and now suddenly there's forms to fill out? Gah!

So anyway, I just gave up. I was like, "Oh, that's cool. I'll just go and take care of that tomorrow" and I went and put it back in my cubicle. I brought in a static bag today so that I can stuff the stupid thing in my bag tonight and pull off the HEIST OF THE CENTURY!!!!!!



Thursday, July 1, 2004 - 1:04 p.m.

I've got mail!

Current mood: crazy

Comments: 1

This would be funny if it wasn't so pathetic.

Okay, so last night I'm all ready to sneak out the motherboard when I noticed it had the wrong socket for my processor. D'oh! This is exactly the kind of bonehead mistake I always make.

So I go to the supply closet to see if I can scrounge up the right one and, for the first time ever, it's locked. Man! I don't know if it's just a coincidence or if the security guard gave IT a tip-off (although I doubt he's in the loop enough to have had anything to do with it).

So I end up going home empty handed. Luckily for me Shadoe came over before I blew my brains out from Internet withdrawals. She was like, "What do you do all night with the Internet anyway?" Of course, I couldn't answer that question honestly in mixed company, so the first other thing that popped into my head was "Um... email!"

She was like, "Okay, go sit down. I'll send you email." So I sat down in front of the blank monitor all confused, and she started scribbling on a Post-it note. She's like, "*You've got mail!*" and she slaps the note on the screen. LOL! I think it's funny that AOL marketing is so ubiquitous that a girl with no electricity still knows "You've got mail."

So we sent "emails" back and forth for a while. She's so funny. Who needs a computer when you've got Shadoe...

I DO! I NEED A COMPUTER! I'M STARTING TO FREAK OUT HERE! AAAA!



anonymous comments...

Why are you fucking around with stealing all these little parts? Why don't you just steal Blake's computer and get it over with?



Friday, July 2, 2004 - 1:35 p.m.

The big heist...

Current mood: devious

Comments: 3

Yesterday somebody commented that I should just forget my motherboard problems and steal Blake's computer. Of course, they were joking, but as I lay there in my bed, not sleeping, not hearing the comforting fans of computational companionship by my side, it got me thinking.

Ever since that boss guy retired about a month ago I've been walking past a dark empty office every day on the way to my cube. I assumed he would have been replaced by now if he was so important. I don't know what the deal is. Whatever. It's not important. The thing is, just out of curiosity I checked in there this morning, and that guy had a sweet machine! It's a 3GHz P4 with 4 gigs of RAM and all the candy. It blows the doors off the sad old dead P3 that I'm trying to save. It's just sitting there in the dark, like a huge ripe apple, just hanging there on the branch yelling "Eat me!"

I've been working on a plan. A brilliantly devious plan that not only gets me what I want, but also smites all of my enemies in the process. If all goes according to task, I shall post the details of my criminal conquest tonight from the comfort of my own bedroom. Mwa ha ha ha!



seinjunkie comments...

... and you wisely posted a pre-plan notification on the Internet from your work computer, knowing that the last place anybody would look is in the immediate area around the office where the computer used to be, and knowing that the security guard who saw you walking out with equipment two nights in a row would never dare finger you if more equipment came up missing.

It's like a Tom Cruise movie! I can't wait to see how it ends up!



marcus132 comments...

... or to put it another way, "You're an idiot."



timb comments...

Haven't you non-believers heard the King Missile song "Take Stuff From Work"? ... or the Mono Puff record "It's Fun to Steal"?

Get with it!



Friday, July 2, 2004 - 11:31 p.m.

OWNED!!!

Current mood: accomplished

Comments: 2

The caper is done
A criminal mastermind
Bwa-ha-ha-ha... ha!

I feel like I'm all Brad Pitt in *Ocean's Eleven* as I sit here writing this post on my NEW COMPUTER! Boo-freaking-yaaaa!

Okay, maybe it's stupid to post this online, but I really don't think the idiots at work will find this journal. And seriously, this story must be posted, because I'm not telling it to Shadoo, and it is too righteously cool to waste on Turbo Dan. Man! I just realized that I haven't seen Turbo Dan in like, weeks. I need to call that guy tomorrow and see what the hell happened to him. But I'm digressing:

First thing in the morning, after that anonymous comment about stealing the computer had been eating away at my mind through another Internet-free night, I checked out the ex-boss guy's computer. It's totally sweet. I think to myself "I'd take it if I could, but I'd never get away with it." So I forget about it and go to my desk.

Later in the morning I'm sitting in my cubicle in the doldrums of work, staring at Blake's ass chair and brooding. I know I've been being spineless about it, but **timb** and **amayasumi** pretty much gave me the "Put up or shut up" on that issue the other day. I chose shut up. I was just going to shut up and take it like a man. No more complaints about the ass chair.

Then Blake gets on the phone. I swear I've developed a Pavlovian response to the sound of his phone ringing. When I hear it, my jaw tenses up and a headache starts even before he says hello. It's his wife and, as usual, they can't talk for more than 5 seconds without it turning into a yelling match. Ever since they've been living apart the topic for these bundles of joy has pretty much exclusively been their daughter. He's all "Because I love her you bitch, that's why! If you understood what love was, you wouldn't let her stay out all night doing drugs with those scumbags she hangs out with!" In a way it's amusing to me that Blake can simultaneously be the "concerned parent" and the "one your mother warned you about". It would be funnier if I didn't have to hear it EVERY DAY.

So the conversation goes on like this for, I don't know, like *17 hours* before he finally slams down the phone and just starts pounding something (his fists?) into the cubicle wall and barking like some kind of enraged gorilla. I was like, "Seriously dude, keep it down over there, I'm working here." He was like, "Just shut up and leave me alone, faggot. You can't understand what it's like to be a father."

Usually his crap just rolls off my back, but for some reason that one stuck. It just crawled under my skin and bit on to my brain. Suddenly I feel like I shouldn't be doing this asshole any favors anymore. I go over there and I'm like, "Blake, I've told you a thousand times to take this chair out of my cubicle." He's like, "Not now, Gay Ray, I'm not in the mood." I'm like, "Seriously, if you don't take that chair back, I'm throwing it out tonight." Then he actually started getting kind of scary. He didn't yell, his voice just dropped to this confidential growl, and he was just like, "No you won't. You know why? Because you've got no balls. Go put on a dress, fag. You don't want to mess with me today." I seriously thought he was going to hit me, so I just left and went to lunch early so he could cool down. But that broke the camel's back, you know? I was like, screw him and screw his chair. If he didn't take it back, I was throwing it away today, for real.

While I'm at Arby's, my mind is all pumped up with adrenalin and it starts to wander into crazy "You know what I'd like to do" scenarios. After I do the "how I'd kill Blake" ones, I start to work out an insane plan about that computer in my imagination. I come back to the office totally excited about this plan. I wanted to post how it was all going to go down, but I didn't want to jinx it, so I just posted that I **had** a plan. You all thought I was insane. WHO'S LAUGHING NOW! Ha ha ha ha! Okay, I guess it's still just me. Read on, my friends...

So I avoid Blake for a few hours, and finally he goes home. Needless to say, the ass chair is still firmly stinking up my cubicle. I continue to wait. Before long, pretty much everybody else on the floor has cleared out for the holiday weekend.

If my life had a soundtrack like Peter Griffin's does, it would have switched to the *Mission Impossible* theme. I pulled the bottom cushion off the ass chair and unzipped the back of it. The reek of stale beer and farts from the rectangle of foam inside is best left undescribed. The whole thing crumbled when I tried to pull it out of the cover, so it came out pretty easily once the first few chunks broke off. It was the most disgusting thing I've ever done. I made sure that nobody was around and then I just unplugged everything from the boss' computer and stuffed it into a garbage bag and then into the cushion cover. It was a near perfect fit. I filled out the rest of it with crumpled paper.

5 minutes later I carried the 3GHz ass chair past Barney Fife at the front door. He looks at the chair skeptically and he's like, "Is that personal property?" I put on this "we're old pals" grin and was like, "Not for long, buddy. I'm about to finally throw this old piece of junk away."

Since my hands were full of the chair, he actually **HELD THE DOOR FOR ME!** He was like, "Have a good 4th." I put the bottom "cushion" in my car and then hurled the rest of that piece of shit chair into the dumpster! LOL! Screw you, Barney Fife! Screw you, Blake! Man, if only I could have screwed HR Julie in there somewhere this would have been the perfect day at the office.

I put my old hard drive in this machine along side the existing one. This computer rules! It's SO FAST! There's a big ugly company inventory bar code on the front of the case staring up at me lovingly. LOL! I'm going to leave it on there as my 1337 case mod commemorating this caper. I am so happy. Go me. :-)



dailygrant comments...

"if only I could have screwed HR Julie in there somewhere this would have been the perfect day at the office"

... man, you gotta rethink that statement.

You need to buy one of those handheld voice recorders this weekend, because you know when you get back on Tuesday all hell will break loose with Blake. When he starts yelling at you and using certain "terms" to describe you, make sure you get it on tape, and present it to your boss with a potential harassment lawsuit. Blake will hopefully be fired. That'll take care of that problem as well.



rcaster1138 comments...

Oh shit. Haha! Yeah. I meant to say that if I could have screwed *over* HR Julie it would have been the perfect day. I will never *screw* HR Julie. *shudder*

And that tape recorder idea is awesome. I'm so doing that.



Monday, July 5, 2004 - 3:46 a.m.

Happy 4th of July!

Current mood: enthralled

Comments: 0

Turbo Dan in love?
Happy Independence Day!
Somebody got kissed!

Today was such a great day! I'm still high off it and I can't sleep. That's fine though, I can sleep in. I've got tomorrow off (I guess now it's technically "today"). Hooray for America!

So I called Turbo Dan yesterday to see what he'd been up to, and he said that Scottie was having a cookout for the 4th and I should come over. Of course, I fucking hate that guy, but I figured there would be a lot of other people there to dilute him.

I picked up Shadoe this morning and we went over to his place. Just like I thought, there were a ton of people there, mostly cute dumb girls. I don't want to sound like some macho asshole or something, but seriously, there is only one kind of girl who is attracted to guys like Scottie, and they turn heads, but they ain't Nobel laureates.

About the only people I knew at the party were Mooker, Turbo Dan, and to my utter shock and surprise, box office Tory. Not only had Turbo Dan not abandoned her for fresh meat since the last time I saw him, but he was still completely fawning all over her. This totally blew my mind.

I mean, if you don't know Turbo Dan, you've got to picture him to be the emotional equivalent of a tin of SPAM. You may like SPAM. You may hate SPAM. But every time you crack open a tin of SPAM it's the same. It doesn't change to please you.

Turbo Dan is the same way. It doesn't matter if you're me, or Scottie, or Shadoe. He's going to be exactly the same no matter who is opening his tin. Love him or hate him, he keeps on doing that same Turbo Dan thang.

That's why his infatuation with this Tory girl blows my mind. He's *different* around her. He's *affectionate* to her. This is the same guy who I never saw treat beautiful, angelic Shadoe with a hint more interest than he treats comatose, reefer-smelling Mooker. Before today, in all the years I've known him, the closest thing to an emotion I've seen him express is hunger. I don't get it, but I like it, because it at least gives me some definite closure on the TD/Shadoe "relationship".

I've never asked Shadoe if her and Turbo Dan broke up or anything, because to do so would be to admit that they were dating in the first place. If Turbo Dan can't do it, why the hell should I? I am China, their relationship is Taiwan. I can see it, and I know it's there, but I don't officially acknowledge it and everyone knows that all I want to do is take it over.

So today I was carefully observing the dynamic of the two of them. Turbo Dan treated her like he treated anybody else. Not badly, just like a neutral friend. Like he treats me. Like SPAM. This did not surprise me, but I was happy to see Shadoe treating him the same way. There was no apparent animosity, but also no apparent interest. She treated HIM like SPAM.

After a whole lotta good old fashioned American beers I finally got up the cojones to ask Shadoe what was up with her and Turbo Dan. She looked embarrassed and was like, "Well, he's a lot of fun to hang out with, but after a while you realize that it's because he's like a big dumb dog in a man's body." LOL! I couldn't have said it better myself. :-)

The whole party kind of broke up at dusk because everybody was going to see the fireworks. We couldn't get too close because of traffic and crowds, but we were close enough to see the good ones. I sat in the grass and Shadoe sat in front of me and leaned back on me like a chair. I put my arm around her and she held on to my hand. I couldn't stop smiling, I must have looked like Alfred E. Neuman or something. I'm glad she was facing away and couldn't see how doofy I must have looked.

When all the festivities were over I drove her home, and before she got out of the car she leaned over and kissed ME! She didn't make a big production out of it, and it

didn't linger, but it was on the lips! It was kind of like the little peck that married people give each other when one drops the other off at the office. You know, like, "Thanks! See ya! *kiss!*" In a way, I think that's even better than a huge makeout, right? It's not like, "I just want to get in your pants because you're a big fun dog" it's like, "I like you like we've been married for 10 years." Is that insane?

I don't care. When she kissed me the fireworks I saw were better than anything the city of Sarasota had to offer on this July 4th. And now here I am, watching the sky getting brighter without having gone to sleep, my heart still going pitter-patter all these hours later.

I am in love. :-)



Monday, July 5, 2004 - 4:30 p.m.

Phone home

Current mood: distressed

Comments: 0

I feel so helpless and useless today. :-(

At about 9 this morning I woke up to the sound of somebody pounding on my door. By that time I had been asleep probably all of 40 minutes. I pulled myself out of bed and slothfully answered the door. It was Shadoe, and she was in her work uniform and she was all in a panic.

I was all "What's going on?" and she said that when she went in to work there were like, a hundred phone messages from her mom. The last time Shadoe had to work was Thursday, and apparently the messages started on Friday morning and haven't stopped since. She said that her idiot boss was pissed about her getting so many personal calls and he wouldn't let her make a long distance call on their phone. She said she tried to tell him how she only gave her mom the store number for emergencies (which is why she was now freaking out), but he was still being a dick so she just walked out and came over to my place to use the phone.

She was all apologetic for getting me out of bed and for wanting to make a long distance call and everything, and I was just like, "It's no big deal! Call your mom!" So she calls her mom, and I take the opportunity to brush my teeth and otherwise make myself not look like the living dead. She ended up talking for like, 2 hours. I tried to give her privacy, which is tough in an apartment the size of mine. But I ended up cleaning my bathroom out of it, so hey, wheee.

After she was off the phone she totally broke down crying. Her mom told her that her dad took a huge turn for the worse over the weekend and he's been in the hospital for the past few days. Her mom was really scared that he was going to pass away and she wanted Shadoe to be able to talk to him, but she couldn't get in touch with her.

Apparently her mom was furious, and she gave Shadoe all kinds of hell about not

having a phone and not being responsible and then put her on the phone with her dad for the rest of the call. I thought that was kind of cruel, to hit her with all of that and then be like, "Here's Dad, talk nice!" Shadoe said that it wasn't like that, and that her mom is very kind and sweet but she's just been really stressed out lately for obvious reasons and she's starting to lose it a little.

So I told her to give her mom my phone number instead. I'll always be sure to get her the messages immediately, and also she won't get into trouble at work. She was all "You're too nice, you don't have to" and on and on, but I eventually convinced her and she called her mom and made it so. After that she unwound just a little bit and decided that she had better go back to work and see how much trouble she was in. I told her that if she tells her boss what happened and he doesn't cut her some slack that she needs to quit, because she is working for Satan himself.

She said that she hoped she'd just end up having to work late and not get in too much trouble. I don't expect that she'll call and let me know what happens. I was thinking maybe I should go over there later if I don't hear from her, but I don't want to get her in any more trouble than she's already in.

I hope Shadoe's dad gets better. Today sucks. :-(



Tuesday, July 6, 2004 - 9:27 p.m.

Oh yeah... BLOODY VENGEANCE!

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 3

Blake almost killed me
I screwed up a simple plan
A happy ending

Today was made of crazy insane suck. Okay, I've always thought that Blake was all bark and no bite, but I still spent the better part of last night fearing that Blake was going to beat the tar out of me when I went into work this morning for throwing away his ass chair.

As **dailygrant** suggested, yesterday I dug out my pocket tape recorder from college, not only to capture Blake's inevitable sexual slurs to use against him in HR, but also for someone to find *Blair Witch Project* style if my body disappeared.

My plan was to sit at my desk all day with the recorder on my lap, and then when he busted in and said whatever he was going to say, I would just secretly reach down and hit "record", then bring the tape to HR and let it speak for itself. Simplicity itself, right? I thought so too, until Blake totally laid into me first thing in the morning.

The second he saw me walk in he just exploded like Mount Vesuvius, if Mount Vesuvius was made out of homophobic redneck. He was all "You better not have thrown out my chair, homo" this and "I'll kick your reamed-out faggot ass" that.

What a way to start the morning. I hadn't even gotten all the way to my cubicle or had my first Dr. Pepper. He ambushed me right in the hallway as I'm walking in with my recorder still zipped inside of my bag. Grrr! I wanted to be like, "Um, hold that thought, okay? *zip* *click!* Okay, now what were you saying again, from the top?"

So while he's screaming at me, I'm trying to just be neutral and not be combative, just in case he is actually on the verge of pounding the crap out of me. I was like, "I'm sorry. I told you that I would throw it away on numerous occasions. I gave you several weeks and made my intentions clear." He really really looked like he was going to kill me. It was like when you're on a roller coaster and you feel like you're going to die, but there's that little voice in the back of your head saying "scientists tested this ride, you're not going to die." And sure enough, after a lot of yelling and a lot of posturing, he didn't hit me.

He finally got burned out on himself and said that he was going to report me to HR, then he stomped off down the hall. I just stood there in shocked disbelief. *He* was going to report *me* to HR. I couldn't believe that the tape recorder was a 16th of an inch of leather away from my hand yet I had been powerless to get the mother of all office conduct violations on tape. We were right there in the middle of the hallway but the conference room was empty, and the first office is unoccupied. I don't know where the hell the guy in the second office was, but he wasn't there when I needed him. >:-(So basically the tirade lives on only in my own molested brain.

I went into my office and sat down in the quiet. I could feel tears starting to form in the corners of my eyes. I think it was part frustration for messing up the taping and part breakdown from just being yelled at so hard. I can't remember ever being yelled at like that in my adult life. Of course nothing he said was true or anything, but it's like, if someone pulls one Band-Aid off your arm you just go "ouch", but if they pull off a thousand Band-Aids, you need a skin graft and a pint of blood. It was like that. I don't know. Maybe I'm just a total wuss.

So the day goes on as usual with him yelling on the phone. I actually listened because I wanted to see if he was talking about me. He wasn't. He was giving his daughter hell in that special way that "only a father" understands. From what I put together Her Royal Majesty Princess Victoria snuck out to go to a 4th of July party over the weekend while she was grounded, and since she apparently lives with her mom, her caring, loving father didn't find out about it until this morning when she called him. So on top of the missing ass chair he was ALREADY furious from that news when I came in. I didn't stand a chance. :-(

But I promised a happy ending, and here it is: I still kept the tape recorder on my lap all day, just in case. Every time he walked past the door to my cube I hit "record", knowing that he can't resist a jab every time he goes by. Today I guess he emptied his bigotry tank all in one shot, because he didn't say a word to me for the rest of the day...

UNTIL he was leaving to go home. He leans in and was like, "I already reported you to HR, so don't go throwing any more of my shit away tonight or your queer ass is fired."

Yes, I got that on tape. It's totally weak compared to what I could have had, but it's still enough to get him in trouble, right? Or at least speak in my defense if he really did report me and *I'm* somehow in trouble?

I waited a few minutes to make sure he was out of the building and then I ran down to HR. Unfortunately it was past 5 and they were all gone for the day already.

Tomorrow shall be my day of reckoning. Mwa-ha-ha-ha! >:-)



webgodd_s comments...

Your posts make me so happy I work from home.

Sorry you gotta go through this all alone. I think that's the saddest part in all this. We all have to deal with Blakes in our lives, but no one should have to go it alone. Do you ever talk to Shadoe about this?



rcaster1138 comments...

Hell no! I've never talked about this to anybody offline, especially not Shadoe. I don't want her knowing how I get treated at work. She'd probably lose a lot of respect for me.



seinjunkie comments...

You know, Shadoe felt confident enough to tell you how her boss mistreats her at work. I'm sure she would love to listen to something like this. Revealing your vulnerabilities to someone else is what raises your relationship to the next level.

Just make sure you aren't going for sympathy, because sexual-harassment-sympathy sex is so lame.



Wednesday, July 7, 2004 - 11:59 a.m.

HR stuff and stuff

Current mood: accomplished

Comments: 4

I went to HR
Things seemed to go very well
HR Julie cares

I had myself a little Human Resources adventure first thing this morning. I don't think I've been down there since I was a new hire, like, 4 or 5 years ago. (God, has it been that long? Somebody shoot me.) I went down to where the HR office is and the door was open, so I knock and stick my head in. I was like, "Hi, I need to talk to somebody in HR. Can you help me?" and the lady in there was like, "Of course! Come on in!"

She wasn't the fat lady with the annoying laugh that I picked out at the party, but she still looked pretty much like what I expected HR Julie should look like from her poems. She was kind of thin and bony and she had a face like Ron Popeil in drag. She was probably in her early 50s, but she dressed like she was still a freshman in college. One unfortunate glance under her desk completely destroyed any good feelings that I may have once had for the miniskirt.

So anyway, I started telling her all about Blake and how he's been harassing me, and she just kind of glazes over and is like, "Yeah, mmm hmm. Right. Right. Right." I'm thinking "Great, this is going nowhere. What a waste of time," then she's like, "Let me stop you right there. I deal mostly just with health and dental benefits. You should talk to Julie about this." I'm thinking "I thought I **was** talking to Julie about this!"

So she picks up her phone and makes a quick call, and is like, "Okay, Julie is in her office. It's the one with SpongeBob on the door." I go out in the hall and two offices down there's one with a square SpongeBob SquarePants paper plate tacked to it. I knocked and boldly went in to finally look the scourge of bad timesheet poetry face-to-face for the first time.

It was... surprisingly not bad, actually. She **also** wasn't the fat lady I picked out at the party. She didn't look anything like I thought she would. In fact, she was actually sort of cute. She had a real Jennifer Garner in *13 Going On 30* quality to her, but something was just not quite right about her face. Like, she was good looking, but her eyes were too big, or too far apart, or her forehead was too tall or something. I don't know. Whatever.

So I started from the beginning and told her everything about Blake. All about "Gay Ray" and how he grabbed my ass at the party and all of his hostile bullshit. She was taking it all down on her computer and she was all "Oh my!" and "That's awful!" I told her that I had the tape from yesterday and she said that I should hold on to it, but she probably couldn't really use it since you're not supposed to record people if they don't know you're doing it. So at least now I don't feel so bad about missing the good stuff.

She was so interested in everything I had to say that I that I figured I may as well throw in all the stuff about how he's always yelling on the phone. I don't think that's really part of the harassment, but she had me feeling like she was on my side, so I threw it all out there and she took it all down. She said that the phone stuff contributed to a "hostile work environment" because he was making me uncomfortable. That made me feel uncomfortable in itself. Like the world's biggest

wussy. Like, "Oh, don't talk on the phone around Ray, it might make him *uncomfortable*." I'm not like that. I'm thick skinned. I feel like I shouldn't have mentioned it. Blah.

I was like, "You probably already know about this from yesterday, but..." and I told her all about the chair incident from start to finish. She was like, "No, he never came down here at all, but I promise you he'll be in here today." She said that I should have come to her immediately and that I shouldn't have thrown the chair away, but that confidentially she would try to downplay that in her file because of how much crap I'd been taking. She also said that him storing so much personal junk in his cubicle probably created a fire hazard and she'd make him move it out.

When I had finally said everything I had come to say and she was done asking me questions I got up to leave and she got up to show me out. Man, she was TALL! She must have had a good 5 or 6 inches on me, and she was wearing flats! For a brief second I caught myself, at the end of filing a lengthy sexual harassment complaint, checking out HR Julie's miles of bombshell gams. I am Jack's inflamed sense of irony.

When I left she shook my hand and was like, "I'll arrange a meeting with Blake and his manager this afternoon. If you want to talk about him, or about anything, don't hesitate to come down here again." So the meeting with the infamous HR Julie actually didn't go that badly. In fact, I guess it went pretty well. I can't wait to see what happens after this meeting. I hope this doesn't all backfire on me. :-\



aerospace comments...

yay!!!!!! sounds like things are on their way up for you. woopwoop!

i always sort of pictured hr julie as the annoying lady answering phones all day in *office space*.



rcaster1138 comments...

Yeah, totally! Me too, that's like *exactly* what I pictured!



seinjunkie comments...

And now, an awful sexual harassment poem from HR Julie:

If you hear a conversation,
Or feel a tight sensation,
When you see your legs a-quakin',
Tell Julie all about it.

If you can't make sense of time cards,
Or you take offense from bastards,

If your cube-mate threatens to beat the crap out of your gay ass because you threw out his orange chair from college,
Run to Julie, she won't shout it.

So drag your sorry self down here,
And spill your guts in our ear,
We won't grab your tiny rear,
We love to watch you spank it.



rcaster1138 comments...

That is truly awful. Have you ever considered a job in human resources?



Thursday, July 8, 2004 - 5:10 p.m.

The Sounds of Silence

Current mood: distressed

Comments: 0

Today has been a "be careful what you wish for" kind of day.

Yesterday afternoon Blake got called down to HR. I heard his phone ring, and when he answered it he just sounded so confused. When he walked past my cubicle I pretended to be really busy, with my headphones on and everything. Out of the corner of my eye I could see him pause in front of my door, then just keep walking. He was gone for about 20 minutes or so, and when he came back he didn't even look at me.

Today, every time he's left his cubicle he's walked past my door with his head down. And when he's at his desk he's been perfectly silent. In fact, the phone rang this morning and he answered it and was like, "I can't talk about this now. It would be *inappropriate*." I felt like such a whiny little tattletale. :-\

I've been feeling so weirdly uncomfortable all day. It's like when that weird-looking girl has a crush on you in high school, and she's all over you every day until you finally one day say "Look, I don't like you." Then she avoids you, and even though that's what you wanted, you suddenly feel so alone. I feel kind of like that.

I think I have major psychological issues. :-P



Monday, July 12, 2004 - 3:28 p.m.

GET OFFA MY CAR!

Current mood: content

Comments: 0

I just finished reading *I, Robot*. Shadoe gave me the book and wanted me to read it before the movie came out so that she would have somebody to commiserate with after we saw it. I am that man. I thought the book was great. I hope the movie

doesn't suck too much. We shall see this weekend...

The eerie silence from Blake's cubicle continues, broken only by soft-voiced phone calls to potential landlords about renting an apartment. He's stressing that he needs an immediate move-in date because of "storage problems". Every time I hear it it makes me feel like I'm being hit on the nose with a rolled-up newspaper. Well, whatever. At least with him operating at low volume I can drown him out with my headphones.

I'm starting to get used to this arrangement, and I'm starting to like it. I rule. Go me.



Tuesday, July 13, 2004 - 9:32 p.m.

NO NO NO NO!!

Current mood: denial

Comments: 3

I got a phone call
The worst thing that could happen
What do I do now?

I can't believe what just happened. I'm still reeling and it feels like a bad dream. This sucks so much on so many levels.

After work Shadoe came over and we downloaded the trailer for *I, Robot*. We were going through it again and again and were pretending like we were recognizing parts from the book. It was funny if you were there, and a dork. In fact, at some point, I consciously realized that I was having fun being my complete loser self with the most beautiful girl I've ever met, and she was having fun too. It was awesome.

Then the phone rings.

I expect it to be Turbo Dan, so I just grab the phone and go "Aw *hell* no!" like Will Smith. The voice on the other end is like, "Um... is this Ray?" I didn't know who it was and I'm like, "Er, yeah, this is Ray. Who is this?" It turned out to be Shadoe's mom. I gave the phone to her and got up to leave the room, but she caught my arm and made me sit back down again and wait. It was so uncomfortable to watch her face and hear her side of the conversation.

At first I was sure that her father had passed away. Her mom sounded very serious when I answered. I felt like an extra ass for answering like Will Smith. I should have checked the Caller ID box before I did that. :-\ Shadoe held my hand the whole time she was on the phone, and after she hung up she told me everything.

Luckily her father is still alive, but he's not well. He was discharged from the hospital but he can barely walk or take care of himself from all of the sickness and the treatments. Shadoe's mom told her that she can't take care of him by herself anymore and she needs help. She said that her mom really laid into her about her "slacker lifestyle" and how she's got absolutely no reason to be in Florida and needs

to come home.

Of course Shadoe was crushed, and this whole explanation came through tears. Her mom told her about how in Florida she's just screwing around, but if she came home to California she could make a real difference to both her and to her dad in what are looking like his final days. When she said that it was like a cold knife plunging down my throat and into my stomach. I don't know if it was just a coincidence or if her mom is a real pro at pushing her buttons, but that really got under Shadoe's skin. Feeling like she's not making a difference is Shadoe's Kryptonite.

I was like, "So... how long does she want you to go back for?" She was like, "Well, you know, for as long as it takes." It was like somebody sat on my chest. I could feel my lungs getting tight. I was like, "So... are you going to do it then?" and she was just quiet for a long long minute, looking at the floor, and then was like, "I don't know."

After that she wanted to go home. I offered to drive her but she said she had her bike and she wanted to be alone to think. I gave her a hug when she left. I wanted to kiss her, but I didn't. It didn't feel right. Like, I'm not sure what the status of our relationship is, and this wasn't the time to go pushing the boundaries.

I feel like such an awful evil bastard right now. Like, the inner good guy is thinking "Her family needs her, she needs to go to them and help them and I should be supportive" but the outer selfish asshole is thinking "NO NO NO! She can't just leave ME like this!"

And then the most evil, Sith-like parts of my subconscious come back with that disgustingly cruel wish for her dad that would take care of everybody's problems that's too evil to think, let alone write down. I'm so ashamed to even be halfway thinking thoughts like that, but I love her, and I'm really scared of what she's thinking right now.

What do I do now? I don't have any idea. :-(



amayasumi comments...

this might be crazy, but check into transfers and/or jobs there. ask her if she'd like you to go with her for support, and let her know you'll be there for her through every step of the way.



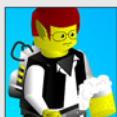
webgodd_s comments...

You gotta let her go and take care of family business. But I believe that she'll be thinking of you a lot and I definitely think you'll be calling each other a lot. Buy her a prepaid phone card so she can call you.



rcaster1138 comments...

Stop making it sound like it's a done deal! She hasn't made a decision yet. There's still a chance that she won't go. Isn't there? :-(



Thursday, July 15, 2004 - 3:38 p.m.

Hey man, is that Freedom Poetry?

Current mood: tired

Comments: 0

Still no word from Shadoe. I slept like crap last night. I've been trying to respect her privacy since she said she wanted to be alone, but I also want to be there for her if she needs me. If I don't hear from her today I'm going over there to see what's up after work.

You know, I just realized that ever since he got yelled at Blake has been spending less and less time at work every day. He used to be here before me every day and leave before me. Lately he's been getting here AFTER me, but he's still been leaving first. Whatever. I don't care. I'm not going to narc on him again as long as he stays quiet.

I got today's HR Julie poem this afternoon:

*July is when freedom comes to stay
From July 4th to Canada Day
And don't forget Bastille Day
just submit your time sheets s'il vous plait.*

Meh. Now that I've met her and she's actually helped me out, making fun of her has kind of lost its entertainment value.



Friday, July 16, 2004 - 5:34 p.m.

Bye.

Current mood: depressed

Comments: 4

I went over to Shadoe's last night to see how she was doing, and the first thing I saw was a big pile of boxes in her living room. I was like, "Hi... how's everything?" She was faking happy, like, "Overall not good, but at least I'll never have to sell another set of Tweety Bird mud flaps."

So yeah. She quit her job. She's packing her boxes. The arrangements are made. She's leaving for California next week.

That's it. That's that. This is the worst that I've ever felt in my life.

I know that her parents need her right now, but a selfish part of me keeps thinking about how the request that she come home was based on the "fact" that "she's got absolutely no reason to be in Florida". Okay, so she only had a meaningless McJob to leave, and didn't so much as have a phone or electricity to cut off, but that doesn't mean that she's got nothing here.

She's got *ME*! But when it comes down to it, I guess I'm the only thing here in her life that's not disposable (I hope).

So in its purest form the question becomes "Stay with me, or go to her dad?" And I can't even compete in that battle. It's not like she's leaving me for another guy or something, she's leaving me to care for her dying father. To do some "romantic comedy" stunt to impress her would just be asinine and crass. And it's not like we're even an officially ratified couple either. We're just like best friends with obvious sexual tension.

There's no contest. And in the end, everybody loses.

This sucks. :-(



seinjunkie comments...

I really do think that she needs you too much to abandon you. If you show an obvious interest in keeping in touch, she'll want to reciprocate. Be patient with everything. Give her time with her family.

You're like the Regis to her Kathie Lee, except less bitchy and she'll be back.



amayasumi comments...

go with her?



rcaster1138 comments...

I wish I could, but it's just not as easy as that. :-(



amayasumi comments...

it could be. find a job there. hey, your company might be able to transfer you to an equal position there if you mention a family emergency.



Saturday, July 17, 2004 - 6:05 p.m.

Trailer trashed

Current mood: sad

Comments: 1

Weekend of packing
Belongings are donated
She's become detached

So I spent the weekend helping Shadoe clear out her trailer. It actually didn't take very long compared to every other move I've ever helped with. She didn't have very much stuff at all, and of the stuff she had she wanted to get rid of almost all of it rather than pack it.

We took the few pieces of furniture and housewares back to the same Goodwill where she bought them. She thought that was poetic in a sense. I told her she should have at least had a yard sale or something, but she just said that she would rather let the money go to the charity. I found the mix CD that I gave her dumped in the box with her Victrola and the records. I'm almost sure that it was just lumped in with "music media" and ended up in the box accidentally, but it still kind of felt symbolic to me. I didn't bring it up, but I pulled it out of the box before I dropped it off. We got all of her furniture to the Goodwill in just one trip in my car.

The books, on the other hand... THREE TRIPS. Admittedly, the third trip was only about 1/4 of a carload, but still, I drove back and forth to the library 3 full times. She donated all of her books to the Selby Library's used bookstore. While I was unloading books from the car Shadoe talked to the lady there for a long time. When she came to help me she was like, "I am now officially a Friend of the Selby Library." I thought it was kind of funny that you can get friendship from a library through bribery.

Anyway, while we were at Goodwill we picked her up this old rectangular footlockerish trunk. She said that it would be big enough to hold everything she still owned. Can you imagine? Well, before I left I got the mix CD out of my car and stuffed it into the pocket in the lid when she was in the other room. Maybe she'll find it when she gets there, and her parents will have a CD player, and she can finally hear it. For what it's worth now. :-P

As if the cold finality of the packing wasn't bad enough, Shadoe seemed weirdly emotionally distant all weekend. It felt like she was shutting me out. Like she didn't know what was going on in her life to the point where she was just putting everything on hold. I felt like I was part of a moving checklist. Like, "forward the mail, pack the clothes, forget about Ray."

I took her out for dinner last night and I let her know that I would still be here, waiting for her, no matter what. I gave her a phone card like **webgodd_s** suggested and I told her to call me, and I'd be calling her and, as soon as I could afford it, I wanted to come and visit her. She didn't say much, but she seemed appreciative.

I feel like something should happen before she goes, but I don't know what. I know what I'd like to happen, but that doesn't seem likely, and I don't want to push it. I hate this.



amayasumi comments...

she is distancing herself from you because she thinks it will make goodbye easier. do not let her! if you keep her close then she will notice and appreciate it. don't let her go, whatever you do.



Tuesday, July 20, 2004 - 7:28 p.m.

Last Supper

Current mood: hopeful

Comments: 2

Today at work just scraped by. All I could think about was seeing Shadoe tonight. I should have taken the day off. Stupid. Instead of spending Shadoe's last day in town with her, I spent it with Blake. I'm such an idiot.

Speaking of Blake, it looks like the honeymoon is over. He was back on the phone today laughing it up. HAR HAR HAR HAR! SHUT UP! Apparently he's got some kind of poker game going on tonight to break in his new apartment. Yay. Congratulations on being a grown-up. He was on the phone about it with people all day. Oh well, at least he's still not talking to me directly.

Also, I ran into HR Julie downstairs this morning, which is weird, considering I just pass through there for 5 seconds on the way to the stairs. I don't think I ever saw her before I went to her about Blake, and now I seem to see her around all the time. She was asking me if everything with Blake was okay, and I was like, "Yeah, it's fine. Thanks," and she was like, "Well if you need anything at all don't hesitate to come and see me again." Yeah, okay. I get it. Do you get a bonus for every sexual harassment seminar you give or something? Get off of me.

Whatever. I'm just wasting time now. Shadoe is on her way over and we're going to dinner and to finally see *I, Robot*. I don't think the merriment is going to be what it was supposed to be when we first started down this quasi-Asimovian road...

I'm hoping that we end up at "our spot" after the movie, and seeing as how I'm driving this does not seem unlikely. I've got a lot to say to her and not a lot of time to say it. I took the day off from work tomorrow so that I could bring her to the airport in the morning. I could have just come in late, but I know that I'm not going to get anything done tomorrow anyway. I should have taken today off. Stupid.

She's here. Time to make some memories...



timb comments...

I know you're upset, but don't be bitter with HR Julie. She's like a godsend.



rcaster1138 comments...

Yeah, I know, I know. I just feel like she's an "ambulance chaser" lawyer or something. Like, "Do you have more complaints? Huh? Do ya? Do ya? I'm ready to bust some ass!"



Thursday, July 22, 2004 - 5:41 p.m.

Just a shadow of Shadoe

Current mood: exhausted

Comments: 2

We stayed out all night
The night was happy and sad
Miss her already

Well, it's done. Shadoe is in California. I'm at work. This sucks my ass. I need a nap, stat.

On Tuesday night we went out to *I, Robot*, or as I call it "I, want my money back". Well, I guess I would have called it that if it hadn't been for Tory. She was working when we went there, and when she found out Shadoe was leaving town in the morning she looked all surprised and upset and she gave us free passes as a "going away" present. That was nice of her. I guess those two got along okay. I could never really tell.

After the movie we had a nice dinner and then hung out and talked for a long time at the restaurant. She mostly told me about her parents, and how cool they really are, and how sorry she is that her mom always comes off as a "raging bitch" every time I have contact with her. I told her that I understood that she's just under pressure, and that I still wanted to meet her parents (which I thought would sound nice, but kind of sounded creepy when it came out).

When it got dark we went out to the beach and walked by the water. It was nice, but bittersweet. We got to reminiscing about when we first met, and how it seems like it was a hundred years ago, but it was actually only a few months. We talked about the first time that we had come to Lido Beach together, and about fate again. I said that I felt like we were meant to be together, and that if fate was going to pull us apart right now there had to be an important reason, and that we'd still come back together in the end. She stuck with her position that our lives are not written or planned, and sometimes things just happen, but she said that it was sweet that I felt we were meant to be together.

And then it happened: the first kiss. Okay, so not the first first kiss, but the first REAL kiss. Lips, tongue, passion. She initiated, I returned volley. She tasted like honey and ginger ale. As soon as our lips came apart I felt torn in half. Of course, the overwhelming part of me was like, "YAHOOOOOO! THAT WAS *AWESOME*! LET'S DO IT AGAIN!" but the rest of me was like, "What? WHAT?! Why now!? Why 8 hours before you're going to the other side of the country?! WHY?!"

But that was as far as it went. (Sorry, gang.) The kiss felt like it said what we needed to say. We both obviously feel for each other. Enough so not to ruin it by going from "not sure how we feel" to "getting sand in all the cracks" over the course of a single desperate evening. Maybe that makes me a prude or a loser, but that's what felt right. Maybe I am "Gay Ray". Blah. My head hurts.

We ended up staying at the beach straight through the night, and in the morning I drove her home to pick up her trunk. She turned in her key to the manager of the trailer court. Before she left I made her do the sitcom thing where she looks around the empty living room, tilts her head as if remembering a flashback from the first episode, then turns off the light (or in this case, non-functional switch), and closes the door. She humored me. She's nice like that. I'm such a dork.

I walked her to the security checkpoint at the airport and we said our goodbyes right there between the Mote Marine fish tank and the stupid golf gift shop. I would have liked to have looked all Mr. Smooth in my final impression before she got on the plane, but I looked like... okay, like I had just been up for 24 hours and spent all night lying in sand. It wasn't the most romantic image I could have left her with. She, on the other hand, somehow looked perfect. The way her tan skin pulls over her perfect cheekbones, the way her crystal green eyes glimmer in the morning light, the way her blond braids flow from her head... I'm going to miss all of it. :-(

After I dropped her off I went home to find her pink bicycle still chained to the railing outside my apartment. It made me want to laugh and cry at the same time. She still needed her bike to get around so we didn't Goodwill it with the rest of her stuff. I don't think we had a plan for what to do with it, and we both totally forgot about it after staying out all night. I borrowed a pair of bolt cutters from the landlord and I cut the chain and stashed the bike in the storage area in front of my parking space. I guess it will be waiting for her when she gets back.

After that I totally crashed, still in my clothes. I didn't wake up until 9 hours later when she called to let me know she got there okay. She sounded so close. Like she was calling from the auto parts store and she'd be over any minute. Damn you, AT&T.

Today I just feel hollow. Not even Blake's return to telephonic assholiness next door could penetrate the cloud of funk that I'm in. I spent most of the day staring blankly at my screen, although I'm sure the massive screw-up of my sleep schedule is as much to blame for that as anything. Zzzzzz...



deech comments...

Call her tonight. Call her every night if you have to.

From what I can tell, you're somewhat poor to moderately not poor. You work at a job you don't particularly like, and most of your friends are self-absorbed.

Why not be poor to moderately not poor in California working in a job you don't particularly like with a woman to make it all better when you get home?

At the very least, you should start bucking for those days off, throw her bike in the back of your car and start driving. It'd rock her world if you showed up and said, "Hey, you forgot your bike."

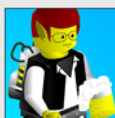


greatbiggary comments...

DON'T bring her her bike! DO NOT go intrude on her father's possible last days.

No kid likes to have a birthday on Christmas, but kids ESPECIALLY don't like having a birthday on Federal Clean Your Room And Eat All Your Vegetables day, because nobody wants to mix the best with the worst. It dilutes the best, spoiling it. If you go, the possible future torrid love affair with her will be mingled and drowned out by her father's DYING. Don't forget that.

I'm sorry, but it isn't cute to bring her her little pink bike like you expect some big astonished loving feeling from her when her dad is gargling his own blood in the back bedroom.



Wednesday, July 28, 2004 - 3:24 p.m.

Life rolls on

Current mood: apathetic

Comments: 5

I guess I should take this moment to break the suspense. No, I'm not driving across country with a bike in my trunk. I'm just boring.

Shadoe called me on Saturday and told me about her dad. She said that he's pretty much bedridden, but he's stable and lucid and he was really happy to see her. So that's good. I told her that I missed her. She said I was sweet. Eh. Evasion.

The days seem to be a little longer and grayer without her around. Blah blah, whatever. I'm not going to be one of these people who just cries in their blog every day. Nobody wants to read that crap. I'll try to make with the jokes and good times.

I've just been doing what I used to do pre-Shadoe. I've been watching a lot of old *Voyager* on TiVo and doing a lot of solitary drinking. But I don't have a problem.

We all have our own ideas of fun. Mine is *Voyager*, okay?!

I ran into HR Julie downstairs when I was going to lunch and she was all "Hey, we're all going out too! Do you want to come with us?" Oooh, an opportunity to have lunch with the HR staff. Be still, my heart. But like **timb** said, I owe her one, so I was courteous about it. I told her that I had some errands I had to run but maybe some other time. Yeah. Some time like **never**. I just kind of want to be alone right now, I guess.

Well, that was a thrilling post. I suck. You guys are excused. I wouldn't read this crap now that Shadoe's gone either.



seinjunkie comments...

Welcome back. Anything you want to post is fine. There was a lot of interesting stuff before the Shadoe posts, too.

The new stuff better be funny, though...



rcaster1138 comments...

Two hydrogen atoms walk into a bar.
One says "I think I lost my electron!"
The other says "Are you sure?"
The first one says "Yes! I'm positive!"



seinjunkie comments...

Well, at least the Shadoe material was original...



gozer2048 comments...

Seriously, why not have lunch with the HR folks? Unless Julie regularly converses in Vogon, they might actually be a pleasant group. If you just weren't feeling sociable due to the other stuff, then fine, but I really think it would make life quite a bit more enjoyable if you were friendly with some folks at work. You don't have to be their best pal.

I'm glad the work situation has gone from hostile to neutral, but why not go for friendly?



rcaster1138 comments...

I didn't think about it like that. HR Julie actually seems nice enough. A little annoying, but still, one of the nicer people I've met at work. Plus if I want to

take a big chunk of time off to go see Shadoe, it can't hurt to be a close personal friend of the head of HR. ;-)



Sunday, August 1, 2004 - 10:19 p.m.

The Glory of Tory

Current mood: uncomfortable

Comments: 0

I am so lonely
A "guys' day" with Turbo Dan
She's so pneumatic

Well, after keeping to myself and moping like a little wiener all week I finally got lonely and called up Turbo Dan today. He was all into hanging out because Tory was working and he was all alone.

I guess it's been a while since I've spent any real quality time with Turbo Dan. This Tory girl has really made him different. She's all he talks about. Today, since it was just a "guys' day", he spent most of the time talking about her in a manner that I could have gotten him fired for if he was telling me at work, and he was also Blake.

To make a long story short (and less graphic), Tory is the most, ah, diversely talented and exceptionally skilled sexual partner he's had the pleasure of working with. Considering that in his opinion she outpaces Shadoe, who is overall the most perfect woman that I've ever met in my LIFE, this Tory must be a pint-sized Kama Sutra stuffed into baggy pants.

The whole time he was telling me about her wide and varied skill set I just kept thinking about *Brave New World*. In the future of that book, society is geared so that everybody can just have sex with anybody they want and it's just accepted. It's not a big thing like it is to (most of) us today. The main character is a social weirdo who holds a belief system more like ours. He is disgusted when his male co-workers discuss his female co-workers that they've done it with like they're "pieces of meat" and whatever.

In that book they keep using the word "pneumatic" to describe the best girls. I thought it was really effective how Huxley used a word that's so mechanical and dehumanizing as a compliment. That was all I could think about all day as Turbo Dan talked about Tory. I can tell that he really likes her on some level that must transcend the physical, but he expressed it by spending an entire day telling me how pneumatic she is. It seemed so wrong.

I wish I could just be like a regular guy and sit there and drink my beer and say "You lucky dog! Fuck her sideways once for ol' Caster!" But no, I'm sitting there the whole day thinking "This is so inappropriate. I'm glad she can't hear what you're saying." Blah. I'm such an uptight prude. I need to loosen up.



Thursday, August 5, 2004 - 3:54 p.m.

Busy busy busy

Current mood: stressed

Comments: 2

God! Work is kicking the living crap out of me this week! I don't have time to bore you with all of the pointless details but, long story short, we've got a huge deadline next Friday and Blake isn't pulling his weight. Blake isn't pulling Kate Moss' weight. I'm going to murder him.

I've been working overtime (unpaid, mind you) all week, and that bastard is still coming in late and leaving early. And when he's here, he doesn't do shit for work. AAAarg! He's driving me insane!

He's completely reverted to his pre-intervention assholiness. In fact, I'm delighted to say that while I'm working at 8 times human speed, he's on the phone RIGHT NOW arguing with his semi-ex-wife about splitting up the furniture. Hey asshole! If you were putting in the overtime you needed to be right now, you wouldn't need any furniture! You'd just pass out on the floor at the end of the night. Like ME!

Oh, shit, I almost forgot. I was too busy to post it, but he finally did it yesterday afternoon. He called me "Gay Ray" again. He came over and was like, "Hey, Gay Ray, do you have the folder for..." then he stopped and I could see the rusty wheels turning in his tiny brain trying to figure out what to do, then he just continued about the stupid file like nothing happened. God, he's such an idiot. It was like when there's a possum in your garbage can and you turn on the porch light, and it just sits there like, "Shit, maybe if I don't move, he can't see me."

The worst part is that I'm so busy that I was kind of relieved that he didn't even try to dig himself out. It was like, "Alright, no backpedaling, just keep talking. I don't have time to be offended today, you prick."



deech comments...

"In fact, I'm delighted to say that while I'm working at 8 times human speed, he's on the phone RIGHT NOW arguing with his semi-ex-wife about splitting up the furniture."

Kinda like you're on your blog RIGHT NOW wasting time at work telling all your friends on the net about how he's wasting time at work.

That MAGNIFICENT BASTARD!



rcaster1138 comments...

I just thought I'd take this moment out of my extremely busy day to tell you that you suck.



Friday, August 6, 2004 - 3:48 p.m.

Blake must die.

Current mood: aggravated

Comments: 1

Unbelievable.

Blake is gone. It's not even four o' clock yet, and that bastard has already disappeared for the weekend. I don't have time to post this, but I thought sounding off would be a better solution than my first idea, which was just screaming like a chimp and pissing all over his desk.

I'm going to end up working over the weekend, I just know it. Well, at least I'll get something done without his stupid ass distracting me all day.



aerospace comments...

just duck out early, and make sure to do all that slow "save file" stuff like 30 minutes before you plan to leave. and don't answer the phone all weekend. and invent the jump to conclusions mat.



Saturday, August 7, 2004 - 10:20 p.m.

Smoked brain

Current mood: tired

Comments: 0

So I had to go into work today. Bah. At least I managed to get enough work done without Blake around that I can now say that I am "really far behind" instead of "mother f-ing really far behind".

To celebrate my great accomplishment I went out with Turbo Dan and company tonight. Tory and Scottie were there. Scottie was annoying, as always, but I drank enough fast enough to dull him down. I ended up leaving early anyway because I'm so burnt out. At least I can sleep in tomorrow. Zzzzz...

Anyway, somebody just sent Scottie that old email thing about how to find your porn star name by adding your middle name to the name of the street you grew up on. He made us all do it. It was pretty obvious that he only brought the whole thing up because he wanted to show off his name: Ken Redwood. Yes, Scottie. Like a big tree. I get it. Har har.

Mine was "Simon Mayfair". And for the next hour, I became the honorary gay porn star of the group. Woo. It's so nice to take your work home with you...

Turbo Dan's was the best: "Thomas Dr. Martin Luther King Jr."

Tory's porn star name was, and I shit you not, Linda Lovelace. Scottie had a field day with that one. Turbo Dan was all like, "Hey man, don't make fun. She's earned it."

Then she punched him harder than I've ever seen a girl punch before.



Tuesday, August 10, 2004 - 1:45 p.m.

Oh, a red snapper!

Current mood: crazy

Comments: 4

Something insane just happened. I probably wouldn't have thought it was funny at all if my brain wasn't so fried from stress and lack of sleep.

Okay, so I went over to the bathroom next to the big cubicle farm and I could see HR Julie going from cubicle to cubicle yelling "Surprise!" I thought a big "WTF" and then went back to work and forgot about it.

Like, ten minutes later she comes into my cube with a box full of pens and Post-it notes and crap and she goes "Supplies?" LOL! Okay, maybe you had to be there. And maybe you had to be a Gedde Watanabe fan. And on drugs...

Anyway, Blake was taking a long lunch at the moment, so I took the opportunity to make a full report about his shitty performance lately. She was all like, "Seriously? Well that's totally unacceptable. I'll speak with his manager." So there I go. Snitchy McGee strikes again. Whatever. I hope she tears him a new asshole.

She said that she wanted to take me out to lunch to "make up for the way the office has been treating me" but I thought that was just too weird. It's like she's trying to head off a lawsuit with an Arby-Q or something. Whatever. I just want her to get Blake to work hard and shut up, I don't want sympathy food. Is that too much to ask?



timb comments...

It **is** too much to ask! If I were you, I would take the Amazon up on her lunch offer. And then I would tell everyone on your blog what it was like.

C'mon Ray, I know about your well-publicized Xena fetish.



rcaster1138 comments...

Yeah, I'll get right on that and regale you with thrilling tales of awkward silences and bad poetry.

HR Julie does have a definite Xena vibe though. If it came down to it, I don't think I could take her in a fight.



dailygrant comments...

There is no food greater than free food, and sympathy food is in that category. Do it. Be a man.



seinjunkie comments...

You really think that another lecture from HR is gonna make Blake act any differently?

STOOPID! YOU SO STOOPIIIIID!!!



Wednesday, August 11, 2004 - 3:20 p.m.

The meeting: Part Deux

Current mood: amused

Comments: 3

Blake got called into HR again this morning. This time he seemed pissed about it, like he knew what he was in for. He slammed down the phone and kicked his chair into the wall when he left.

He came back like, an hour later and got all up in my face. He was obviously seething but he kept his voice down. He just planted his big hairy palms on my desk and was like, "If you got a problem with me just tell me, alright? Quit cryin' to your girlfriend, you fucking pussy."

I was like, "Blake, I don't ask you to be my friend. All I ask is that you do your work and leave me alone. Can we agree on that?" He just seethes for a minute, and then he goes "Screw you, Gay Ray", gives me the finger and goes to lunch.

WTF? After he was gone I couldn't help but laugh out loud. Did that really happen? How can somebody like Blake exist? And even more, how can he exist in an office where human beings work?!



webgodd_s comments...

Is there any "3 strikes and you're out" type policy there? He's blatantly violating

HR policy. I'd report that he came back harassing you after being spoken to. Methinks what he just did is a firable offense.



halfwayhappy comments...

Get him fired. Please. Do all of mankind a favor and hire an assassin to take him out or something. Trust me, it'd be well worth it. Better yet, give ME his phone number. I'll personally tell him off, just for being RETARDED.



dailygrant comments...

I wish I was like Blake. He sounds neat.



Friday, August 13, 2004 - 2:40 p.m.

A good day to die

Current mood: tired

Comments: 0

It is done. The project from hell is now finished. I did an all-nighter last night but I made the deadline, despite the fact that Blake DIDN'T EVEN SHOW UP TODAY! Oh that's fine. My 25 hours of work make up for the 2 that you would have done anyway, ass bastard.

Now I'm going to go home and unplug all of my shit and hope that Hurricane Charley doesn't kill me in my sleep, or worse, cause me to wake up in Oz.

Wish me luck.



Sunday, August 15, 2004 - 5:11 p.m.

The truth about Charley

Current mood: happy

Comments: 0

This weekend has turned out pretty awesome for me.

First of all, big bad Hurricane Charley took out all of its aggressions farther south, letting Sarasota live another day. My condolences to anybody in the Port Charlotte area though. Ouch. :-(

I ended up sleeping through most of it, but what I saw wasn't any worse than the typical rainstorms we get here just about every afternoon. Considering that the storm was supposed to mow a path of destruction right through my neighborhood I got off lucky there. Go me.

But secondly, and more importantly, I just spent the afternoon talking on the phone with Shadoe! :-) She called me to tell me all about what's been going on there. She said that her dad is stuck in bed but he's really chatty, and he always wants her to

stick around and talk to him. I almost said "Man, that's gotta suck" but before I could open my big stupid mouth she told me that she thinks it's great because he's got so many interesting stories.

She told me a ton of stuff about his Peace Corps days, like how he was always writing grants to get money from different places into these impoverished villages, and how when he was waiting for paperwork to clear he'd be out digging wells and teaching basic medicine and stuff like that. The way she describes him he sounds like a really cool guy.

She went on and on about how much she admires him for doing something worthwhile with his life, and then she started to get down on herself again for not living up to that. I tried to be comforting by telling her that she was making a difference right now just by being there for him and everything. I think that made her feel a little better, but she was still all blah about it.

It was so nice to hear her voice. I miss her so much. This was the perfect ending to my week of hell. She's my silver lining. :-)



Monday, August 16, 2004 - 5:24 p.m.

The HR Lunch

Current mood: restless

Comments: 2

I like the silence
Went to lunch with HR girls
Holy freakin' crap.

Ahh, the wonderful day of silence. Blake failed to come in again today. I'd be afraid that this was going to turn out to be one of those "You say how happy you are that he's not there then find out later that he died Thursday night and feel really bad" kind of deals, but seriously, it would be cool if he died.

Anyway, I finally got corralled into going out to lunch with the HR people today. It was me, HR Julie, and that scary old lady in the short skirt that I met the first time I went down there (Ellie).

We went to Applebee's. It was awkward but alright. I wish there had been more people there to take the social stress off of me, but that Ellie is quite a talker. She barely shut up for 5 seconds the whole time we were there. She's one of these "loud talkers" who punctuates every sentence with a blast of high laughter, as if she's afraid that her head will depressurize if noise stops coming out of it at any time. Whatever. It saved me from having to add much to the conversation.

HR Julie asked if Blake had been better behaved, and I told her that he'd been great since he hasn't been in for 2 days. She leaned in and got all quiet and was like, "Ray, can you keep a secret?" I was like, "Um, I guess." She's like, "This does not leave this table, but a computer went missing at about the same time that he moved all of

his personal belongings out of the building. If we can prove he took it, you won't have to worry about him anymore."

The way she said "won't have to worry about him anymore" was like something out of a Mafia movie. It made my stomach collapse. Holy shit. I changed the subject and Ellie took it away and ran in another direction. Whew. I'm going to refrain from going out to lunch with HR people again. I can't handle the stress. :-/



dailygrant comments...

That's so great! The computer you stole is going to come down on Blake!



rcaster1138 comments...

Hopefully. Or else the tables could turn terribly against me. I'm just going to keep my head down until this all blows over.



Thursday, August 19, 2004 - 1:43 p.m.

Sleepy time

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 3

Would it be considered acceptable to report Blake to HR for snoring?

He spent all morning on the phone complaining to somebody about divorce stuff and how his "bitch wife" is killing him and whatever. I got sick of listening to his macho-man bullshit so I went to lunch early. Ever since I got back he's been sawing a log over there. Unbelievable.

And he didn't even get in trouble for missing 2 days of work either. When he finally meandered back into the office the other day I overheard our supervisor having a little chat with him about not coming in. That guy is such a pathetic wiener. What he should have been saying is "Blake, you asshat, you can't just not come in, especially when we've got a deadline to hit. You're fired, now DIE!" but what he was actually saying was "I know that sometimes personal commitments come up, but we all need to keep the lines of communication open and let the team know what's going on, blah blah blah..."

God, what a politically correct sissy. I'll bet if I tattled to him about the sleeping he'd be like, "Blake, I understand that work can be exhausting, and that sometimes we need a little break, but could you show courtesy to your co-workers and roll over so that you don't snore quite so loudly?"

I'm surrounded by idiots.



webgodd_s comments...

That's SO white collar management for you. Effeminate little power hungry geeks who are afraid of real confrontation.



seinjunkie comments...

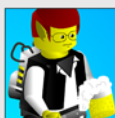
Heh, honestly not trying to start a flame war here, but the first thing that popped into my head when you said that was "Democrats." :p



rcaster1138 comments...

Let's see, my supervisor is a scrawny little wuss who can't stand up to a self-centered loudmouth asshole who does what's best for himself regardless of the consequences to others.

He may be the Democrats, but Blake is the Republicans.



Friday, August 20, 2004 - 1:22 p.m.

Drunk!

Current mood: fed up

Comments: 0

Holy holy motherbastard shit! I can't believe what just happened.

Okay, so this morning Blake was on the phone with asshole buddy after asshole buddy. They were talking about "Jonesey's goodbye party". I don't know who "Jonesey" is or where it was going, but it sounded like a big deal. Anyway, Blake leaves the office at like 10:30 and he doesn't get back until 1:20, and he comes back DRUNK OFF HIS ASS.

He stumbled into my cubicle and just starts shoving my monitor. Not like he's trying to move it, but like he's trying to pick a fight with it. I'm all like, "Um, Blake, can I help you?" He's all like, "You think you're so funny. Why don't you mind your own business you little cocksucker?"

That one caught me off guard, as I thought I HAD been minding my own business. So I went with a direct "Go away, Blake." He was like, "Or what, tough guy? Are you going to go crying to your giant girlfriend again?" Then he just started laughing at me. By then I could feel my face burning with rage. I didn't say anything, and he was like, "That's what I thought" and he goes back to his desk.

I HATE HIM! And he's all reverse-psychologied me now. I want to tell HR Julie on him, but now he's got me feeling all emasculated about it. RRR! Okay, screw it, I'm going down there and telling her. This is totally insane. I can't take this shit

anymore.



Friday, August 20, 2004 - 3:54 p.m.

Wooooooooooooooooo!

Current mood: ecstatic

Comments: 4

It's over! I did it! Holy shit this is the best day EVAR!

Okay, so I went down and told HR Julie about Drunky's exploits, and she was all stern, like, "Thanks for reporting this, Ray. I'll take care of it." By the tone of her voice I expected her to pull a riot shotgun out of her desk and give it a one-armed pump.

So I go back to my desk and a minute later Blake's phone rings. He picks it up, lets out this big sigh and, swear to God, says "Get offa my back, Sasquatch." LOL! That was the point that I knew it was all over for him.

Like, two minutes later our supervisor shows up with Barney Fife Security Guy at his side. He's all like, "Blake, we need to have a meeting with Julie in HR. It's really important that you come down there with us." Blake was all belligerent, but he eventually went with them. It's kind of funny that they sent the security guy to show that they mean business, considering that Blake could break that guy in half with one arm.

So they're gone for about a half hour or so, and when Blake comes back he's all quiet and his face is beet red. This time he's being escorted by Barney Fife and by HR Julie herself, who **MAKES HIM CLEAN OUT HIS DESK! HE FINALLY GOT HIS STUPID REDNECK ASS FIRED! OMFGLOLROTFL!!!!1!!!!11**

It was so awesome. It only took him a few minutes to box up his crap, and the whole time HR Julie was standing there all fierce-eyed with her arms crossed like some kind of business-attire dominatrix. She was all like, "Uh uh. That stapler is company property. Leave it." She really laid the smack down on him. I admit, it was kind of hot.

So now they're all gone and the dust is settling. I can't believe I now have an empty cubicle next to me. I won. Holy shit. For once in my life, I actually won. This is the best day ever. :-)



aerospace comments...

yayaayyaayyaayyaayyaayyaayy!!!



halfwayhappy comments...

Holy crap! You are my hero. Do you have an action figure yet? Cuz I'd be all over that...



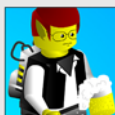
timb comments...

Mmm, HR Julie! My kinda chick! :-D



rcaster1138 comments...

She's a chick who can kick some ass, I'll give her that.



Saturday, August 21, 2004 - 4:25 p.m.

Caster vs. Peace Corps

Current mood: melancholy

Comments: 2

I just called Shadoe and told her all about the excitement with Blake yesterday. She said that she was proud of me for standing up for myself. :-) She said that she wished that she could be here to take me out to celebrate, but that she was sure that Turbo Dan could do the job for her. Heh. No. Not exactly. :-P

Anyway, her big news is that she put in an application this week to the Peace Corps. She said that all of her father's stories and whatever really opened her eyes and made her see that she could be making a huge difference somewhere in the world that needed her. Gah! I love her, but sometimes she kills me. Shadoe, I know a place in the world where you are needed, it's called Sarasota!

I got nervous and was like, "But if you go into the Peace Corps and have to go off somewhere then you can't help with your father." She said that she realized that, and that there was a big chance that she might not be accepted at all, but she felt like it was something that she had to do, and her father was behind her on it. I'll bet her mother wasn't. :-P

So that makes me kind of nervous. I always assumed she would be coming back here to be with me. Now I don't know. I wonder if I ever was more than just a friend to her at all. :-(Blah. I think I'm going to take her advice and go see what Turbo Dan is up to. I think I need some cheering up.



aerospace comments...

one of my neighbors growing up went into the peace corps. she really liked it. and one of my friends from high school is in the peace corps right now, he's been spending 2 years in africa somewhere doing who knows what. he gets like

an hour of cell phone time every week, and if he has no one to call or no one calls him, that's it for the week.



rcaster1138 comments...

Please, **aerospace**, stop helping.



Monday, August 23, 2004 - 3:18 p.m.

A day without a Blake

Current mood: ecstatic

Comments: 0

Today was the most relaxing, pleasant day at the office in as long as I can remember. I wonder why today is so different from just last week...

Oh, I know! Blake is GONE FOREVER! Man, I never get tired of saying it. Luckily for me, his dumb drunk ass wasn't waiting to ambush me in the parking lot when I left on Friday, so I think it's now safe to say that I'll never see him again. I also never get tired of saying that.

No longer will I hear secondhand rants about psycho wives or easy daughters. No more lunchtime boozing and deadline shirking and sexual harassing. From now on, I can just sit here in peace and quiet. Just me, Hetero Ray.

Life is good. :-)



Tuesday, August 24, 2004 - 3:10 p.m.

Chit chat chatty chat

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 2

I keep to myself
The small talk is killing me
I have a stalker

Blah. I just had some "pleasant small talk" with HR Julie in the hallway. I'm starting to miss the days when I didn't know who she was. She's not a bad person or anything but it's just starting to get annoying.

I mean, even though nobody is anywhere near as bad as Blake, most of the people in my office just kind of annoy me in an *Office Space* kind of way. Like, I can work with them just fine, and we're all pleasant and everything, but I can easily go for a week without saying a word to anybody unless it's directly related to work.

This policy has worked for me for many years. Now, ever since I started reporting Blake's crap, HR Julie has become like my office stalker buddy. I was just walking down the hall and I saw her coming from the other direction, so I ducked into the

men's room to avoid her. I know, I've got issues. Shut up. So once I'm in there I've got to make it look like I actually used the facilities so, for added realism, I actually did.

When I come out, who's coming out of the women's room directly across from the men's room? Yep. HR Julie. Bah! She's all like, "So, how are you enjoying the empty cubicle next to you?" and I say how it's great and I thank her for her help again and whatever. Then I start to slink away and she just walks with me. So we keep up this airy and meaningless small talk bullshit and she starts telling me about how they're going to start interviewing for a Blake replacement next week. I'm like, "Uh huh. Cool." I'm not sure what she wanted out of me. I'm bad with the whole "chitchat" thing.

Then she starts saying how much fun her and Ellie had going out to lunch with me last week, and how we should do it again some time. I think my mouth said "Yes, definitely" while my body language said "Not a chance in hell, ever, leave me the hell alone."

Still, when it comes right down to it, I guess I'd rather have HR Julie stalking me than Blake sitting next to me. At least she comes in short controlled bursts of mild annoyance rather than a constant sandpaper bath of it.



timb comments...

Why do you keep trying to escape Julie? She sounds like total hotness.



rcaster1138 comments...

Whatever. You just think she's so hot because you've never actually spent time with her. So she's tall and... well, okay, hot, but when you talk to her it's like talking to a Care Bear with a faint streak of *psycho*. She's like a Disney Store employee who gets off of work and then spends the night turning puppies inside out.



Friday, August 27, 2004 - 1:29 p.m.

Bunch of lunch

Current mood: okay

Comments: 4

When I tried to go to lunch I ran into HR Julie by the front door. Before I could duck around her she asked me if I was going to lunch and if I wanted to go with her. WTF is her deal?! Is she like, trying to do some kind of employee outreach thing or is she just really desperate and lonely?

I was like, "Oh, no, that's okay. I was just going to run over to Arby's drive-thru and then come right back." She was like, "Hey, that's where I was headed too! Let's

carpool." Okay, whatever. There's no way she was going there before I said I was, but by that point there was no way out of it. So off we go like good ol' lunch buddies.

When we get there I figure we'll just go through the drive-thru and come right back like I said, but she parks and wants to go in. Great. So I end up sitting there and talking with her for almost an hour. She did most of the talking, so it actually wasn't as awkward as it could have been. I found out that her interests include running, basketball, and Johnny Depp movies. Wheee.

I didn't appreciate being tricked into a conversation, but it was kind of refreshing to sit and talk to somebody about something other than farts and Nintendo for a while. It really made me miss Shadoe though. HR Julie can beat Turbo Dan in a conversation fight, but Shadoe would kick her ass with her tongue tied behind her back. Ew.



nostradomnatrix comments...

If she starts writing you love poems, will you post them?

smacks self



seinjunkie comments...

Be careful. When you end up marrying HR Julie, you'll have to go back and delete all this Shadoe talk.



dailygrant comments...

Have you guys noticed the lack of "HR Julie Poems" since the "incident." I think somebody has a crush....



rcaster1138 comments...

Oh ha. Ha haaa. I know you're all kidding about HR Julie being in love with me, so I'm going to issue one blanket "SHEEEEEEDUP!" to all of you.



Saturday, August 28, 2004 - 10:37 p.m.

The laziest day

Current mood: lazy

Comments: 0

Lazy day of sloth
Awkward bonding with Tory
"The Perfect Woman"

Today was a good old-fashioned day of doing nothing but hanging out with my loser friends. I haven't even stepped out of my front door all day. I am a sloth. It's really been a while since I did so much nothing and enjoyed it so much.

Turbo Dan called around noon and he wanted to hang out, so I told him to come on over. He showed up with Tory, as I pretty much expected, but also with Scottie, which I didn't. Scottie's not in the door for two seconds before he's all poking around in my stuff and being like, "Damn Casterbater, it's all 'beam me up' and shit in here." I fucking hate that guy.

We didn't really feel like going out and doing anything real, so I just pulled up some *Aqua Teen Hunger Force* on the TiVo. So, needless to say, Turbo Dan and Scottie were more than occupied without any further effort from me. Tory wanted to watch something else, but she was outvoted, so she kept herself busy with a magazine she had in her backpack. This all worked out fine for me, because right around then I got a phone call from Shadoe. :-)

She gave me this week's status report on her dad, and he's doing very well. In fact, she said that he was starting to get a little ornery because he was stuck in bed even though he's "healthy as an ox". The whole time she's talking to me she sounds different and kind of weirdly sexy. Finally I figure it out and I'm like, "Am I insane, or are you developing a French accent?" She got all embarrassed and told me that last weekend her dad was speaking to her in French and she was having a hard time understanding him because he was talking too fast. So then he got all on her case about letting her language skills get rusty and he hasn't spoken to her in English or let her speak to him in English since. LOL! Her dad sounds so cool. I always picture him as Doc Brown in my head for some reason. I told her that she could only talk to me in French from now on too, but that conversation didn't last long. It sure was sexy while it lasted though. And it didn't even cost \$4.95 a minute.

Okay, now for the awkward part of the day: When I got off the phone I went back in the living room (I took the call in my bedroom for some quiet) and Turbo Dan and Scottie were gone, but Tory was still there all sprawled out on the couch reading her magazine and writing in it with a marker. She told me that the boys went to go and buy some beer. She had turned off the TV, so there was just awkward silence.

If you haven't picked it up yet, I'm really really bad at having conversations with people I don't know very well. It's especially bad with Tory for some reason. Did you ever meet somebody who somehow reminded you of someone you used to know, so you automatically associate those old feelings to the new person? Does that make sense? For example, Tory must look like some forgotten evil girl I went to high school with or something, because she just gives me this weird "I hate her" feeling that she's done nothing to earn. I should dig out my yearbooks and try to figure out who she looks like because it's driving me insane. Does this happen to anybody else, or is this just a freak thing for me?

So after sitting there for what seemed like 6 months of silence I asked her what she was reading. She holds it up so I can see the cover: Frederick's of Hollywood

catalog. Oh yeah, great. It was awkward before, but *now* it's not awkward... She sits up and starts showing me stuff that she's got circled and is like, "If you were Dan, which of these would you think would be hottest on me?"

That took me off guard from so many different directions. The first one that made it to my mouth was "Just 'Dan' huh?" She's like, "I refuse to call him Turbo Dan. He's not a fucking Power Ranger." LOL! Zing! I was like, "Yeah, it's kind of retarded, but than again, so is he." She's like, "Yeah, yeah I know. But he's easy to get along with and he's an incredible fuck."

And the conversation again grinds to a painful halt.

After a few more awkward minutes of silence she asked me who was on the phone. I told her that it was Shadoe and she's like, "Is she your girlfriend now?" And I was like, "Well, kind of. It's complicated." She's like, "Okay, your turn. I told you what I like about Dan, tell me what you like so much about Shadoe." I'm thinking "When did this become an 8th grade sleepover?"

I told her that I like Shadoe because she's really smart and literate and she's conscientious about making the world a better place, and on top of that, she speaks *French*. Tory's like, "You speak French?" and I'm like, "No, but I kiss that way." I have no idea where the hell that came from, but I regretted it as soon as I said it.

Conversation. Halt. Pain.

So she goes back to asking me about which lingerie she should buy. The whole concept seems weird to me, because she's wearing her usual stuff: big Oxford shirt and pants big enough to use as a car cover. From the way the fabric hangs off of her shoulders I can tell that the clothes aren't full of fat girl or anything, but I honestly have absolutely no idea what her body looks like outside of "short". I'm sure she must be great under there if Turbo Dan thinks so highly of her, but it was like somebody asking you to pick out lingerie for a badly upholstered loveseat.

So I just pointed out the one that was my favorite. It's like this black stringy lace-up whorey-bad-girl-elven-butterfly-princess kind of thing. She's like, "So you want to see me in that?" I'm like, "Whoa whoa there! I just said which was my *favorite*. I didn't say I wanted to see you in any of these." And she's like, "I know, I know. You want to see *Shadoe* in that." And I'm like, "Yes. Yes I do. That + Shadoe = The Perfect Woman."

She's like, "Okay, I'll hook you up." She drew this big word balloon above the picture that said "We've got to save the whales! Quick to the Bookmobile! Sockray Blue!" (Her spelling, not mine.) Then she wrote "THE PERFECT WOMAN" at the bottom, tore it out and hung it on my fridge for me. It's still there. I like it. It makes me feel like I'm in the planning stages of a *Weird Science* experiment.

About that time Turbo Dan and Scottie came back with a couple of 12-packs of Pabst and rescued us from any further bonding time. We ordered in some pizza and watched *Tank Girl* and did some quality drinking until Tory got bored enough to

make them take her home. It sounds boring, but it was a really good time just chillin' out. Who needs a life when you've got friends like Turbo Dan?



Saturday, September 4, 2004 - 4:22 p.m.

Shadoe: The Miracle Healer

Current mood: happy

Comments: 0

I just talked to Shadoe. :-) She's really happy because her father has been feeling even better this week than last week. She said that he was even walking around on his own a little bit, which is a major improvement. Plus he's speaking English again. Heh. :-) I told her that it was all because of her, because she makes people feel better just by being near them. She told me I was silly. I said that you can't argue with results.

Anyway, she said that she's been going a little stir crazy in the house, so she started working a few hours a week in a used bookstore. She said that she really liked it. Well, duh. That's like, the perfect job for her.

I told her that she should get a job at the Main Bookstore when she comes back to Sarasota, and she said that sounded like a good idea and she'd totally try it. Ah ha! My devious conversation manipulation skillz reveal that in her own subconscious she does indeed know she is coming back to Sarasota! It definitely wasn't "if" she comes back, but "when".

God, I'm such a dork.

Alright, that's my report. Enough blogging. It's Labor Day weekend! Time to find Turbo Dan and drink beer!



Tuesday, September 7, 2004 - 10:54 a.m.

How do you talk to a Vogan?

Current mood: embarrassed

Comments: 0

Poetry critique
Tubular boobular joy
I escaped intact

Well, I just had a totally awkward conversation. I ran into HR Julie down next to the vending machines, and she was asking all about my long weekend and whatever. Then she was like, "It's too bad that Labor Day was last weekend, now I've got nothing to use for my timesheet poem this week." I was like, "Uh huh."

I admit that I wasn't paying any attention to what she was saying because... okay, how to put this tactfully... You know what the most distracting thing about having a conversation with HR Julie is? Her freakin' *breasts*.

It's not a problem when we're sitting down at a table, but when we're standing up, I mean, Jesus the woman is like 6'2" and I'm the size of a *normal human*. So it's like, I'm not a total pervert, but the damn things are just RIGHT THERE at eye level going "Howdy! We're all perky and round and in your face! Dare ya not to look!"

As if to punish me for not knowing how to properly avert my eyes from her blouse, she did the unspeakable. She asked me how I liked her poetry.

I don't know exactly what words she used, because to me it sounded like, "I present you with a simple choice! Either die in the vacuum of space or... tell me how good you thought my poem was!"

Instantly I'm thinking "Telling her that her poems are like getting your fingernails ripped off with pliers wouldn't make anybody any happier." So I reached deep into my ass and pulled out the only thing that I know about poetry whatsoever: Writing in haiku is fun! It's a simple, beautiful form of meter (*that not even YOU can screw up*).

She said that she'd try it, and I managed to slink away with my Dr. Pepper and a shameful feeling like I had dodged a cannonball. A cannonball with breasts.



Thursday, September 9, 2004 - 3:27pm

HR Poetry and Psycho Stalking Corner

Current mood: apprehensive

Comments: 2

And now, a beautiful haiku by HR Julie:

*Another Thursday
Payroll wants to hear from you
Submit your time sheets*

So full of meter and mystic beauty. More importantly, so *short*. For a second I was feeling all good about myself, like I'd done the whole office a huge favor, and then I got a second email from HR Julie. She wanted to know if I was doing anything for my birthday on Saturday, and if I wanted to do something with her.

First off, if you didn't know, yes, my birthday is on 9/11. The one day when everybody is supposed to party just because I exist has to coincide with the worst terrorist attack in American history. I don't make a big deal about it ruining my birthday because, well because I'm not a totally insensitive asshole dickwad. Since 2001 though, as you can imagine, my birthday has not exactly been the high point of the social calendar. Whatever. I don't talk about it. In fact, last year I slept through almost the whole thing.

So the first thing I think when I get this email is "WTF? How the hell did she even know it's my birthday?!" I replied to the email basically saying that, and she's like, "I know where you live too. The girls of HR know everything. :)" Okay, now that's

a little creepy. Isn't that an abuse of records or something? Seriously, that creeps me out.



deech comments...

HR Julie *lllllkkkeess* you..

And by "likes" I mean "Wants to get a little of that hot pound cake."

If it wasn't for Shadoe, I'd say get a little "love in an elevator"... It couldn't hurt to get a little nookie in high places... just as long as you *never* *never* piss it off.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Next thing you know she'll be hiding in your bushes with a sock puppet.

HR Julie Dear,
You are so freaking me out
I don't date at work.



Saturday, September 11, 2004 - 7:44 p.m.

Happy Birthday to me

Current mood: gloomy

Comments: 4

Happy birthday me
HR Julie is a freak
Shadoe saves the day

So it's my birthday. I just turned the big 27. Go me.

This birthday was okay compared to the last few years. I guess it's just going to keep getting better until it's like 50 years later and nobody remembers the significance of the date except for some wrinkled old firefighters that are on the last blurb of the nightly news (like Pearl Harbor soldiers on December 7th). Maybe I'm just cynical. Whatever.

My mom called me to wish me a happy birthday, but she sounded so depressed and upset. I know it's just because she spent the morning watching depressing 9/11 specials and missing me. I love Mom, but her birthday calls just end up making me feel lousy.

That's pretty typical for my birthday now though. My friends are always all "We'll do something fun for you later", but then it passes and everyone forgets and nothing happens and whatever. I don't want to sound like a dick. I totally understand and respect that September 11th is now about much bigger tragedies than me not getting

a cake. I'm fortunate for everything that I have. So knowing full well that there was no chance of anything better happening today, I actually accepted HR Julie's invitation to do something for my birthday.

This was a mistake.

She comes over and picks me up this morning and I'm like, "Where are we going?" and she was all like, "I always go jogging on the museum grounds, but I've never been in the Circus Museum and I thought it would be fun!"

WTF? I've lived in Sarasota for more than 10 years now and I've never been to the Ringling Circus Museum. This was not by accident. The only thing less fun than a circus is a *museum* about a circus.

We were the only ones there. I'm not sure if that's because it's "Patriot Day", or just because it's the most nightmarish tourist attraction in town. The whole place is like a childhood memory that you can't quite remember but still haunts you and makes you want to cry when you smell cotton candy. It's basically a dusty old warehouse painted up in bright colors and filled with old circus wagons and stained clown suits. The whole building dimly echoes with calliope music and the screams of children long since deceased. In short, it's a real fun time birthday spot!

But I'm just being a jerk now. At least HR Julie tried to give me a good birthday, and that's something. I do appreciate her effort, even if it was misguided. She's alright, that HR Julie, she's just a little bit... *not right*.

So we had an early dinner and then she brought me home. When she dropped me off she gave me a card that had two gift passes in it to the Hollywood 20, so that was nice. I'm going to take Turbo Dan to see *Resident Evil: Apocalypse* tonight. It looks cool, but I'll bet it's nowhere near as scary as the Circus Museum. Zing. Sorry.

Anyway, there is a silver lining to this cloudy day. When I got home there was a message on the machine from Shadoe. She sang "Happy Birthday" to me in the style of Marilyn Monroe and was like, "Happy birthday, Sundrop. If I was there I'd jump out of a cake for you." Yowza! :-D Even from across the country she still gave me exactly what I wanted for my birthday: A positive mental image strong enough to completely wipe out a nightmare army of sad-faced clowns.



dailygrant comments...

Ray and HR Julie

Sitting in a tree...

Then Shadoe comes along

and things get awkward before they get interesting.

Oh, and happy birthday.



timb comments...

What do you think is so "off" about HR Julie? At least she's putting in the effort to be your friend. Plus, I think the movie tickets may have been a hint. Had you considered that maybe you should use them on her and not Turbo Dan?



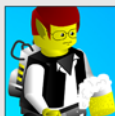
rcaster1138 comments...

Oh right, like I'm going to take HR Julie to see a movie with hot chicks killing zombies.



seinjunkie comments...

(note to self: never buy Ray two tickets to anything)



Saturday, September 18, 2004 - 8:08 p.m.

Another sleepy Saturday

Current mood: bored

Comments: 0

There's not much going on today. As always, the highlight of the weekend has been my phone call from Shadoe. She's doing well, and her father is likewise. He's been encouraging her to make herself useful by getting involved in some community outreach programs instead of spending all her time "nursing an old fart who doesn't need it."

I've never met Shadoe's dad, but I have this feeling that even sick in bed he could still take me in a fight.



Monday, September 20, 2004 - 1:18 p.m.

The New Guy: Starting this Wednesday!

Current mood: cynical

Comments: 1

Oh boy! Office news! Lucky you!

HR Julie just emailed to let me know that they've finally hired a replacement for Blake and he'll be starting on Wednesday. She says that he's a "great guy" and she thinks I'll "really like him".

I'm a little worried now. He's going to end up being some "Hey buddy! Let's be pals, buddy!" guy, I just know it. Still, that'll be better than Blake.

I hope.



dailygrant comments...

First Day:

"Hi, I'm Ray!"

"Hey Ray, I'm New Guy. Are you the one who didn't ask HR Julie out and crushed her dreams forever?"

"Err..."

"Or are you the one that rats out his co-workers?"

"Umm..."

"Or are you the one that steals computers?"

"How did you know that!?"

"I didn't, until now! Book 'em, Lou!"



Thursday, September 23, 2004 - 2:08 p.m.

Dave's World

Current mood:

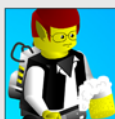
Comments: 0

So the new guy started yesterday. HR Julie brought him up and showed him his desk and introduced him yesterday afternoon. His name is Dave, and he's just... he's just this guy, you know?

When she introduced him he was polite and he seemed kind of shy. After she left he went right to work and I didn't hear a peep out of him outside of the clattering of keys. When he came in this morning he just nodded and said "Mornin".

You know, I think HR Julie may have been right for once. I think I DO like him.

Sorry if this is a disappointment to everybody. If you like, you can pretend that he's actually a robot ninja with a harem of schoolgirls. In fact, I think I might do that anyway.



Friday, September 24, 2004 - 4:02 p.m.

Nothing in life is truly free.

Current mood: manipulated

Comments: 2

"Free" movie passes

I was tricked into going

Garden State tonight

I'm so pissed off. I feel like I just got in an argument with Bugs Bunny that ended with me telling Elmer Fudd that it was Caster season and getting my face blown off.

Okay, I'm downstairs trying to send a fax, and HR Julie just *happens* to wander by. She's all small talking me up and she's like "So, have you seen any good movies

lately?" I'm like, "Last movie I saw was *Resident Evil: Apocalypse*. It was pretty good but kind of dumb." Then she's like, "Have you seen *Garden State*? I just saw it the other day and it's really good."

I was like, "I've been meaning to see that but none of my friends were interested." Then she's like, "I'll go see it again with you! It was that good!" Nice, Ray. You dove right into that one headfirst...

So now I'm backpedaling and I'm like, "Oh, that's okay. You don't have to sit through it again, I could just go by myself." Then she's like, "No seriously, I really want to see it again. We can use our passes from your birthday."

Whoa whoa! "Our" passes? WTF?! They were a birthday present! Those were "MY" passes! So now it looks like **timb** totally called it and the passes were all a setup to get me to ask her out. So by now I'm feeling guilty and weird for using the tickets which I thought were a *gift for me* on Turbo Dan and, instead of just saying that I already used them, I end up making plans to "use the passes" with her tonight. God, I suck so much. I'm such a wussy.

Now that I've had some time to think it over I actually feel seriously pissed off about this. She totally manipulated me. She gave me those tickets deliberately to trap me and I didn't fall for it, but now in the end I'm going to wind up not only going out with her, but *buying her a ticket*. And at this point I can't just be like, "Oh yeah, I just remembered I actually used the tickets already so... nevermind." I think HR Julie is a lot smarter than her poems would lead you to believe. This sucks.



nostradomnatrix comments...

Daaaaaamn. "Gay Ray" is now "Played Ray." She totally played you, man. But I know you're already pissed about it so I'll not bring that up.

You know... this is kind of bordering on inappropriate behavior from her. You do know that, right? Her being in HR... she should know that too.

Next time you go out with her you really need to start talking about Shadoo. Seriously.



twentyafter7 comments...

You're being a jerk, Ray.

Julie is making a prodigious effort to be your friend and all you have done is:
1- Unceasingly call her "HR Julie" like it's some kind of mental patient classification.

2- Talked about her boobs.

3- Made fun of her poetry.

Would it kill you to have more trusted friends than that dick, Turbo Dan? You are totally allowed to go out alone with other women. Has Julie asked you for a two carat princess cut diamond ring and told you to give up loving Shadoe?

Take Julie to the movie, Ray.



Sunday, September 26, 2004 - 12:37 a.m.

The Garden State that wasn't

Current mood: relieved

Comments: 5

Went to *Garden State*
Didn't go to *Garden State*
I should make some friends

So yeah. I went out with HR Julie last night to see *Garden State*, but it didn't work out.

After we talked about it she looked up the show times and then told me to meet her at the theater at 8 for the 8:20. So after I left work around 6 I didn't want to go home just to get there and then leave again, so I just went straight downtown. I had some time to kill so I went over and farted around in the Main Bookshop for a while. The smell of dusty paper makes me happy because it reminds me of Shadoe. It sounds stupid, but it's true.

I realized that I haven't been reading very much since she left, so I ended up buying *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman. Has anybody read it? It sounds really cool from the back cover, and I like his other stuff that I've read, so I figured why not. If nothing else at least it's short. So by that time it's about 7:45, so I wander back over to the theater.

When I get there HR Julie spots me out of the crowd and rushes over looking all concerned. She's like, "I'm so sorry! Did you get my messages?" I'm like, "No, what happened?" and she's like, "I screwed up on the movie. *Garden State* isn't playing here, it's at Burns Court. We can still make it over there on time though if we hurry!"

It was like a beam of light shot out of heaven and illuminated the way out of my predicament. I was like, "Oh, gosh. Let's forget it then. The passes aren't good for that theater. I guess we'll just have to call it a night." She's like, "I'm so sorry! I must have looked at the wrong theater on Yahoo! I'll buy you a ticket at Burns Court to make up for it." I'm like, "No no, forget it, don't worry about it." We go back and forth on this through the "I'm sorrys" and the "Are you sures" and the "It's no troubles" until I'm practically ready to agree to go just to make the hurting stop. Finally she's like, "This is such a disaster. Let me at least get you a cup of coffee before we give up for the night."

I realized that if I told her the actual truth (I don't drink coffee) that it would just

prolong the debate through every other option of nightlife activities until one of us was dead. So I just said "Fine."

So we went to the coffee shop and I got some bitter artsy fartsy coffee. While I'm waiting for it to cool to a temperature where it can be touched by humans she notices my book and she's like, "So, you like to read?" Again, the beam of light from heaven shines on me, and I'm like, "I didn't used to read very much, but my *girlfriend* got me into it again." She's like, "Oh. Hey, I didn't know you had a girlfriend," and I was like, "Yeah, Shadoe. She's in California right now helping out her father. I think I've mentioned her before," and she's like, "Oh yeah, I remember, I just didn't realize she was your girlfriend." I'm all like, "Yep, she's the greatest. You'll have to meet her when she comes back to Sarasota," and she's like, "Definitely, I'm sure she's really cool."

And suddenly it was like the angels came down and lifted 10,000 pounds of tension off of my head. I somehow managed to tell HR Julie that we couldn't be more than "just friends" without coming out and actually saying it and facing whatever awkward denial or psycho repercussions that would have resulted. I was so smooth. Go me.

So there's a strange combination of awkward/relieved silence, and then she's like, "Is that book good?" I'm like, "I don't know, I just bought it." She's like, "Well let me know what you think of it when you're done. I really like Neil Gaiman. I thought *Neverwhere* was incredible."

At that point I think my face did that thing that Scooby-Doo's does when he sees a ghost. It was like, "WhwWwhwhwhwaaat!?" She not only knew a book title, but she actually pronounced it like "gaymin" and not like "guy-man" or "gay-man". She clearly wasn't just pulling this out of her ass for chitchat.

I read *Neverwhere* a few years ago and I really really liked it. So we ended up talking about that for a long time. I don't know if it was because I didn't feel threatened by her anymore or if I'm just desperate for intelligent conversation, but it was the least awkward conversation that I've ever had with her. Luckily for me, the coffee acted as the hourglass on the evening, and as soon as I had managed to swallow the last bitter mouthful it was all "Nice talking to you. Gotta go. See you at work Monday."

So it sucks that I never got to see *Garden State* but, all things considered, it could have been much worse. I'll probably go down to Burns Court and see it by myself this week.

I told this all to Shadoe when she called today and she thought I was being silly and overreacting. She said that HR Julie sounded nice and that I shouldn't be so shy around people. She was all telling me how I shouldn't be so introverted all the time and how I'd be happier if I just let people get to know me. She said that I should try to make friends with the new guy Dave at work. I told her I would. I probably won't. Whatever.

Shadoc, on the other hand, practices what she preaches. She told me about the new friends she's made at the bookstore she's working at. A girl named Teresa and Luis the manager. They sound like really cool people. The way she describes them, I imagine them being like a garage band chick and a human Dewey Decimal System. If I worked with people like that I'd have a really awesome circle of friends too. Eh. Who am I kidding. If I worked with people like that I'd keep my head down when they passed me in the hallway and then feel like a worthless loser for the rest of the day. That's me!



aerospace comments...

choirs of angels are singing their hearts out for you.

good job getting that tension out of the way!!



timb comments...

I still don't understand why you're so afraid of Julie. You always talk about some odd vibe, but I think it might be all in your head. You realize of course that even if you have a girlfriend you are allowed to have "just friends" that are girls. Plus, if she's been reading Gaiman, you have to admit she probably has more in common with you than you realized.



rcaster1138 comments...

I know I can have "just friends" but it seemed pretty obvious that she wanted more. I didn't.

But now that she knows how I feel, if she still wants to be friends it won't be so bad I guess. Still, all things considered, I'll keep to myself for a while.



deech comments...

The real question is what did Shadoc say when you told her about the "girlfriend" part of the conversation that night? Did she just take it in stride like it's a given or did she argue or what?



rcaster1138 comments...

I intentionally told her the story just matter-of-factly, like the whole "girlfriend" thing was something that we both already knew, and so I used it to scare off this other girl. Then she just told me that I was being silly and overreacting to HR Julie trying to be my friend. There was like, no reaction to the girlfriend part. She bit on the wrong part of the concept. She was all

focused on the scaring away and not on using her as my human shield. Oh well, at least she didn't say "Whoa whoa! Girlfriend my ass!"



Tuesday, September 28, 2004 - 5:14 p.m.

I'm in a garden state of mind...

Current mood: disappointed

Comments: 4

Music is too loud
Finally saw *Garden State*
Crazy girls are hot?

Last night I was going to go and see *Garden State* by myself, but I decided just for the hell of it to give Turbo Dan one last chance to be interested. So I called his place and he's all like no, no, no. Then I can hear Tory in the background all "Who's that, what's going on?" He tells her what's up, and she's all into going to the movie, so 5 seconds later Turbo Dan is all into going to the movie too. Ha ha ha! *Wsht-chhh!* Whipped!

So I'm sitting outside waiting for them to pick me up and I'm looking for Turbo Dan's Jeep. Suddenly this big blue Buick rolls up and honks at me, and it's got Tory behind the wheel. WTF? Judging by her whole "punk ass tomboy" image, this was NOT the kind of ride I was expecting her to drive. This wasn't like a "pimp ass" Buick or anything, this was like, "snowbird special" Buick. And the funniest part was that it had that angry-white-boy music that her and Turbo Dan like BLARING out of it. It was like something from the wrong side of the retirement home. Anyway, the point is that riding in Tory's car is like riding in Korn's amp, and next time I'm just driving myself. That way I don't have to bring a sponge to mop up the BLOOD coming from my EARS.

So anyway, the movie just didn't do it for me. I mean, it was okay, but it just seemed like another one of these indie films where there's a dude who is so disenchanted and blasé until he finds some totally original "free spirit" with unique and non-standard ways of looking at the world who turns his miserable life around. What's supposed to be so appealing about crazy girls? It's like, yes, they're going to be fun for a while on account of the unpredictable insanity, but once the initial charm wears off I think it would get really annoying. Right?

But to its credit, there were like, no other girls in *Garden State* besides the pet-killing, pathological liar, so the guy didn't really have anywhere else to go to break him out of his funk. It's not like he had the choice between the smart girl, the nice girl, and the hot psycho. It was like, hot psycho, underage teen, or trendy bitch who eats bamboo.

Also, what was that giant hole at the end supposed to be all about? They're all standing there (in the rain, of course), screaming into a hole. I'm sure this is a metaphor for something. Like, the hole is the great swirling unknown of an unfair universe, and the screaming represents the fact that you can fight the universe in

some small way but it's really an empty gesture. Whatever.

Or to put it in the simple wisdom of Turbo Dan: "That movie coulda used less Oscar moments and more Natalie Portman naked."



aerospace comments...

am i wrong to think you were pretty disenchanted with girls until you met shadoe? isn't shadoe pretty free spirited? and didn't she offer you a different outlook on life?



seinjunkie comments...

LOL! It's hilarious to see you talking about how clichéd this whole thing is when your relationship with Shadoe has been a shadow of your description. Was that intentional?



marcus132 comments...

Caster, have you any sense of self-awareness at all? Next you'll be complaining that you saw *Office Space* and it was just a bunch of annoying stuff happening at an office, like *that* ever happens to anybody...

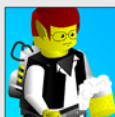


rcaster1138 comments...

Oh ha haaa, everybody. Okay, I see how you could say that Shadoe is a free spirit, but she's NOT like a "crazy" free spirit like an indie film chick.

Yes, Shadoe had no electricity, I'll give you that, but that doesn't make her some kind of wild and crazy girl that's just riding on the cusp of our mundane reality. It's not like she was painting daisies on the cat so it could hide from the dog and attaching wings to her bike to see if it would fly. You see?

She makes me happy because she's so smart and purely good at heart, not because I'm just waiting to see what batshit thing she does next. Does that make sense? Or am I the crazy one?



Friday, October 1, 2004 - 12:25 p.m.

Oktoberfest?

Current mood: contemplative

Comments: 3

I just got an email from HR Julie asking if I wanted to go to "Oktoberfest Suncoast" with her tonight. I didn't expect to ever hear from her again after last time. Weird.

But now she knows what's up, right? Why would she still want to hang out? Unless she was never interested in anything more than hanging out ever, and I'm just a paranoid freak like everyone says.

Anyway, HR Julie or not, the Oktoberfest website makes it sound awesome.

- Featuring the music of "Musikuss", "Spitze!", and "Herb Sheldon and Fritz"
- Keg Hurling contest (I've seen Turbo Dan hurl a keg, and I hope this isn't the same thing...)
- Beer Frauleins courtesy of Hooters of Bradenton
- "FINGERHAKL, a traditional finger wrestling competition throughout Germany, pitting two challengers in a tug-of-war using leather finger loops."
- "Bier, Wein, and Schnapps"!
- "You'll also enjoy listening to the Professor's antique organ"

I don't know. What do you think? Should I go or not?



gozer2048 comments...

YES!! Seriously, why not? She knows where things are at. She seems like she'd be a lot of fun at this sort of thing.



timb comments...

Dude, Oktoberfest! How could you NOT go??



dailygrant comments...

Go! Socializing isn't as bad as it seems. Well, actually, it is, but you can tell yourself it isn't while getting trashed.

Plus, at this point, she knows where you stand in terms of a relationship, so you don't need to worry about that. Unless her whole plan is for you to get drunk, and then she takes you back to her place and ties you up there to forever be her love slave. Still better than going back to the office.



Saturday, October 2, 2004 - 10:38 p.m.

Oktoberfested!

Current mood: happy

Comments: 0

Oktoberfested
German beer education
Gold macaroni

So I went to the Oktoberfest with HR Julie yesterday. I actually had a really, really

good time. Ever since I told her that I have a girlfriend her psycho factor has gone way down. Well, I take that back. She DID show up dressed in a dirndl. Or to put it in non-German terms, she looked like the freakin' St. Pauli Girl. The costume got her free admission into the fairgrounds, but I'm guessing she would have worn it even if it didn't. She's brimming over with German pride. And she's a freak.

The music was pretty cool in a "I only have to listen to it for one day a year" kind of way. Everything I heard reminded me of "Sven's Theme" from *Ren and Stimpy*. I just kept thinking "Duhhh, he is Ollie, you are Sven. Duhh, you are my new friend. I share mit you." Oh, did I mention that we did a lot of drinking. A LOT of drinking...

Well, that's not really true. *I* did a lot of drinking and HR Julie, as our responsible designated driver, drank a lot of "alkoholfreies bier". She kept throwing out German words like that all night. I asked her if she spoke German and she said that she knows just enough to get around a menu. I guess her mom is "extremely German", and so Oktoberfest was always a big thing for their family when she was growing up. So it was kind of cool to be there with somebody who had a clue what the hell was going on and could sort of speak the language to the hardcore Germans in the hizzle.

I was amazed at how much she knew about beer and the ordering of beer. She explained that "dunkles" were dark beers, and "helles" were light beers. "Grosses" is large, and "kleines" is small. She said that there's some German law called the Geshunteitkerblamphenstein (not its real name, but I can't remember it) that says that German beer can't have anything in it besides hops, yeast, barley and water. So you'll never see a "Warsteiner Remix" or a "Lowenbrau Code Red".

So when Shadoe called today I was in the midst of a hangover. She thought that it was hilarious that HR Julie was dressed up like that, and she said that I should have found lederhosen to wear so I could have gotten free admission too. I told her it was worth the 6 dollars to me to never have to wear lederhosen.

Shadoe was mostly good news this week, so that made me really happy. Her dad is still not supposed to leave the house for very long, and he can't do it by himself, but otherwise he's doing really well. She said that he keeps trying to get her to play one on one basketball with him even though he has to use a walker. Ha! Her dad sounds like the coolest old guy ever.

She said that her and her friend Teresa are getting involved with this program that does art with kids from the community on weekends. She said that they did macaroni necklaces today and that she can't get the gold spray paint off of her fingernails, so she's just rolling with it and pretending like she got a manicure from King Midas. Haha! She's so awesome.

She made a necklace for her mother while the kids were doing theirs. When she gave it to her, her mom got all emotional and hugged her and wouldn't let go. Shadoe says that her mom's having a really hard time dealing with everything that's going on but she tries to hide it and act strong in front of her father. I miss Shadoe

so much, but I can see how important it is for her to be there right now. Her story made me realize that I need to call my mom. I haven't talked to her since my birthday. I'm the world's crappiest son.



Saturday, October 9, 2004 - 9:39 p.m.

Democracy at work

Current mood: curious

Comments: 0

After I watched the presidential debate on TV last night, I met up at the bar with Turbo Dan, Tory, and Scottie. I was all full of opinionated fury about the whole thing, but none of them wanted to talk about it. They were all "They both suck. I'm not voting." Tory said she wasn't even registered. By the time Scottie started taking all these lame "I'm Casterbater, and I Rock the Vote" shots at me, I just gave it up and drank.

My friends. The future of America.

Later I was telling them about that German beer purity law HR Julie told me about with the Lowenbrau Code Red and everything, and Turbo Dan was just like, "Man, you talk too much. All you need to know about beer is which brand can get you shit-faced the cheapest." I should start a book called *The Wisdom of Turbo Dan*. It can be like the Ferengi Rules of Acquisition, except more retarded.

Anyway, I talked to Shadoe and she made me feel a little better about my extended social circle. She's not even here and she's voting absentee. I asked her who she was voting for and she kind of sighed and was like, "Well, I'm voting against Bush." Yeah, that pretty much says it for me too. Go democracy.

She said that her and Teresa had their outreach kids paint a mural on the side of their school this morning. She said that she was bending down and helping one kid with something and this other kid knocked over a stool right on top of her and dumped black paint all over her hair and down her back. I would have probably murdered him, but of course she just took it all in stride. She said that she couldn't really leave or do anything about it until the parents all came back, so by the time she could wash it out it had dried and wouldn't come out of her braids.

So she cut them off.

I can't believe it. Those braids were like her trademark thing. That's like Spock getting his ears rounded. I can't even imagine what she looks like without them. She said that once she cut out all of the paint and then brushed out the rest of the braids her hair was short and really frizzy. I'm sure she's still completely beautiful, but wow. I can't imagine it. She must look so different. I wish I could see her.



Sunday, October 10, 2004 - 11:43 a.m.

Another birthday crisis

Current mood: guilty

Comments: 5

My mom's birthday is in 4 days, and I still haven't found a present for her. I have no idea what my mom likes, because as I've mentioned before, I'm the world's crappiest son.

I've talked about this a little with **dailygrant**. He suggested a visit, which is a good idea, but won't work because she lives in New Jersey and I'm too poor for spontaneous flights.

So, anybody got any ideas? If bribery works, I've got five Gmail invites to give away for the top five answers.



gozer2048 comments...

Everyone loves Sea Monkeys!



aerospace comments...

bribery with a gmail account? everyone and their mom already has one, and if your mom doesn't have one, give her one.



rcaster1138 comments...

I should give one to my mom. Maybe she'll actually start using email again. Last time I was in NJ I set her up a Hotmail account that she could check from the computer where she works. She called me two days later and told me that somebody was sending her pictures of naked women and she wasn't going to "click the mail" anymore. Hotmail sucks.



marcus132 comments...

You can never go wrong sending your mom flowers. Moms love flowers, and if they don't, at least they'll die in a few days and she can throw them away.



rcaster1138 comments...

Flowers eh? Yes, I think this is the winner. Seeing as how my lazy ass has waited too long to find anything better, ordering her some flowers is probably my best hope.



Wednesday, October 13, 2004 - 5:05 p.m.

Blah

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 0

I'm pissed off lately
I just bought flowers for Mom
Tory, go to hell

I've been in such a foul mood for the past few days. I don't know what it is.

Work is fine. Dave doesn't bother me, at all, ever. He's an awesome neighbor. I had lunch with HR Julie the other day in the breakroom. That was uneventful, but fine. Altogether I guess work is better than ever. So why am I all pissed off?

Maybe it's all the election stuff coming up. Not just the debates and the presidential race, but all of the local bullshit too. I keep getting spam phone calls at home from all of these local politician assholes. When it's actually a real person and not a machine I tell them that I had intended to vote for their candidate but, since they use telemarketing, I'm voting for the other guy. What happened to that "Do Not Call" list? Are politicians above the law? (I think we all know the answer to that one.)

Then there's stress over the mom's birthday thing. I've procrastinated doing something about it up until the last minute, again. I ended up buying flowers online because they can deliver overnight for a reasonable shipping fee. I mean, I'm willing to spend money on my mom and all, but it would have sucked to pay \$50 in shipping just because I waited to get her something until I was within 7 hours of her birthday. That's me. World's crappiest son. So at least that's taken care of and off of my mind. I'm writing myself a note and sticking it on my monitor right now. "Call Mom tomorrow."

My idiot friends have been pissing me off lately too. Last night I was hanging out over at Turbo Dan's with him and Tory and they were being grossly affectionate. They were like being all flirty and touchy, like they were trying to send me "Get out of here so that we can screw" signals. At one point Tory bent over to get something out of the fridge and Turbo Dan gets up behind her and pretends like he's taking her from behind. He's all pumping away and he's like, "Who's your daddy?" and she's all laughing and she's like, "Baby, you know my daddy's dead!" They are so retarded. That's not funny. It doesn't even make any sense. I liked Turbo Dan better before Tory came along. I liked him better when he was just the dim-witted drinking buddy. Now he's like the frat-boy sex-fiend idiot dickweed. I wish they'd never met. She sucks.



Sunday, October 17, 2004 - 3:40 p.m.

Fall cleaning

Current mood: clean

Comments: 1

All things are now clean
My apartment cleansed of filth
Glitter art danger

This weekend I've been trying to break out of my funk by cleaning up my apartment. Clean living, clean mind, that sort of thing. I don't think this place has been so clean since before I moved in. I threw away a ton of papers and old magazines and crap. The bathroom is so clean I would swear that my mom has been here. I dusted EVERYTHING. I went through 2 cans of spray duster and half a box of Swiffers.

When I was cleaning out the computer I finally pulled that incriminating sticker off the front of it. It left this huge sticky metallic glue stain, so I stuck this big Apple sticker over it that came with my iPod. Now I have a PC with a huge Apple logo on the front of it. And I find that funny, because I'm a huge dork.

I talked to Shadoe yesterday. She said that her and Teresa did glitter art with their outreach kids. I was like WTF is glitter art? She said that it's where you draw something on paper with glue, and then dump glitter on it, and then pour the glitter back off so that it only sticks where there was glue. After she described it, I totally remember doing that as a kid, and at the time it actually seemed cool.

Anyway, she said that this one little girl was acting like she was Hermione from *Harry Potter* and she kept blowing the glitter off of her paper into the air and yelling magic words. When Shadoe tried to get her to stop the kid blew a whole mess of glitter right into her face. She told me that she had so much glitter in her left eye that she swore it crunched when she blinked it. She rinsed it all out, but she said her eye was still all pink hours later. I hate hearing about it when bad stuff happens to Shadoe. If I were her I'd have quit this stupid outreach thing after the paint last week. She's got a lot more resolve than I do, I guess. Or maybe I just hate kids.



hawk_one comments...

Nahh, you don't hate kids. You're just unconsciously following an ancient and not uncommon trend:

Your own kid = Cooler than cool

Your close relatives' kids = Cool in small doses

The rest = Snotty, ugly brats that do terrible stuff to you if let them get closer than 30 meters



Friday, October 22, 2004 - 5:44 p.m.

I really did heart Huckabees!

Current mood: existential

Comments: 2

I heart Huckabees

My philosophy on film

Insignificant?

I saw the most incredible movie last night: *I heart Huckabees*. If it's playing near you, you should check it out. It was completely brilliant. I think this movie connected with me the way that *Garden State* was supposed to but didn't.

I wish Shadoe had been here to see this with me. It reminded me so much of the way that we used to sit around all night and talk about the inner workings of the universe. This movie completely backs up everything that I always said in those discussions. It says that there is no such thing as coincidence. Every single thing in the universe, no matter how insignificant, affects every other thing in some way.

Lily Tomlin says "There's nothing too small. You know when police find the slightest piece of DNA and build a case on it? If we might see you floss or masturbate that could be the key to your entire reality." That's basically what I always said to Shadoe, except I always just called it fate. I'm not existential enough to know any other words for it. I've always thought that if you think of anything that's important to you, and really think back on how it came to be, it usually starts in a place completely unrelated to where it ends.

I talked about all of this with Julie after the movie, and she seemed to side with Shadoe on the issue of fate. She said that nothing is connected, and that anything significant that happens happens because somebody consciously makes it happen. As her example she was like, "I asked you to go to see the movie with me, and you said yes, and we did. It's concrete cause and effect." And I was like, "But that's just the insignificant tail end of it. Me seeing this movie with you can be directly traced back to the completely irrelevant event of Blake's wife throwing him out of his house." After I went through the whole chain of events she just told me that I was trying to be "too deep and spooky". Whatever. I totally won that debate and she knew it.

Anyway, *Huckabees* is brilliant. Go and see it. Hundreds of seemingly insignificant events have led up to you seeing it.



dailygrant comments...

You don't refer to her as "HR Julie" anymore, and you don't refer to her at all until later on in the story! I think you are trying to hide a secret crush! DRAMA!



rcaster1138 comments...

Huh. I'll be damned. Maybe I've been spending enough time with her lately that she seems less like the mysterious email poetry troll and more like just some ordinary chick. Or maybe I just forgot the HR. I'll let you decide.



Monday, October 25, 2004 - 3:31 p.m.

Stuff and blah

Current mood: blah

Comments: 0

I feel so blah lately. Like nothing matters. I feel like the universe has just lost interest in me and is about slip off into oblivion. And I've got the biggest headache. It's like there's this huge pressure in the top of my nose and it's just expanding and filling with acid. I think my brain is dying.

I talked to Shadoe the other day. It was nice to hear from her, but she didn't really have a lot of news. That guy Luis from the bookstore helped with the kids' art thing this weekend. They did chalk sidewalk art. That's about it. I didn't have a lot to say either, I guess. I just feel like, I don't know. Blah.

Well, that was a great entry. I think I'll just take some Advil and die now.



Wednesday, October 27, 2004 - 11:38 a.m.

Halloween party

Current mood: indecisive

Comments: 3

So Halloween is now 4 days away, and no, I don't have a costume. Somewhere around the time that I simultaneously turned too old to trick or treat and became old enough to just buy the candy that I like, Halloween lost its magic for me. That's not really true. I still enjoy looking at all of the girls who decide that one time a year it's okay to be a "Sexy ____". But I don't need to dress up to partake in that. So I don't.

This year, however, I've made an annoying new friend. Every time I run into HR Julie she's hassling me about dressing up and coming to the office party on Friday. I've never dressed up to go to work. Not ever. Maybe my inner child is dead or something, but I'd just feel like such a dorkass sitting here all day doing the same old crap in Darth Maul makeup as if that suddenly makes my job all "fun" and "festive".

If I did dress up at all I'd wear my stormtrooper helmet, but I don't have any other parts of the costume to go with it, and I don't have the money to do it right or the time to fake it right. Maybe I'll just wear a tie and the helmet and be "stormtrooper from Accounting". Or maybe I'll be the same thing I was last year: Crazy Not Going To The Office Party! Gimme some candy!



seinjunkie comments...

Go with a digital camera and say you're "taking-pictures-for-my-adult-website guy." Then insist that all of the drunk girls flash you or their careers will never take off.



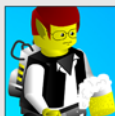
gozer2048 comments...

How many boxes of Mardi Gras beads shall I FedEx to you?



timb comments...

Righto, I'll chip in on that.



Monday, November 1, 2004 - 2:50 p.m.

Halloween weekend

Current mood: content

Comments: 0

I had a pretty good Halloween weekend. I hung out over at Turbo Dan's last night. Tory wasn't around, so he was in "fun to be around" mode. He had some candy to give out to the kids who came for trick or treats, but he ran out really early in the night. We started giving out stuff we found in his kitchen. A bunch of kids got handfuls of Doritos. Their moms looked pissed. LOL! I think one kid got a bottle cap.

I did end up going to the office party on Friday. I had the most hilariously lame costume. I wore a white sheet with my helmet over it and I was "Ghost of a stormtrooper that Han Solo shot". Nobody got it except for Dave, who saw me and yelled "TK421! Why aren't you at your GHOST!" Ha ha ha! Dave is pretty cool.

Shadoe said that she dressed up as a team with Luis and Teresa as *Gilligan's Island*. She was Mary Ann, Teresa was Ginger, and Luis was Gilligan. Holy crap. I've always been a Mary Ann man, and this totally seals it. I sure wouldn't mind being stuck on a remote island in the South Pacific with Shadoe for a few years. Rrrroww.



Tuesday, November 2, 2004 - 1:26 p.m.

VOTE!

Current mood: cynical

Comments: 0

I'm off to cast my soon-to-be-lost Floridian vote for the saggy Munster and against the psychotic chimp.

Ain't democracy grand?



Wednesday, November 3, 2004 - 10:47 a.m.

I give up

Current mood: depressed

Comments: 4

So... how about those presidential election results?

Can anyone recommend a nice Canadian city for someone looking to move out of the country, ASAP?



dailygrant comments...

There is nothing good in Canada. The only thing they are good at is being EVIL!



rcaster1138 comments...

That's not true. I saw *Bowling for Columbine*. They have Taco Bell in Canada.



timb comments...

Vancouver! Start packing your shit. We'll pick you up on the side of I-75 northbound.



rcaster1138 comments...

Sounds good. I'll be waiting on the offramp... weeping.



Saturday, November 6, 2004 - 8:32 p.m.

The Incredibles vs. The Perfect Woman

Current mood: gloomy

Comments: 0

The Incredibles

HR Julie acting weird

Shadoe powerup

Last night I went with Julie to go see *The Incredibles*. I would say that it was aptly named, as it was actually incredible. It was a completely awesome movie and you should go see it RIGHT NOW!

I think I pissed off Julie, but I don't really know what I did. Well, I sort of have an idea, but it's really stupid, and if that's it, then she's got issues. Okay, when she came to pick me up to go to the movie I was talking on the phone with my mom. I've tried

to make a habit of calling Mom once a week since I realized on her birthday that it was only about the third time that I had talked to her this year. Anyway, so I'm on the phone and Julie gets there and I'm like, "Sorry to cut you off, Mom, but I gotta go" but Julie is like, "No no, that's fine we've got time, talk to your mom, I'll just hang out." So Mom keeps talking my ear off about this ornery patient that she had at the hospital this week while Julie starts poking around my apartment under the guise of just "innocently waiting while I talk to Mom".

The second I get off the phone she's pointing at the fridge with this scowl like, "So that's the perfect woman, huh?" And I'm all like, "That's a long story. I was here all alone with my friend's annoying girlfriend and she was asking me to pick out underwear that he would like from this catalog that she has with her and I picked that one and so she started making fun of me and writing all of these things that she thought I wanted to hear on it, etc." After I said it all out loud the whole story sounded convoluted and retarded. Julie just kind of had this accusing look and was like, "I see." She didn't talk very much for the rest of the night. After the movie she was all detached and weird. I should have seen it with Turbo Dan instead. He probably could have even got us free tickets on top of not being a freak.

Anyway, in the good news column, Shadoe said that there were no incidents that caused her to be maimed or shorn in this week's kids' art session. And on top of that her dad is still kicking ass. She said that he's starting to develop a little bit of a cold, but she's just going to keep giving him juice and vitamins until he pulls out of it. It's weird, but I always feel like talking to Shadoe is like my powerup. Like, I run around all week and my hit counter keeps getting lowered and lowered from shit at work, and my weird friends, and *election results*, and then talking to her is like finding that medkit or bouncing pretzel or whatever, and suddenly I'm at full power again.

Just in time to start the whole stupid level over again...



Friday, November 12, 2004 - 6:26 p.m.

Sweet deal!

Current mood: giddy

Comments: 0

I just went over to Best Buy and they had a Plector PX-712A DVD burner as an open box deal for only \$50! Sa-weet! I've been looking for a good burner, and Plectors kick ass!

I'm gonna install this bad boy right now and then start burninating the peasants! Uh... DVDs.



Saturday, November 13, 2004 - 3:24 p.m.

DVD SUCKS!

Current mood: cranky

Comments: 0

Burnination sucks
I hope I can return it
Talked to Shadoe's dad

GRRR! I am so pissed off today. I've been trying all night to get this stupid burner to work. So far I've made about \$10 worth of coasters. Finally my retarded brain just started doing simulations instead of flushing any more discs down the toilet. I've tried every burning software that the Internet has to offer and I keep getting buffer underruns and "alignment error" messages.

I checked and double checked all the jumpers. They're all fine. I shut down every other process that was running. It's not like my computer is lacking in horsepower, but just to be sure. It didn't help. I'm convinced that this unit is hosed and was probably returned, which is why it was an open-box deal in the first place. :-P That'll teach me to be a cheapskate. I just hope I can still return the little bastard and buy a working drive.

After taking that piece of shit all apart and boxing it up I really needed my weekly moment of Zen. I called Shadoe a little while ago but she was still out doing the art thing. I always forget about the time difference. So I actually talked to her dad today for the first time. His voice sounds all charming and grandfatherly, like a crackly James Coburn. He had this massive cough but he just kept grumbling about how healthy he was and how he should be allowed to go out and do stuff.

I was just like, "Sorry to bother you, I'll call back later", but he wouldn't let me go. I think he's lonely. He sounds to me like he's got some serious cabin fever. He kept asking me all of these questions about myself, which was really weirdly awkward. He asked me all about my job and my family, then he started getting all theoretical. He asked me where I thought I'd be in 5 years. I told him that I'd probably be in Canada with the rest of the reasonable people.

From what Shadoe always told me about him I thought he'd be with me on that, but it seemed to really piss him off. He gave me a big "if you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem" lecture. He told me all about how hard his generation worked against the war and for civil rights, and how much worse off the country would be if they had all just given up and run to Canada. He told me that if I truly care about something that I should be willing to throw away everything for it. Actions speak louder than words, and whatnot.

He actually kind of freaked me out a little. He seems cool, but he's really intense. At any rate, he sure as hell out-liberals me. I look like Strom Thurmond compared to him.

So, battle plan for the rest of the day:

- Hopefully return POS burner, get another one
- Call Shadoe
- See *Polar Express* tonight
- Install new non-POS burner and burninate the midnight oil

Wish me luck.



Saturday, November 13, 2004 - 11:59 p.m.

THAR BE RANTS HERE!

Current mood: cranky

Comments: 2

Today sucked my butt

Sucked sucked sucked sucked sucked sucked

Prepare for a rant

So today has just sucked and sucked and sucked. I don't even know where to start. I guess I'll just start at the beginning and do the blow by blow in order. And it did blow.

I went to Best Buy to return the busted-ass DVD burner. It's Saturday, so the returns desk is like 10 deep. When I finally get to the front it takes every manager in the region a half hour to approve my return, and they'll only give me store credit. Of course they didn't have any more 712As, so I ended up having to pay another \$90 to upgrade to the 716A. Which is alright, but I'm just pissed because I probably could have found it cheaper online if I didn't have to use the \$50 in store credit. Although I could have used that on something else later now that I think about it. And now I'm pissed off again.

So all this bullshit takes almost two hours, and by the time that I get something to eat and get home I don't have time to call Shadoe before Julie shows up for the movie. I WOULD have had time to call Shadoe, if Julie wasn't like A FREAKING HOUR EARLY! She's all "I thought we could go and get coffee or something first." Grr! I hate coffee! I was in a bad mood, so I told her that even though we had coffee before, I hate coffee, and I didn't want to get coffee again, ever. She thought on that for about one second, then was like, "Okay! Let's get milkshakes!" Gah!

So I have to go to the bathroom before we leave, and when I come out she's standing there in the kitchen looking at the inside of my computer case with this confused look on her face. Okay, back up. I had expected to have time to exchange the drive, come home, install it, and put it all away hours before she got there. So the whole computer is open and laying on the kitchen table with the cover sitting on the chair. I never noticed that there is an inventory control sticker INSIDE OF THE GOD DAMN CASE! She's like, "Is that what I think it is?" and I know I'm screwed, so I'm just like, "Yeah, it is." Then she's just quiet for a minute, then she turns away and goes "Let's pretend that I never saw that." And my pants suddenly uncrapped

themselves. So that could have gone worse, but I feel uneasy now knowing that she's got dirt on me.

But wait! It gets worse!

After the milkshakes (during which thankfully nothing of note happened) we go to the theater. When we get to the front of the ticket line, who's working? Yes. Tory. If I had been with Turbo Dan, this would have meant free tickets, but with Julie it meant *mocking torture*. I think it's official. I hate Tory.

We get up to the window and Tory's like, "Ooooh, is this your new *giiiiiiiiirlfrieeeeeeeeend*?" and I'm like, "No no, she's just a friend. Shadoe is my girlfriend," and she's like, "HA! You WISH!" Damn you! So I just try to laugh it off and I'm like, "Ha ha, shut up, etc." So she actually just looks at Julie and is like, "Seriously, though. She is SO not his girlfriend." WTF?! Why does she have to be such a bitch?! After we walked away Julie was like, "What was that all about?" and I tried to be all funny and was like, "I don't know. I've never seen her before in my life. Ha ha." Shit. Crap. Shit.

I sent Julie into the theater to "find us some seats" and then I went to the concession stand and spent 15 minutes (and almost 15 dollars) waiting for the trailers to start so that I wouldn't have to sit there next to her and talk about this. She was so pee-her-pants happy about the movie that by the time it was over she seemed to have forgotten all about the Tory thing. She just kept going on and on about how great the movie was and how happy she was. I just kept agreeing with her to keep her going until she dropped me off, but now I'm going to tell you what I REALLY think: *The Polar Express* sucks Santa's big rosy ass. If you liked the "Hogwarts Express" sequences of the *Harry Potter* movies, you'll love *The Polar Express*: a movie about riding a goddamn train.

When did "performance capture" become a state-of-the-art breakthrough worth mentioning in every review? I'll tell you when, it was about 5 or 6 years ago when they started doing it in like EVERY VIDEO GAME! Of course, back then it was called "motion capture". You only need "motion" for a video game, for a Tom Hanks movie you require the delicate nuances of *performance* capture. And on the subject of Tom Hanks, when the hell did he contract Eddie Murphy Disease and decide that he has to be every damn character in the movie? No, it's really not distracting at all when every undead CG corpse person who opens their mouth sounds like Woody from *Toy Story*.

So I just installed the new DVD burner, took off the *God damn interior sticker* and set everything back up again. I just did one simulation and it worked, but I'm too tired and pissed off to fart around with it any more tonight. I'm just going to go to bed and hope that tomorrow doesn't suck as much as today did.

Goodnight, cruel world.



deech comments...

Oh. Damn. Busted.

I'd be shitting myself. You **really** should have pulled the guts out of that computer and ditched the case.

Now let's hope she doesn't get to feeling all guilty about it.

Or, conversely, let's hope you and Julie don't have a falling out.



webgodd_s comments...

I **should** be all supportive and say stuff like "It'll be ok. Things will work out."

But I can't. So on with the dose of reality...

You are so totally screwed.



Wednesday, November 17, 2004 - 1:38 p.m.

Girls are weird.

Current mood: confused

Comments: 3

Could somebody who understands girls please help me?

Julie has been avoiding me all week at work. She used to come by my cube in the afternoon and say hi almost every day. But not once this week. I guess that's because she's pissed at me for lying to her about having a girlfriend.

But here's the weird part: Whenever we DO accidentally run into each other, she's all like, giggly and super friendly. And believe me, I can tell when somebody is doing "fake friendly". I do it to practically everyone I talk to all day long. She's doing "real friendly" bordering on "weird friendly". I just get this paranoid feeling like she's up to something.

It's like, she's trying to avoid me, but when she DOES see me, she's acting like we're super best pals. WTF?



deech comments...

She caught you red handed with the computer. She's uncomfortable fostering your relationship at work now because sub-consciously she's afraid of being associated with your actions. She's shielding herself from any potential repercussions.



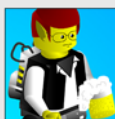
nostradamatrix comments...

If she can't come up to you and explain what's going on then just ignore her. Seriously. Focus on what you need to do and just don't worry about whatever she's up to.



seinjunkie comments...

Guessing why women do what they do is impossible sometimes, but it seems to me it isn't a coincidence about what happened over the weekend and what's going on this week. I think you'd be stupid to ignore this.



Thursday, November 18, 2004 - 1:37 p.m.

She makes contact

Current mood: anxious

Comments: 2

Julie just came in here and told me that she's getting a new couch delivered to her apartment tomorrow. I'm like, "That's... cool?" and she's like, "So I need to get rid of the other one, and the store is going to charge me a huge fee for disposal if I have them take it." So I'm like, "Oh, sorry, I don't have room for another couch." She's like, "No, I didn't want you to keep it, I just need somebody to come over tonight and help me throw it away. And I know how good you are at throwing away chairs."

Ow! At least she said it winkingly like it was a joke, but still, ow! That's low. So it looks like I'm moving a couch tonight. Woوو. :-\ This could be a good thing though. Maybe it will give me a chance to dig myself out a little with her.

Sure Julie's annoying and weird, but I actually kind of miss her coming around. It's the same way I'll feel when *Drawn Together* gets taken off the air in another 2 episodes. A feeling of "Well almost every minute of that sucked, but it was alright enough to watch."

In other news, I don't think I've lifted anything heavier than a 19" monitor in about 5 years, so this should be interesting. I hope the couch is wicker.



nostradamatrix comments...

One little sticker obligates you to do this. Daaaaang. LOL!



webgodd_s comments...

Can we say "Julie's bitch"? I think we can... ;)



Friday, November 19, 2004 - 2:08 a.m.

I fucked up

Current mood: stupid

Comments: 4

I fucked up. Fuck fuck I fucked up.

I went over to Julie's after work and she's like, "Hey, strong man, how about a beer before we start wrestling that couch?" I'm like, "Shouldn't we start drinking *after* the heavy lifting?" and she's like, "If we wait until after, there will be nowhere to sit." The argument seemed reasonable enough at the time.

So we're sitting there drinking her expensive German beers and just shooting the shit. She was just going on about the new 401(k) plan that the company is switching to and how much work it is for HR and blah blah blah. So finally the tension is killing me and I just bring it up, and I'm like, "You're not mad at me about the computer, are you?" and she's like, "No no! Not at all. I was just surprised. I really thought Blake took it," and I was like, "So does that screw up his whole reason for being fired and everything?" and she's like, "Oh no, that never really came into it, he got fired because he was being so cruel to you all the time, and he was creating a hostile work environment."

So then she's like, "So what was that ticket girl talking about with your girlfriend? So Shadoe's NOT your girlfriend?" And I'm like, "Well, not technically. We were practically boyfriend and girlfriend, but then she had to go to California and blah blah blah blah." So she's like, "So Shadoe's the perfect woman?" and I'm like, "If she's not, she's the closest I've ever met." Then Julie gets this weird smile and she's like, "Well, I have to go to the powder room, then we're gonna move this couch!"

She goes into the bathroom and I get up and my head just spins like I'm on a ride at the county fair. I think that beer was like 120% alcohol. So I'm standing there going "Holy shit, I'm going to drop the couch, fall down the stairs, and break my neck." So I start doing the "I'm totally sober" dance that drunk asshole idiots do when they're trying to knock the drunk out of themselves.

Then Julie comes out of the bathroom and, so help me God, she's wearing nothing but the lingerie from "The Perfect Woman" picture. No fucking shit. I was in shock. The first thing my drunk ass thought was "How is she going to move the couch dressed like THAT?!" She slinks across the room, puts her hands on my shoulders and goes "We've got to save the whales! Quick, to the bookmobile! Sacré bleu!" I'm like, "What are you doing?" And she's like, "Forget Shadoe, *I'm* your perfect woman," then she leans down and just plants this big warm orangey-tasting kiss on my lips.

So yeah. One thing leads to another and I end up losing my virginity to HR Julie right there on her couch. FUCK! I'm such a fucking "thinking with his dick instead of his brain" fuck-up. I'm exactly the kind of fucker that I HATE.

God I fucking hate myself. The worst part is that I wasn't that drunk! I just had a good buzz going on, but it wasn't like, "can't remember what happened, woke up in a jail cell in New Mexico" drunk or anything. So I've got no excuse.

I know it sounds totally retarded, but I always thought that I'd "save myself" for my true love. I mean, Julie's a little annoying at times, but she's still pretty cool. I can spend time with her without wanting to kill her or anything. And I had a good time I guess, it wasn't like "it" was bad. I don't exactly have anything to compare it to though. So do I actually love her and just can't admit it to myself because I'm stuck in some denial pipe dream about another girl who moved 2,000 miles away and can't even say that she's my girlfriend?

Julie wanted me to stay but I just told her that I couldn't because I had to come home before work tomorrow and change my clothes and whatever, and she said that she understood and it was okay. I was so shaky in the car coming home. I'm so sick to my stomach right now. I'm not Turbo Dan, I don't do this shit. So what is our deal now? I guess Julie and I are kind of a "couple" now by default. I can't just say "Ooops! That was fun, but I fucked up! I don't really like you that way." FUCK! I'm going to have a breakdown. I wish I could just hit CTRL+Z and never have gone there tonight. I don't know what to do. I'm posting all this because I need to just talk it over with somebody but I've really got nobody else to turn to. How sad is that? Not that you guys are sad, but just the fact that the only good friends I can turn to are Internet bloggers that I've never actually met. Turbo Dan wouldn't understand this at all. Mom of course is out. And Shadoe is ABSOLUTELY out. What if Shadoe finds out about this!? I'm so fucked. I'm such an idiot. I don't know how I can face Julie at work tomorrow.



aerospace comments...

i think you are the victim here. your guilt is misplaced. julie took advantage of you!! she invited you over on false pretenses, she gave you beer, and she had to have been planning this move for a while to be wearing the "perfect woman" deal. geez, this sounds like late night showtime softcore.



deech comments...

It would behoove you to recall that Shadoe dated Turbo Dan *for the nookie* and nothing else. I think anybody that can do that will understand a one night drunken hookup.



nostradomnatrix comments...

People that work in HR have absolutely no right to behave this way. Seriously. That's atrocious behavior.

And no nookie is worth what you're feeling right now. But I guess you've

figured that out. I don't see anything cool about what happened either.

Now you're going to have to disengage yourself. If I were you, I'd start looking for another job.

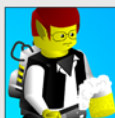


marcus132 comments...

I still don't see what's wrong with Julie! Besides the poetry she seems like a really cool lady. If Shadoe was out of the picture (and for all intents and purposes, admit it, she *is*) how would you feel about Julie? I think you would have been eager for this night since the first time you saw her.

Listen to yourself. You had a picture of hot underwear that you like hanging on your fridge, and **SHE TRACKED IT DOWN, BOUGHT IT, AND WORE IT FOR YOU!!** Do you have any idea how many men would **KILL** for a woman like that?! Stop pretending you're not a lucky bastard.

Yes, you screwed up, but it could be much worse. So your first time wasn't the bed of white dove feathers and rose petals that you had always dreamed of. So what? At least it wasn't you drunk off your ass with a hairy transvestite in a West Hollywood men's room. You did all right. A "mistake" like this could have been much, much worse.



Friday, November 19, 2004 - 2:43 p.m.

Kiss

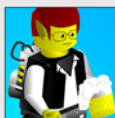
Current mood: sick

Comments: 0

Julie just came in here for her afternoon hello for the first time this week. She was all, I don't know, "aglow". I've never seen her so happy. It totally tore me in half, like, "You really made her happy, good for you!" vs. "You really made her happy, NOW WHAT YOU STUPID ASSHOLE!?"

I didn't want to talk about any of it at work, so I just kind of did a lot of "uh huhs" and "yeahs" while she talked. When she left, she gave me a peck on the lips. :-\

Dave walked by like a minute later and he's like, "Wow, Julie's sure in a great mood today. I wonder what got into her." The punch line popped into my head so fast that it made me nauseous. I'm such a prick.



Friday, November 19, 2004 - 6:56 p.m.

Worse

Current mood: worse

Comments: 0

I just dragged myself home from work, all exhausted from not sleeping last night and sick to my stomach, and there's a message on the machine from Shadoe and she

sounded terrible. So I called her and she told me that her father passed away some time last night.

I tried to be supportive but she just kept lying and saying that she was okay, and that they knew he was really sick, and he'd been sick for a long time and everything. She said that today was going a little better than last night because there were family friends around for support. She said that last night was the worst because it was just her and her mom with nobody else to cry on. She told me she tried calling last night, but I wasn't home. I told her that I was working late. I'm such a shitty liar.

I feel like the biggest shit right now. If I really loved her as much as I claim I do I would have gone to California with her. I would have been there for her when she needed me. I should have been there to support her last night, but instead I was... not. I am so pissed at myself. I think I'm going to throw up.



Wednesday, November 24, 2004 - 4:02 p.m.

Sad week

Current mood: sad

Comments: 3

This has been a tough week. I've pretty much just been holed up in my apartment not answering the phone if it's not Shadoe on the Caller ID. I had Thursday and Friday off from work for Thanksgiving so I took the rest of the week off as vacation days.

I talked to Shadoe a lot over the weekend, but there wasn't really very much to say. I did a lot of trying to say the right things and she did a lot of crying. She said that Teresa is out of town this week but Luis has been hanging out with her a lot and helping her and her mom with stuff. The memorial service is this afternoon. I wish there was some way I could have been there.

Turbo Dan and Tory came by last night, which was weird. He said that he hasn't seen me in a while and he wanted to hang out. I guess he's not so bad as I make him out to be sometimes. I told them about Shadoe's dad and they were all supportive. Tory was like, "She'll be okay. When my dad died, I got over it in like, two weeks." Oh, okay then, great. I'm glad I have an authority on the subject around. I should call Shadoe and tell her that she'll be fine in time for Christmas! :-P

If nothing else this whole sad experience has helped to put Julie in perspective. I told her Friday night that Shadoe's dad had passed away and that I really wanted to be alone for a while and it didn't have anything to do with her. Which was pretty much true. On Monday I got a card from her offering her condolences. Today she came by to see how I was doing and to bring me some lunch. That was weird. I'm glad I was dressed. The thing that surprised me is that I was actually really happy to see her when she showed up at my door. I don't know if it's just because I'm lonely or what, but I kind of missed her. She's not as bad as I always say she is either, I guess. Or maybe I'm just emotionally mooshy right now and anybody who talks to

me seems like the best person ever.

She invited me to go up to Tampa with her tomorrow and spend Thanksgiving with her and her parents. Gah. I don't know what to do with that one. On the one hand, with the funk I've been in it might be a good idea not to spend Thanksgiving in bed feeling sorry for myself, but on the other hand, *meeting the parents*? It seems like a lose-lose situation. Or at the very least a sad-depressing situation.



seinjunkie comments...

I wouldn't look at it like meeting her parents. Sometimes it's just nice to spend holidays with people. If I were you, I would go with Julie.



timb comments...

Nah. Go there. Get out. Eat. Fall asleep in front of the TV. It's the least you can do.



marcus132 comments...

It sounds like a cute girl and free food is just what you need right now.

Now that I mention it, that sounds like what *I* need right now...



Saturday, December 4, 2004 - 6:34 p.m.

Christmas is coming

Current mood: content

Comments: 3

Every day has just seemed to blend together for me lately. Not that I'm depressed or anything, it's just that they all just seem to moosh together into one flat blur of dull contentedness. Work has been fine and uneventful. Sitting next to Dave is like sitting next to a loaf of Wonder Bread. I've got no complaints about that.

Last week I ended up spending Thanksgiving up in Tampa with Julie and her parents. Even that was just blandly pleasant. Her mom is like this total German frau stereotype. She reminded me so much of Kraus from *Benson*. I've never had a Thanksgiving dinner that included sauerkraut and brats, but hey, there's no tradition like a new tradition.

Her dad was your typical sports guy. All day, it was like:

"So, you like football?"

"No."

"You like basketball?"

"No."

"You like baseball?"

"No."

"Well what do you like?"

"*Star Trek*."

We didn't exactly hit it off.

Anyway, ever since then I've been hanging out with Julie and we've been having a good time (that's without quotes and winks). In the past week she's practically turned into one of Santa's elves. She's already done with her Christmas shopping and she put up her tree last weekend. Freak.

On that subject, I need to get started on my shopping. First I need to resolve this dilemma: Which do I hate more, the mall at Christmas or shipping fees? The clearest answer I can see is that I should do all of my Christmas shopping in a huge single order at Amazon.com and reap the benefits of free shipping AND not having to go to the mall. It's a Christmas miracle! Now if only I can find an Amazon gift guide for "Stuff for your mom that she will actually like."



dailygrant comments...

So are you and Julie like, an item now, or are you just "strong friends"? Also, is Shadoe coming back, or did she find her place in Cali? So many unanswered questions!



rcaster1138 comments...

Me and Julie are just friends. I guess she's a cool chick, but she's not *my* cool chick, you know?

I didn't want to ask Shadoe about coming back because I thought it was still too soon, but she did talk a lot about spending Christmas with her mom. Which is understandable. After the holidays maybe I'll get an opportunity to ask about it without looking like a total selfish dick.



dailygrant comments...

Yeah, it's hard to tell when the "right time" is to say "Hey, so, remember the reason you left?"



Friday, December 10, 2004 - 4:14 p.m.

Christmas Music Debate

Current mood: debatable

Comments: 0

Today Julie and I went out to lunch and they had the standard endless loop of annoying Christmas Muzak playing. I started talking about how stupid the words to

Christmas songs are, and she called me a Scrooge. So I started to do a running commentary on every song that came on.

Rudolph - "You know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen. But do you recall the most famous reindeer of all?"

This song hasn't even started yet and the intro has already started making false assumptions. As a matter of fact, I **don't** know Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen. They're all just interchangeable supporting cast in the whole sleigh-pulling show. If Blitzen was replaced mid-season by Dick Sargent, would you notice? I think not.

And then the second part: Do you recall the most famous reindeer of all? Do I recall the **MOST FAMOUS** reindeer? Alright Mr. Narrator, if you already assume that I remember all of the meaningless bit players, what the hell makes you think that I don't recall the **MOST FAMOUS** reindeer!? That's like saying "You know Malla, and Itchy, and Lumpy, but do you recall the most famous Wookiee of all?"

Julie's rebuttal: You're just looking for something to be negative about.

One point for Ray.

Joy to the World - "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

Say what?! Say whaaaaaaat?! That's like an excuse that a preacher gives the altar boys while he's getting them a towel!

Julie's rebuttal: You're disgusting. You'll go to Hell for saying things like that.

Ray 2, Julie 0.

The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year - "There'll be scary ghost stories and tales of the glories of Christmases long long ago."

Scary ghost stories? This is the only Christmas song I can think of that has the word "scary" in it. It's not even put in there to make a cheap rhyme or anything. I mean who the hell tells ghost stories at Christmas?

Julie's rebuttal: Charles Dickens.

Point Julie.



Thursday, December 16, 2004 - 1:25 p.m.

Love Actually

Current mood: cynical

Comments: 4

Last night Julie and I went out intending to rent a Christmas movie. I wanted to get *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, but she said that movie was "dumb and

gross" and wanted to get *Love Actually*. Of course, we ended up with stupid, gay-ass *Love Actually*.

I can appreciate a Christmas miracle as much as the next guy, but this movie is just too full of suspended disbelief. I guess I'm going to do spoilers now, so if you want to have sugar hearts and flowers nailed to your face via DVD don't read the rest, just go rent the violently uplifting movie.

Okay, there's this one British loser dork who goes to America because he wants to score with American chicks, and then... it just HAPPENS! He just falls right into bed with Elisha Cuthbert and her two hot roommates straight off the plane! As an American loser dork, does this mean that I just need to go to the UK to instantly score with Kate Beckinsale and two Brits of equal or greater hotness? I just kept waiting for something to go horribly awry and nothing ever did. I know this movie was about Christmas joy and miracles and whatever, but once he got off the plane with Shannon Elizabeth and Denise Richards the impossibility needle was just spiked too far into the "no f-ing way" zone for me. As a member of the club, I like to see a loser dork score with a hot chick, but the dude needs to work for it a little. I can believe in happy endings, but it's just insulting to me to see the loser hook up with no obstacles whatsoever. It never happens.

Then Alan Rickman cheats on his wife and all she does is tell him how disappointed she is and then cry a lot and act like everything is okay. Whatever. If your husband has an affair with an überhot German hottie hotness I would think that there would be more flipping out involved. I'll bet if the tables had been turned and he was cheating on the German hotness, *she* would have destroyed him. German girls don't just shut up and take it when their man is sweet on another girl. They get bloody vengeance.

Then there's the airport reunions at the end of the movie. That little 4th-grade pop star came back after a month? WTF?! What was with all the thrilling "She's going to America, I have to see her one last time, I have nothing to lose" theatrics if she was just coming back in a month? That was total bullshit. After you've had your tearful goodbye the dream girl doesn't just come back out of nowhere. The spurned lover goes on with his life, eventually meeting somebody else who looks sort of like the original girl just before the credits roll. Or if it's a depressing art film, he ends up in a loveless relationship with somebody completely different, all the while thinking of the first girl. Or if it's a really depressing art film, he just ends up lonely and dead.

So basically what I'm saying is, we should have rented *Christmas Vacation*.



timb comments...

The part where the loser Brit goes to the States and scores with chicks was my favorite part, actually. You need to loosen up a bit. It's called a comedy.



rcaster1138 comments...

I'm not saying that dorks can't get the hot chick in the end, I'm just saying that it's insulting for it to just happen. Take *The Girl Next Door* for example. That guy was a dork who got the hot chick, but he had to work his ass off for it.

To put it in terms that you can understand as a rock star, what if the guy wanted to be a major recording artist, and so he just went to America and met David Geffen right off the plane and had a platinum record the next day? Wouldn't you think that was total bullshit?



timb comments...

I think you take this matter much too personally.

Certainly you can understand the comedy in his fantasy just suddenly coming true. Could you imagine how bleak it would have been if he'd come to the States and failed miserably? Then he would have spent the whole trip miserable in shitty weather Milwaukee.



rcaster1138 comments...

That's what I thought would happen! I wanted to *commiserate* with the guy, not be furiously jealous of him!

I kept expecting him to wake up in a bathtub full of ice missing a kidney or something. That's what really happens when hot girls triple team a loser. Believe me, I know what I'm talking about on this one...



Saturday, December 18, 2004 - 3:27 p.m.

Decemberween!

Current mood: distressed

Comments: 1

I just realized today that I haven't talked to Shadoe in like, 2 weeks. Man, I'm such a crappy friend. I just called her and she said that she just got back from the kids' outreach thing. She said that her and Luis did holiday cards with them. I was like, "Oh, how politically correct. Holiday cards." She just said that they were all for the "Christmas spirit" and the brotherhood of man and everything, but Christmas is a bogus holiday.

She was saying how the Christians appropriated it from the pagans and redressed it with Christ imagery, and now we modern pagans have reappropriated it from the Christians and redressed it with Santa imagery. She says that we non-Christians

should stop living the lie and just celebrate something else in December. Shadoe is so refreshing after being called a Scrooge by Julie for not wanting to dress up in stupid Santa hats and go caroling. :-P

Maybe I'm just paranoid, but I couldn't help but notice that she did an awful lot of talking about Luis. Her and Luis did this, and her and Luis did that. How her mom likes Luis so much, and how he's been helping them out so much lately. I'm sure Luis is probably a great guy, but to me, he's a lousy bastard. But that might just be jealousy talking...

Sticking with my shitty tradition, now that it's the last minute I really need to do that Christmas shopping that society has railed me into. Most of my loser friends are easy to shop for. All they need is beer and DVDs of crappy *Porky's* knock-offs from the '80s.

The only one I'm really worried about this year is Shadoe. We've been apart for so long that I don't even know what she wants or needs. I need some kind of "romantic comedy" gift that will make her miss me and come back after Christmas is over. Maybe I should get her a gold heart necklace. All the girls in *Love Actually* seemed to want one of those. :-P



webgodd_s comments...

And um, I know this is being kind of shitty of me, but if you can hang with Julie, then Shadoe can totally hang with Luis. Here's where I might say something about glass houses and whatnot, but I think you get my meaning.



Sunday, December 19, 2004 - 8:08 p.m.

Cookie day, cookie day, it's a beautiful cookie day.

Current mood: accomplished

Comments: 3

Today didn't turn out how I expected it to. I thought I'd just spend the day catching up on TiVo and doing some Christmas shopping. Well I started out buying some junk online for my family, then suddenly I get this frantic call from Julie. Our office Christmas party is tomorrow and apparently every year her and Ellie make a ton of their "famous" Christmas cookies.

Well, as it turns out, today Ellie is on her deathbed with flu, so Julie was *freaking out* about having to do the whole thing by herself. And who do you call when you need a Christmas miracle? That's right, Helper Elf Extraordinaire.

So I've spent all day in Julie's kitchen listening to Amy Grant Christmas CDs and stirring. Stirring. A creature was stirring, and it wasn't a mouse. It was me. I was the Chief Executive Stirrer today because, as luck would have it, Ellie is the one who owns the electric mixer. Who needs electric when you've got my mighty right arm!

Ha ha! Ho ho! I think I need an ice pack...

It was actually a really fun day. I've been in a kind of funk lately and Julie managed to break me out of it for a while. And I'm sure the "all I could eat" cookies didn't hurt either. I guess now I'll have to go to the party tomorrow. Being friends with Julie is totally screwing up my streak of non-attendance at these things. I guess in the end she's worth it though. Gah, okay, no more Amy Grant for me today, it's softening my bitter edges. :-P



marcus132 comments...

So she bakes *and* appreciates a good Amy Grant Christmas album?

Dude, I'll never understand why you still hesitate to find this woman awesome.



amayasumi comments...

dude... he's got shadoe.



seinjunkie comments...

Dude, Shadoe's got Luis.



Monday, December 20, 2004 - 1:25 p.m.

From Julie and Ray.

Current mood: confused

Comments: 3

Holy crap. Jesus. So I just went down to the "Holiday Luncheon", and as soon as I walk in I keep getting these "Ooooooh, you lucky dog" kind of comments. I'm all WTF? until I get to the food table and there's a huge mountain of cookies with a prominently displayed card: "From Julie and Ray". Encircled with tiny red and green hearts no less. It was like one of those dreams where you're naked and everybody's staring at you and you try to run away but your feet are nailed to the floor.

So I turn around to slink out of the room in humiliation and what's right in front of me? Julie's Christmas-sweatered rack. I look up at her face just in time to notice what she's holding. Mistletoe. Yeah, she dropped the M-bomb on me right in the middle of the Christmas party. She planted a good one on me too. My brain was all like, "Shit! Which is worse, running away and having everybody think that Blake was right with his Gay Ray shit or taking it and getting the sitcom 'Woouoooooooooo!' for the next month?"

I decided that the Woouoo was the lesser of the two evils, so I kissed her right back on her hot cinnamon lips. Ha ha. Take that. So there. Yeah. I totally win. Right?

Whatever. I hope she doesn't pull that shit again. I think. Don't I? Jesus, I need to quit being such a... whatever I am. :-\



deech comments...

So, despite what you may think, Julie is now officially your girlfriend.

Sorry to break it to you.



rcaster1138 comments...

Don't I have to sign some kind of permission slip or something?



deech comments...

You did.

It's called, "Kissing her in front of your coworkers".

She brought the issue to a head at the party, you complied.

Oh, and you had hot monkey circus sex with her. Don't forget that.



Wednesday, December 22, 2004 - 5:32 p.m.

Happy Winter Solstice

Current mood: amused

Comments: 1

I just picked up the mail today and there was a card in there from Shadoe. It's handmade of all kinds of layers of blue paper and glitter, yet somehow it looks nice. It has a big glittery white sun on the front.

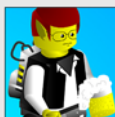
On the inside it has the message "This year Luis suggested that we celebrate the Winter Solstice instead of Christmas. It's an ancient celebration that predates most western seasonal rituals. We've been making these cards all day for our friends. I'm folding the paper and Luis is taking care of the glitter. I had a bad experience with glitter once (happy face with Band-Aid on the eye). Happy Winter Solstice, Love Shadoe and Luis."

So it looks like she found both the alternate non-Christian December holiday she was looking for and somebody to celebrate it with. :-/ I missed the solstice by one day. I guess Julie and I will have to just stick with Christmas this year. Some pagan I am.



seinjunkie comments...

Wow, so not only does everyone at work see "From Julie and Ray," but everyone on Shadoe's card list sees "Love Shadoe and Luis" ... sucks.



Sunday, December 26, 2004 - 2:53 p.m.

Christmas recap

Current mood: tired

Comments: 0

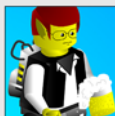
Well, that's over with. I hope all my online peeps had a good Christmas. (Or Hanukkah, or Winter Solstice. I'll talk to you Kwanzaa people next week.)

I called Shadoe yesterday but she wasn't home. Her mom said that she was out with Luis volunteering at a homeless shelter giving out Christmas dinner. *sigh* The little voice in my head was right all along: She *is* too good for me. I'll call her again later today.

I ended up going with Julie up to her parents' house yesterday. They did an old-fashioned German-American Christmas celebration. Lots of tiny colored bulbs, beer, and sausage-based meat products. Her mom gave me an ugly sweater, which is what moms do. It was nice of her. Julie gave me the *Return of the King* DVD, but it wasn't the extended version. It's the thought that counts though. I gave her the first season of *SpongeBob*. Nautical nonsense be something she wish.

After dinner me and Julie went out in the driveway and played one on one basketball. The fact that she grew up in a house that has a basketball hoop installed and I grew up in one with a satellite dish shows just how unfair this match was from the start. Oh yeah, and did I mention that she's freakishly tall? At one point she defeated my rock-solid defense by just standing still and holding the ball over her head where I couldn't reach it. Needless to say it was pretty much a pathetic, emasculating shut-out. I blamed it on a blitzkrieg of stomach cramps. I did not demand a rematch.

Um, what else. I got a Best Buy gift card from Mom. Maybe I'll use it to get the extended *ROTK* DVD. I ended up sending a package to Shadoe too late for Christmas, which is fine I guess, since she celebrated the winter solstice. Actually, her card is what inspired the gift. I got her a little gold necklace shaped like the sun. The card said "Happy Late Winter Solstice. May each of your new days be brighter than the previous." You see? Astronomy humor. I'm so clever.



Wednesday, December 29, 2004 - 4:53 p.m.

New Year's Problem

Current mood: anxious

Comments: 4

Man, this week is just dragging by. There should be a law that says that nobody works between Christmas and New Year's. Blah.

At least the week officially ends on New Year's Eve, so I have a guarantee that I'll start the weekend good and hung over. Turbo Dan's Rockin' New Year's Eve is one of the highlights of my social calendar. He always has this huge party every year where a million people come and this magical "loaves and fishes" thing happens where there's at least twice as much alcohol at the party as the people there can drink. But we always give it a sporting try.

I'm feeling a little uneasy about it though because of the Julie situation. Part of me feels like I should invite her to the party because she's always inviting me to stuff, but a bigger part of me thinks that she'll hate it there and won't have any fun. She's never met any of my friends, and I'm afraid that this isn't exactly the opportunity for them to make a good first impression. Plus Tory is going to be there, and I don't want her talking to Julie again, ever.

So I'm thinking "Just go ahead and invite her and explain how it's just going to be a bunch of drunk idiots, then she'll say no, and you can go with a clear conscience." But I'm also afraid that she'll say yes even though she doesn't want to go, and I'll have to spend the whole party feeling guilty for having fun while she's sitting in the corner looking at her watch. Either way I feel like I'm screwed. :-\



webgodd_s comments...

Jeez, way to be a pooper before the party's even started! Why don't you ask her what she has planned for New Year's Eve? She may have a party to go to herself that may be more fun than Turbo's. You never know...



rcaster1138 comments...

You're right! Maybe she has a party of her own! I didn't even think of that. This problem could end up fixing itself! :-)



seinjunkie comments...

You talk about this like Julie doesn't drink, and after she invited you to Oktoberfest. She'll probably have more fun than you will.



rcaster1138 comments...

This is totally different from Oktoberfest though. That's like, a celebration of her heritage with oompah bands that happens to include a lot of beer. This is just a ton of guys getting liquored up and acting like assholes. It's not quite the same thing.



Thursday, December 30, 2004 - 12:39 p.m.

Party Details

Current mood: excited

Comments: 0

Holy crap. I just called Turbo Dan to ask him about the party and he told me about all this crazy crap that he has planned this year. He said that he knows a guy who knows a guy who is a pro DJ who is going to bring all of his gear over. I'm sure the family that lives in the main house is going to appreciate that. LOL!

He also claims that Scottie is in good with some girl who works over at the Cheetah Club (why does this not surprise me?) and that he was going to be bringing her and all of her friends. Damn. Turbo Dan's parties are never lacking in hot ladies, but this one is going to have **professional** hot ladies. Not that I ever do anything but hide in the corner and watch surreptitiously, but still. Damn.

Turbo Dan is becoming frickin' Hugh Hefner. LOL! We're all gonna get so arrested.



Friday, December 31, 2004 - 3:01 p.m.

Party is off

Current mood: irritated

Comments: 3

Well the party problem resolved itself, but not like I had hoped it would. :-(

Last night I asked Julie if she wanted to go to Turbo Dan's party, but I was like, "I've got to warn you, there's going to be a lot of guys there getting drunk and being loud assholes." So she was like, "So why do YOU want to go? You hate loud assholes." The first thought that goes through my mind is "free beer and strippers!" but, realizing this line of reason would not win the day, I was just like, "Well, yeah, but they're my **friends**."

She looked all flustered and she was like, "Well I already bought you a ticket to MY party." Ticket? Party? What? So it turns out that every year Julie goes to this fancy-pants champagne toast thing at some hotel up in Tampa, and it's like \$100 a person to get in. I was like, "Why didn't you **ask** me before getting me a ticket?" and she was all like, "It was supposed to be a surprise!" Because I didn't have any plans for Thanksgiving or Christmas, she just **assumed** that I didn't have anything for New Year's either. That's so **kind** of her to look out for me. :-P

I suggested a compromise that we go to Turbo Dan's first and then drive up to her party, but she was all like, "If you just want to go there to get free beer, there's an open bar all night at my party." So I'm all like, "But I want to see all of my friends at MY party." Finally she just starts to get all weepy and is like, "Please, Ray? This means a lot to me, I spent a lot on it, you can see your friends tomorrow," and so on and so on.

After like, two hours of her getting more and more passive aggressive I just gave up. This is my own damn fault for waiting until the last minute to invite her to Turbo Dan's. At least I didn't blame my last-minute invitation on making it a "surprise". :-P And on top of it all, right after work, she's taking me out to rent a stupid tuxedo. And of course I have to pay for it, she was *kind* enough to pay for the tickets. How *kind* of her.



aerospace comments...

i would sure as hell be pissed if someone spent \$100 on me for something like that. it's sort of like, "here's this \$100 surprise!! it's a giant collection of *little rascals* videos and a box of spiders! plus, you have to spend 8 hours with me while you open it and watch the videos and try not to get eaten alive by the spiders!"



marcus132 comments...

Oh, so now you have to go to a swank party with a classy chick who likes you rather than a frat party full of sleazy hos who wouldn't give you the time of day.

Yeah, you *so* lost on this deal...



dailygrant comments...

What you need to do is pull the ol' two places at once routine. Just be like, "I gotta go to the bathroom Julie!" and then rush over to Turbo Dan's place, slam down a beer, ogle a stripper, and then rush back just in time to the fancy party. Then you have to make a phone call, and do the same thing.

It worked in *Mrs. Doubtfire*, and you don't even have to cross dress!



Saturday, January 1, 2005 - 8:24 p.m.

Happy New Year

Current mood: hungover

Comments: 0

Happy New Year blog friends! I hope you all had a good 2004, and that you'll all have good 2005s.

Julie's party last night was actually pretty cool. And I admit it, I looked pretty damn good in a tux. I don't think I've ever worn one before. And of course Julie looked very elegant in her gown. It was one of those black sparkly deals, but somehow every time I saw her she reminded me of the Martian Girl from *Mars Attacks*.

As far as I'm concerned New Year's Eve is one of the high holy days of drinking

and, even though I didn't get to go to Turbo Dan's, I was not let down. The open bar at this party was pretty damn sweet. I thought that since I was dressed like James Bond I should be drinking martinis. Note to self: Martini + martini + martini + martini + martini = Hangover from Hell. I had no idea I was drinking so much until Julie finally cut me off. It's amazing how much booze you can go through when it's free and you don't know anybody in the room. I think it made me a lot more fun to be around though.

Julie was drinking her share though too, which made me nervous since she drove, until she revealed that the second part of the big surprise was that we also had a room at the hotel and we didn't have to worry about getting home. According to her I had a "very good time" last night, but honestly I don't remember very much after watching the Times Square thing on the big screen. Get well soon, Dick Clark! (Quote of the year - Julie - "The ball just isn't the same without Dick.")

Anyway, the whole time we were there Julie kept introducing me to people as her "boyfriend". I decided that it was sort of pointless to protest at this point, and even if I did, it would have just ended up pissing her off anyway. So I guess we're like, "official" now. So go me. Here's to a good 2005.



Monday, January 3, 2005 - 11:55 p.m.

Return of the King: The Annotated Version

Current mood: aggravated

Comments: 2

I think there should be a law that people shouldn't be able to see sequels to movies that they haven't seen thinking that they can just "catch up". At least not sequels with plotlines that aren't about sports teams that finally win the big championship.

Me and Julie just watched the *Return of the King* DVD that she gave me for Christmas. She hadn't seen *The Fellowship of the Ring* or *The Two Towers*, but she thought that she could just "catch up". I told her that it wasn't that kind of movie and that we should just watch something else, but she was all like, "No, I heard this movie was so good but I never saw it because I didn't see the others. You can just tell me what's going on if I don't get something."

She spent the whole movie asking me question after question after question....

"Who's this guy?"

"Who's that guy?"

"What are they doing?"

"Why are they doing that?"

"Why doesn't the elf run out of arrows?"

"Why don't they give the little monster some clothes?"

"Why do none of the Hobbits wear shoes except for the one with the beard?"

"Why don't they just break the ring up and hide the pieces?"

It was maddening. The only saving grace was that it wasn't the extended version, so at least I didn't have to be Mr. Answer Man for an additional 50 minutes. This

weekend I think I'm going to go buy the extended version and watch it BY MYSELF! :-P



dailygrant comments...

Man, for barely knowing that you are in the relationship you are *soooooo* whipped.



aerospace comments...

bah!! after 20 minutes i would have stopped the movie. you have more patience than i! wow!!



Wednesday, January 5, 2005 - 1:43 p.m.

New Year's: Part Deux

Current mood: groggy

Comments: 3

I have a headache today that won't go away. I blame Turbo Dan.

Last night he called me and said that he was having a "New Year's Bonus Party" because he still had so much beer left over from the weekend. Whaaat?! *Another* Turbo Dan's New Year's Rockin' Eve? It was like that part in *Contact* where Jodi Foster is all bummed because the alien whirlything got blown up, then the rich dude calls her and tells her that there's another one.

But it turned out that there wasn't another one at all. It kind of sucked. There was nobody there but Tory (who I'm not on the best terms with), Scottie (who I fucking hate), and Mooker (who has the gripping personality of a bag of lawn clippings). So we tear into the stockpile of cold ones, but every time it almost starts to turn into drunken revelry Turbo Dan is shushing everyone down. WTF?!

It turns out that the cops got called in *twice* on his REAL New Year's party, and now he's all worried about getting evicted if the family in the house makes any more complaints about him. He kept saying that we should just move the party over to Tory's place, but she just got all pissed at him and she just kept going on and on about her bitch roommate, and how she couldn't do anything when she was around. That made me laugh on the inside. If Tory is the "good" roommate, I'd HATE to meet the "bitch" roommate.

Finally they decided to move it over to Scottie's place, but by that time I bailed because I had work in the morning. They said that they were all going to do something on Saturday, and I should hang out because they never see me anymore since Julie came along. That really got under my skin. Is that true? Have I become one of those guys who meets a girl and then goes MIA? That always royally pissed me off when my friends would do that. I don't want to be "that guy". :-\



dailygrant comments...

Man, you missed out on what seems like the greatest party ever. I mean, being with some chick is okay, but come on...

Anyway, you are that guy. I was that guy once. It's easy to tell who is that guy when you have been that guy. I've said "guy" too much now.



deech comments...

I'm sorry to inform you, but you are "that guy".

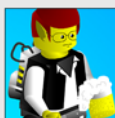
Ever since you've been involved with Julie, it's all "Julie and I did this" or "I took Julie to that", and very very little "I saw Turbo Dan for any reason at all".



rcaster1138 comments...

Ugh. I know. You're right. As usual. I make it my New Year's resolution to spend more time with the Turbo Dan gang.

But not so much that it makes me want to kill them...



Friday, January 7, 2005 - 4:58 p.m.

Clash of the friend groups

Current mood: worried

Comments: 0

Man, ever since I went and hung out with Turbo Dan the other day, Julie has been bugging me about it. She's all "What were you doing? Who were you with?" I told her that it was a "redo" of the New Year's party, but not really. She was all "Oh, you should have told me, I really want to meet your friends."

So this morning she was asking me about what we should do on Saturday, and I (not wanting to be "that guy") told her that I couldn't hang out with her because I was going to be with the Turbo Dan gang. So then she says what I knew she was going to say. "I should come and meet your friends!"

This is such a bad idea. I like Julie, and I like Turbo Dan, but it's so obvious that introducing them would be like throwing water on a grease fire. Julie is sophisticated, and Turbo Dan is a lovable village idiot. She's going to spend all day looking down her nose at him, and he's going to spend all day thinking she's uptight. I tried to tell her this (sugar coated, of course), but she was just like, "If you like them, I'm sure they're great." But she's not ME. She's more highbrow. I mean, I don't cheer for fart jokes or anything, but I do like stuff like *South Park*, which she can't stand.

But there's always the chance that I'm over-thinking this, and maybe it'll all be fine. Or maybe Turbo Dan will pull an "Uptown Girl" on me and be the greasy idiot who wins the heart of the classy socialite. :-P



Saturday, January 8, 2005 - 7:54 p.m.

Bowling for Trouble

Current mood: bitchy

Comments: 2

Bowling with the gang
Julie doesn't fit in well
I should have told her

Well today could have gone better. :-P

I talked to Shadoe this morning. She was home because the kids' art thing ended at the end of the year. She said that she's going to try to start picking up more hours at the bookstore now that she has some more time. I told her about what Turbo Dan said about me being "that guy" and she agreed with him. She was like, "You're always telling me about stuff you did with Julie. Is she like your girlfriend now?" I said that she kind of was, and she congratulated me, but she sounded like she didn't mean it. But I'm not going to pretend that I wasn't just hearing exactly what I wanted to hear. Shit. I just realized when I typed this that I blew my perfect opportunity to say "So what's the deal with you and Luis?" Hooray for quick conversational thinking skills! :-P

Okay, so in a firm and decided effort to not be "that guy", I made plans with the Turbo Dan Gang today. They wanted to go bowling, so I picked up Julie and we went over there. The whole day was like trying to play Ping-Pong against myself. On the one hand, Turbo Dan was being his crazy idiot self, drinking too much and bowling like a freak, and on the other hand there's Julie, completely focused and trying to win. Which wouldn't have been so bad if she didn't *suck* at bowling. Turbo Dan was doing all these crazy sloppy throws and he kept beating her every round. I could tell that she was getting so frustrated with him. And it also didn't help that Scottie kept making all of these WNBA cracks at her. He has no filter. I fucking hate that guy.

But the worst part of all was the constant inside jokes. Turbo Dan, me, Scottie, and Tory have been tight in various configurations for many years. There's so many quotes and old jokes and stuff that goes on between all of us (ESPECIALLY Turbo Dan and Scottie) that I can see how it's hard for someone new to join in. She got *really* pissed off about it though. At first she was whispering to me like, "What are they talking about?" but after a while she just started to laugh this really fake sarcastic laugh every time they made a personal joke. They could tell she was doing it too. It was embarrassing.

I was really worried about what Tory was going to say this time, but she barely

talked to Julie at all. She spent most of the day all over Turbo Dan, as usual. Julie made it pretty clear how she felt about that as well...

So in the car on the way home Julie's all like, "Your friends really made me feel like I didn't belong. Why did they have to be such jerks?" I was like, "I TOLD you that they were like this, but you wanted to meet them." Then she started getting on me about "not helping her". I was like, "It's not worth telling you 5 years of history just so that you can understand a poop joke that's not funny anyway" and she's like, "Well you didn't even try." Well excuuuuuuuuuuse meeeeeeee! I guess I should have WARNED YOU that you wouldn't like them. :-P



twentyafter7 comments...

How obnoxious! Poor Julie! You weirdo! From what you've written: You hate Scottie. You worry about what Tory will say. And Turbo Dan is a crazy idiot. You really should introduce Julie to your *nice* friends.



deech comments...

Like us? HAHAAHAHAHAHAHAHA!



Monday, January 10, 2005 - 2:38 p.m.

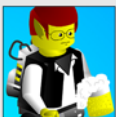
I dream of Boring

Current mood: accomplished

Comments: 0

I had the dumbest dream last night. I was at work in my cubicle, but the wall between my cubicle and Dave's was missing. So it was like a double cube, but all the furniture was still in the same place. Anyway, Dave wasn't there (man) and Shadoe was in his place. I remember we didn't have any work to do so we just sat at our desks and talked all day long, then went home. WTF? Could my dreams be any more boring?

Anyway, I went to Best Buy last night and used the gift card mom sent me. There was enough for the *ROTK* extended edition plus the first season of that BBC show *The Office*. My mom is too good to me, considering that I'm the world's crappiest son. :-P Anyway, everybody tells me that this office show is so good and that I should see it, so here I go. Right after I watch every damn thing on the *ROTK* disc (by myself...).



Wednesday, January 12, 2005 - 3:52 p.m.

Bad boyfriend

Current mood: guilty

Comments: 2

I feel like crap right now. Julie just asked if I wanted to go out and rent a movie

tonight, and I told her that I already had plans with Turbo Dan because Tory was working. I didn't think it was that big a deal, but she seemed so upset. So I was like, "Is that okay?" and she was like, "I guess so."

So we got talking about it and she was like, "I don't like who you are when you hang out with him. You're better than that." And so I was all telling her how Turbo Dan wasn't so annoying when Tory wasn't there. Then she was like, "So are you going to ditch me every time his girlfriend isn't around?" WTF? It's not like this is the 10th time I've done this or something. Cut me some slack, I'm new at this.

Anyway, she said that she didn't care if I "ditched" her tonight, as long as I promised that she could have me on Sunday. Huh? I'm not "ditching" you! We didn't have plans! Is this how having a girlfriend works? Is it like, permanent standing plans and it's rude not to "cancel" before I do something else? So now I feel all guilty. Relationships are hard. :-\



aerospace comments...

i'm just curious here... what do you and julie do when you hang out together? is there a strong physical/sexual aspect to your relationship? do you look forward to spending time with her?

i'm just wondering because you never seem too excited about her. it sounds like she wants way more out of the relationship than you do.



rcaster1138 comments...

Without getting too personal, I'd say our relationship is "somewhat physical." We're not like Turbo Dan and Tory or anything, but we also don't sit across a long table from each other and wear high collars and drink tea.

We went running a few times, but I quickly bowed out of that. She's been doing it for years and I don't have the stamina. We do a lot of dining out and watching movies/DVDs. Random date-like stuff and just hanging out.

I like to hold her hand in public, how's that?



Thursday, January 13, 2005 - 1:07 p.m.

Mrs. Turbo Dan?

Current mood: contemplative

Comments: 0

So I hung out with Turbo Dan last night and my relationship is still intact today. I guess I was overreacting yesterday.

Anyway, a "Guys' Night" was good for me. We did a lot of talking about our ladies and a lot of defending our ladies to each other. Heh. We also got to do a little

venting of relationship grievances to each other. I told him all about how Julie loves to listen to Christian rock, and he told me all about how annoyed he is that Tory has never let him come inside her house because she doesn't want him to have to meet her "evil bitch roommate".

That sounds like a red flag to me. I can believe she has an evil bitch roommate, but you'd think that if Turbo Dan was pushing to meet her, Tory would at least let him do it to appreciate what a bitch she is, and then not want to see her again. Right? It almost sounds to me like she's got another boyfriend or a meth lab or something. Of course I didn't say anything to Turbo Dan. I just told him that it was nothing to worry about, because really, it's probably just a bitch roommate.

So thinking these worst case scenarios, it was kind of uncomfortable when he started to get all squishy and telling me that she's "the one for him". Last night he actually told me that he was seriously thinking about asking Tory to marry him. WTF!?! The legendary bachelor Turbo Dan wants to get hitched?! It totally blew my mind! I'm still half wondering if he was kidding or if it was just the beer talking.

But either way I guess I should start seriously trying to work out some kind of friendship with Tory. It looks like she's going to be around for a while.



Sunday, January 16, 2005 - 11:22 p.m.

The Golden Apple

Current mood: silly

Comments: 4

I found out Julie's big surprise today. It was the most ridiculous date, but it was actually really fun. :-)

This is something that I've driven past downtown millions of times, but the thought never crossed my mind that I would ever go *inside*. That thing of which I speak is the Golden Apple Dinner Theater. LOL! She took me to see their last show of *Chicago*. I never know what to expect when Julie plans a date, because it's always so *WEIRD*!

Once I got over the initial hilarity of being taken out for a night of legitimate theater (with a buffet) the show was actually pretty good! I never saw the movie, so I can't compare it, but it was really cool. People give guys a lot of crap about being gay if they like musicals which I now see is unfounded. This show was full of hot chicks in black lace doing all of these hot sexy dances all over the place. If enjoying that makes me gay, then Gay Ray I am.

After the show we walked over to Island Park and walked along the water by the marina. It was actually pretty romantic. Julie was like, "I have a confession to make," and I'm like, "Uh, okay," and she's like, "I've had a crush on you since the first time that you walked into my office." Awwwww. She went on to tell me all about how she kept trying to get me to go out with her and how she got all frustrated when I kept dodging her. He he! She said that she was happy that she didn't give up,

because now we're together and she's so happy. Awww. :-) That made me feel so loved. It's nice to hear somebody tell you how much you mean to them sometimes. *squish!*



deech comments...

I never, ever, want to see you say "squish" again.

I feel dirty.



amayasumi comments...

well guys who like *chicago* aren't in the typical "musical lover" crowd. as for saying "squish" that's gonna take a bit of recovering from.



rcaster1138 comments...

Apparently being squishy is revolting to my friends. Now that I think about it, I guess it's revolting to me too. I retract my *squish* and offer an *awwww* in its place. Better?



amayasumi comments...

only slightly. how 'bout just not saying anything? ~.^



Monday, January 17, 2005 - 9:16 p.m.

Surprise Office Cameo

Current mood: weird

Comments: 1

Finished DVD

I thought I saw an old friend

It made me feel blue

I finally got to the last episode of *The Office* first season DVD today. It was really good, but something in it made me sick to my stomach for absolutely no reason.

At the end of the episode there's this party scene, and they keep doing this running gag where Gareth is trying to pick up a girl who is out of his league. That girl reminds me *so much* of Shadoe. She doesn't look exactly like her, but she looks enough like her that when she came on the screen I was like, "Holy crap it's... not, nevermind."

The worst part was the end of the gag (spoilers!) where Gareth actually gets a slow dance with her. There was this shot from behind her where he's stroking her

dreadlocks lovingly, and it made me feel all butterflies-of-jealousy in my stomach. (I know Shadoe cut off her braids, but that's the way she still appears in my mind's eye.)

Now I know this girl isn't really her, I'm not psycho or anything, but it just made me think about Luis. He is very real, and he is very much... touching Shadoe's hair. But even so, it DOESN'T MATTER. I'm with Julie now, and I'm touching **her** hair. And I like it! It's just stupid that some irrelevant British girl on a DVD can get my stomach all wrenched up like this for no reason. I'm such a sentimental wuss. :-P



hawk_one comments...

So basically your rational mind is calmly stating that you're happy with HR Julie, but every single other part of your body is screaming "Second prize!!!"

That's bad, man. Really bad.



Tuesday, January 18, 2005 - 2:36 p.m.

Anniversary?

Current mood: frustrated

Comments: 0

Today when I got into work there was an envelope and a rose sitting on my chair. It was a card from Julie wishing me a happy 2-month anniversary.

At first I was like WTF? I thought we became "official" at New Year's? Did we even hang out 2 months ago? So I went back in my blog and looked it up.

Oh. Yeah. So **that** was 2 months ago today.

My first instinct was to challenge her dates and tell her that it may be **her** 2-month anniversary, but it's only my 2-week, 3-day anniversary. Somehow I don't think that love letters are well responded to with correction notices. :-P

I feel kind of sideswiped. Like I should have been prepared for this with wine and roses, but it just sprang out of nowhere and caught me off guard. But it's not like I can argue about it. "Oh no, that wasn't our first date. That was just a meaningless physical meat grinding. I didn't actually admit to **dating** you until **weeks** later." It really doesn't matter though, at all. We're together, and we like each other, and whether we've been together for 2 weeks, 2 months, or 2 years is really irrelevant.

Still, I feel like I screwed up again. :-\



Thursday, January 20, 2005 - 5:57 p.m.

Julie 24/7

Current mood: crushed

Comments: 5

Julie's always there
They say you "can't live with 'em
can't live without 'em".

I'm starting to get really annoyed with Julie lately. She's just **always there**.

She's always coming over and watching movies with me at night. Watching movies, watching movies, watching movies. I don't know what would happen to our relationship if the Video Library shut down. :-P

But I don't care about that, that's not the problem. The problem is that after the movie, lately she's always **too tired** to go home, so she just stays over. That was fun the first few times, but it's losing its charm fast. I mean, I don't even try for any nookie anymore, I just want to go the hell to sleep. And my little loser bed wasn't built for 2, especially when one of them is a 7-foot tall mutant. I'm sick of sleeping with my ass hanging out of bed and my arm pinned under her giant basketball head!

And if I tell her that I'm just going home after work and taking care of errands and crap, she's all like, "Can I just hang out? I won't get in the way." AAARRG! She can't understand the concept of "alone time". Every time I say that I just want to be alone she gets all paranoid. She always thinks that I'm doing something I don't want her to know about, like hanging out with Turbo Dan.

Man, we've had it out about him this week too. We went out with him and Tory again last Saturday and the whole day the two of them were like sandpaper on each other. She can't understand that we're just old friends and I can just like him without concrete reasons. She's all "Everything about him makes him an idiot and a jerk!" and I'm like, "Well I can't argue with that, but he's my FRIEND!" I admit, if this were the debate team, she'd have won the Turbo Dan debate, but it's not the debate team, it's my LIFE! Turbo Dan is like Apple Jacks. I don't care if he doesn't taste like apples, I just like him, OKAY?!



hawk_one comments...

You have to stand up and put some freakin' boundaries in place. And considering you were more or less tricked into this relationship in the first place, the least she should do is to understand that you have a life apart from her. If she doesn't get that then I predict things will be going more downhill than the Kitzbühl arena in Austria.



rcaster1138 comments...

I don't think I was "tricked" into it. I was just too stupid to realize that I was in a relationship until she spelled it out for me. It was my fault.



deech comments...

Mmmmm.. Amazon woman...

What were we talking about again?



rcaster1138 comments...

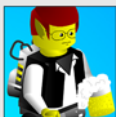
Heh. Yeah. I guess I really shouldn't be complaining.



deech comments...

Well, the fact that you have an Amazon woman to bang and yet you're *still* worried about these things means that it may very well be an important thing that you should take care of...

Don't let me project male pig dog childhood fantasies on you.



Saturday, January 22, 2005 - 3:44 p.m.

Baby baby?

Current mood: nervous

Comments: 1

I just had the weirdest conversation with Shadoe. If you can even call it that. It only lasted for like, 20 seconds.

I called her and she was all incoherent and was like, "I've got something important to tell you, and it's something that I've known for a few months. I didn't know if I should tell you, but I decided that you should know."

So I'm like, "Okay, what is it?" and she's like, "I can't tell you right now. Will you be home on Monday night?" and I was like, "Okay, sure. But, ?!?!?!?" and she was just like, "Don't worry. It's not bad news. I'll talk to you Monday."

WTF?! She said it's not bad news but I'm still freaked out. What could have happened? And why Monday and not today?! What's going to be different on Monday from now? This is so weird.

If it's not "bad" news, the only thing that I can think is that there's a little Shadoe or a Luis Jr. on the way. Which, I mean, if that's what she wants, then it *is* good

news, but I mean... I don't even know. I shouldn't get worked up about it. It's not like it's really my business or that it really affects me at all. It's just upsetting to me not to know. :-(



seinjunkie comments...

Relax, maybe it's something else. Maybe she put hidden cameras in your apartment and you're the star of some messed up reality show where everyone knows your business...

Well, if so, let me be the first to say that the comment board for your show sucks and I can't wait for the Season 1 DVD.



Sunday, January 23, 2005 - 4:43 p.m.

Not Monday yet

Current mood: anxious

Comments: 0

I'm so distracted today. Why can't today be Monday already! I can't stand this! I've almost called Shadoe like 100 times since yesterday, but she was solid about the Monday thing. There's no point in harassing her about it if she's not going to tell me anyway. Plus she told me it was "good news", so I shouldn't get all worked up. :-\

I went out for lunch with Julie today and she just got all irritated at me. She said that I've been acting all depressed lately and she thinks that I'm just doing it for attention. What!? From who?! You?! You couldn't give me any more attention if you cut me open and started cataloging my organs!

So I told her about the Shadoe thing. She's sure that it's going to be a wedding invitation. She thinks that I'm going to get it in the mail on Monday, and that's why she couldn't tell me yesterday. That doesn't sound like Shadoe to me, but there's a certain logic to it I guess. I'm not sure if I like that idea better or worse than her being pregnant. Then I remind myself that I have a girlfriend, and Shadoe having a husband OR a baby doesn't change anything in my life, at all, and I shouldn't even care.

Anyway, after she said it was a wedding invitation Julie just kind of broke eye contact and was like, "All of my friends are getting married too. We're reaching that point where it's time to get married." I nearly choked on my Dr. Pepper, but then I realized that she meant that point **in our life cycle**. I think.

Just to be sure, I told her that none of **my** friends were married. And she was like, "That's because none of your friends are worth marrying." Grrr. I hate it when she says shit like that, because I can't really **disagree** with her. But the difference is, **I like them**. It's the equivalent to how Chris Rock can say the N-word 200 times in an HBO special and it's okay, but if Jerry Seinfeld did it once, he'd be executed. You can't make those kind of cracks from outside the group. >:-(-



Tuesday, January 25, 2005 - 1:21 p.m.

The News!

Current mood: ecstatic

Comments: 2

So yesterday was Monday and I finally found out Shadoe's news. But I can't tell you about it. Will you be home on Saturday?

Ha haaaaa! Sorry.

Okay, yesterday I'm at work all day, and I'm all upset and worked up and everything about Shadoe's call. Then quittin' time rolls around and suddenly there's this huge freakout with the financial database, and I can't leave until it's fixed. AAARG! Luckily Dave is a bad-ass mother on the database software so, with the two of us working on it, I was **only** 2 HOURS late leaving the building. If I had been alone or with Blake though it literally would have taken until morning. Dave is da bomb.

So anyway, I kept calling home like every 5 minutes to check my messages, but there was never anything. Finally I'm ready to go and I call one more time. No messages. Cool. So I floor it home and go flying out of my car to get upstairs before the phone rings, and then what do I see on the steps to my apartment?

Shadoe, waiting for me with the biggest smile that I've ever seen, very very NOT pregnant. It was so weird and awesome (like sbemailahundred!) that my brain just seized up. She was wearing the gold sun necklace that I gave her at Christmas. :-) I don't even know what I said, or what she said. I'm pretty sure I cried though. She was all "Sorry to be so mysterious on the phone, but I wanted to surprise you," and I was all "I'm surprised! I gave up hope that you'd ever move back!" Then she's like, "Well, I'm not moving back. That's what I wanted to tell you, but I had to tell you in person."

And suddenly the good mood turned horribly bittersweet. She's been accepted into the Peace Corps. She's leaving the country at the beginning of March, and she's going to be working in Vanuatu for the next 2 years. When she told me I thought it was a joke. I was all like, "Are you going to be part of the international task force sent to help them recover from hosting a season of *Survivor*?" But she was serious. She's actually going to Vanuatu. It makes me wish that I had watched that show now. I didn't even know where it was until I looked it up. And I thought California was too far away. The South Pacific is like, she might as well have told me she was going to Mars. :- (

She said that she found out before Halloween, but with her dad and everything she wasn't even sure that she was going to accept. Then when he passed away she didn't want to just abandon her mom, but they decided that this is what her dad would have wanted.

She was like, "I didn't know how to tell you," and I'm like, "Why didn't you just TELL ME!?" and she was like, "I almost didn't tell you at all because I knew you had a girlfriend now and you probably didn't care, but I still care so much about *you*." I was like, "So... you *do* care?" and she was like, "Of COURSE I care! You mean so much to me!" WTF?! I mean so much to you?! Where is this all suddenly coming from?! TOO LITTLE TOO LATE! I have a girlfriend now and you're LEAVING THE COUNTRY! Why couldn't she care this much about me when I was throwing myself at her every day!? I guess fate never had it going for us after all. :-P

So I don't really know what to say at this point, so I'm like, "How long are you in town for?" and she's like, "I wanted to spend the rest of my time in the US in Sarasota with my friends, if that's okay." IF THAT'S OKAY! The implications of that kind of stung. It was like, "Would you still hang out with me just as a friend even though you have a girlfriend?" Whatever. Everything else aside, Shadoe's STILL the best friend that I ever had. She's made arrangements to sleep on Turbo Dan's couch. I would have told her she could stay with me (on my non-disgusting couch), but I thought that might not go over well with Julie, given our history.

So I'm like, "So is Luis here too?" and she's like, "Nope, just me". So I'm like, "Oh, did you guys break up?" and she just laughed and was like, "No, it's nothing like that, I'll miss him a lot." So I'm like, "Well, that's noble, to try to make the long distance work," and she's like, "WTF are you talking about?" I'm like, "Isn't he your boyfriend?" and she just busts out laughing and is like, "Dude, Luis is GAY!" I just started laughing and I was like, "I assumed that you were a couple because of the Winter Solstice card and everything!" and she's like, "Why do you think he even celebrates Winter Solstice? He doesn't do Christmas because he's not down with people who think his lifestyle is a sin!" Ha haaaaa ha! I should have just quit being a wuss and asked about it before. It would have saved me a lot of unfounded petty jealousy. I'm such an idiot.

So I can't wait for Julie and Shadoe to finally meet each other! All my favorite ladies finally in one place! Giggedy! ;-) But on the other hand, I'm sort of paranoid that Julie won't like Shadoe. She's not exactly been a beacon of friendship to *anyone* in the Turbo Dan gang, and I think the fact that I've told her Shadoe is my girlfriend (even though she WASN'T and never actually WAS) is not going to make the reception any warmer. Still, I think if I introduce Shadoe in the right way Julie will be happy to meet her. I think we have a pretty trusting relationship.

So I've been trying to work out the exact right way to tell Julie about Shadoe in my head all morning. This is exactly like that episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* where they have to go through the asteroid field, and they run the computer simulation a thousand times, and every time the Enterprise gets wrecked in a different way. Every variation I try, I get closer to the goal of Julie going "Oh, that's cool", but I always smash on the rocks at some point before I get there. Picard fixed the problem by turning off the computer and just winging it. Maybe I should do the same. But let's face it, I'm no Picard. :-\



deech comments...

sigh

So much I want to say, yet, I cannot and will not.

I'm sorry Ray.



timb comments...

You're in big trouble this week, buddy.



Wednesday, January 26, 2005 - 2:34 p.m.

"Dirty Hippie"

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 4

So today at lunch I introduced Julie to Shadoe. It was like *Hoth* in that restaurant. Shadoe did her best to be friendly, I definitely give her that, but Julie just wouldn't give her a break. I hate to say it, but she was being such a *bitch*!

Okay, so we're just small talking about whatever, and I'm like, "Did you sleep okay last night?" Shadoe said that she ended up sleeping on the floor because Turbo Dan's couch had silverfish. Aaaugh! That's so disgusting! :-P So Julie's like, "You should stay in a hotel," and Shadoe's like, "It's okay, I don't have the money for a hotel." So I do the thing that ANY GOOD FRIEND would do, and I told her that my couch was vermin-free and she was welcome to sleep on it. That was a mistake.

When we were alone in the car on the way back to the office Julie took a giant bite out of my ass. WTF?! What was I supposed to do, just say "Silverfish, huh? Well, sucks to be you!" She just kept going on about how I should have asked her first before I made the offer. Whatever. WHAT-ever. You're my girlfriend, you're not my parole officer.

Oh yeah, also at one point Julie actually said to Shadoe's face that going into the Peace Corps was okay for "her type". When we were in the car I was like, "WTF did you mean by 'her type'?" and she's like, "You know, the dirty hippie type." The way she said *dirty hippie* it was like she was talking about lepers who were also Jehovah's Witnesses.

I was like, "Just because she wants to help out in the world it doesn't mean that she's some kind of '60s love beads burnout. And she's NOT dirty." And then she was just like, "Oh please, you know that she's only doing this because nobody would actually give her a good job *here*." Gah! As if Shadoe was being exiled to the South Pacific for being unhirable. WTF?! She's so lucky that my mom always taught me that it's wrong to punch girls. >:-P

Why is she being such a jealous shrew? NEWS FLASH: YOU WIN, JULIE! YOU'RE my girlfriend, not Shadoo! Hello?! I wish that just once Julie could meet one of my friends and actually just *like* them. Then again, I think all of her friends are assholes too, so at least we have balance. :-(



halfwayhappy comments...

Arg, just break up with Julie. Ridiculous...



rcaster1138 comments...

I couldn't. I mean, Julie really is cool once you get to know her. And I guess if I were her I'd be jealous of Shadoo too. After thinking about it, I'm sure this bitchiness is just her defense mechanism. As if she needs one. I wish she could just trust me.



hawk_one comments...

Tell Julie that you do not like her "I am better than other people" attitude. It is snobby, it is arrogant, and she only ends up belittling herself instead of the people she indirectly claims superiority over. Tell her that every time she does that you lose a bit of respect for her. She obviously doesn't respect you.



rcaster1138 comments...

It's not like that. I think she just feels a little insecure because of my lies. I brought this on myself when I said Shadoo was my girlfriend when she wasn't. I can kind of understand where Julie is coming from if I look at it from her perspective. I just wish that she'd believe that I'm not going to break up with her.



Thursday, January 27, 2005 - 2:29 p.m.

Worst. Night. Ever.

Current mood: exhausted

Comments: 4

Last night was the worst
Julie is a jealous girl
I did not sleep well

Man, last night was *horrible*. I think men have killed themselves in better situations than last night.

Julie came home with me after work. I told her that I was just going to do some catching up with Shadoo (who is now crashing at my place), but she was all no

nonsense about coming over. What does she think I'm going to do? Get Shadoe drunk and screw her on the couch or something?! I know *I'd* never do something like that. That's not *my* style. >:-P

So we get home and Shadoe is in the shower. I'm all "See, she's not dirty," and Julie's just like, "If you're going to let her stay here, I hope you're at least charging her for part of the utilities. If she even has any money." W... T... F!? I haven't been charging YOU for all the showers YOU'VE taken here, which has practically been more than *I* have lately.

So finally Shadoe gets dressed and Julie suggests we - YES you guessed it! - Go rent a movie. So we go to Video Library, and I decide to just appease her by letting her get whatever she wants without so much as a constructive criticism. She chooses *Fatal Attraction*. The definitive "Guy has affair that ruins his life" movie. Oh, subtle, Julie. Very subtle.

We bring the movie home and we're watching it, and Julie is just *all over me*. She just kept leaning in and kissing me on the neck and giggling like some kind of horny schoolgirl. It was SO WRONG! I could tell that it was bothering Shadoe too, but she was acting like she couldn't see it. This would have been bad enough if it had been like, at the movies in front of some total stranger, but in my own living room in front of my best friend it was just disgusting.

When she didn't knock it off after the first 10 minutes I got up to go to the bathroom, and when I came back I sat in a chair instead of going back to the couch. Julie was all "Oh. You don't want to sit on the couch?" and I was like, "No, that's okay. You can stretch out your legs on it. I don't mind." Such a gentleman am I! :-P

So then the movie is over and Julie goes to the bathroom and brushes her teeth. She didn't even do the "I'm too tired to drive home" routine. It was just like, "Time for bed! When I sleep here. With you. Like always. Isn't it, *Raymond*." While she was in the bathroom I quietly apologized to Shadoe, and she was all "It's okay, don't worry, forget it." But it wasn't okay. I was so pissed off. Julie is acting like a total freak. It's not like I've EVER done anything behind her back with ANYBODY. We've had rough spots, but I'd NEVER cheat on my girlfriend, not EVER. I guess that's what pisses me off the most. The fact that she can't trust me enough to leave me alone for 5 seconds. Not just with Shadoe, but EVER!

So, needless to say, I didn't sleep well last night. Julie tried to get a little action out of me, but that was SO SO beyond the wrong thing to be doing. When I made that clear she just turned her back on me and went to sleep. Taking up the whole bed, as usual. :-P

Today I'm like a zombie. If this bullshit keeps up I'll have to make Shadoe go and stay with Turbo Dan, silverfish or not. At least then I could go and see her by myself without Julie all up my ass. Turbo Dan is Julie Kryptonite. :-(



halfwayhappy comments...

BREAK UP WITH HER



deech comments...

I concur.

Do you concur?



aerospace comments...

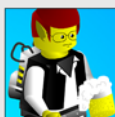
i concur.



nostradomatrix comments...

I concur!!!

Is there a petition we need to sign???



Saturday, January 29, 2005 - 2:58 a.m.

Down doobie doo down down.

Current mood: drained

Comments: 0

No haiku. Too tired.

I can't believe today even happened. I still feel sick about it, but I know it was the right thing to do.

So, okay, Julie was like, psycho girlfriend from hell all morning. She brought all of these Disney tour books and crap into my cubicle this morning and was all full of this gigantic fake happiness, like, "Let's go to Disney World this weekend! It'll be so fun! We can stay at the All-Star Movies hotel and go to all the parks! It'll be great!" WTF!?!?

I was like, "Julie! Stop it! I don't want to go away with you this weekend. You know I have a guest staying with me!" and she's like, "Well that's why I wanted to go! I thought you could leave her alone while she's staying in your apartment and we could go and have fun and give her some privacy." And I'm like, "Hello?! The whole reason she's in town is to SEE HER FRIENDS! I'm not ditching her."

So we got into this huge fight about how she always does this shit and how she hates all of my friends, and she was all yelling at me about how I'm "having an affair" with the "dirty hippie", and it just went on and on and kept getting uglier.

Finally all of her histrionic bullshit just broke the camel's back, and I couldn't take it anymore. I broke up with her. In retrospect, I was pretty melodramatic about it too. I was like the abused housewife at the end of a Lifetime special or something. Go me. :-P

This all went down in my cubicle (Note to self: Apologize to Dave on Monday), so after I had said my piece people were starting to prairie dog. I was humiliated, so I just got up and left and didn't go back. It's not like I had to tell anybody where I was going. Somebody in HR knew why I was taking a "sick day".

I went straight home, and the whole time for some reason I was crying my eyes out. I don't know if it was just the stress of it all going down like that, or just that my first real relationship with a girl is over, or what, but I just felt all torn up. Sure she's crazy sometimes, but I really do like her. We have a lot of fun when she's not mad at me, but that just happens to be most of the time. :-(

When I got home Shadoe wasn't there and there was a note that she was hanging out at Turbo Dan's. So I got myself cleaned up and I went over there. They were all weirdly quiet and awkward when I got there, but they loosened up when I told them my news. Turbo Dan was like, "Shit dude, we were just talking about what a fucking bitch she is. We thought you had been outside listening!" Heh. It made me kind of feel better and kind of want to punch him at the same time. Turbo Dan says I'm his hero now and he wanted to take me out for 100 beers, but I didn't feel like it was a cause for celebrating.

On the ride home Shadoe said that she was sorry that Julie and me broke up, and she was sorry if it was all her fault. I told her that it wasn't, and that honestly this was probably long overdue anyway (At least that's what all my online friends say). She said that she was glad about the breakup, because Julie "wasn't good enough" for me. I thought about it, and that's so not true. Julie was **exactly** good enough for me. She was always **just** good enough to keep me from wanting to break up with her. :-(

It's like the end of *The Matrix Revolutions* where the only way that Neo could beat Smith was by letting Smith kill him, thus causing Smith's destruction as the Matrix balanced itself. Shadoe's "non-bitch" forces screwed up the equilibrium, causing Julie's recessive "bitch forces" to double up to take in the slack. Or something. I don't know what the hell I'm talking about. It's been a long day.



Monday, January 31, 2005 - 1:17 a.m.

The Tory Incident

Current mood: shocked

Comments: 4

Picking up Tory

It's a small world after all

There's no freakin' way!

Holy shit. This is one of those days that I feel like I have to write down the entire thing because it's just too bizarrely impossible not to be documented.

So I'm hanging out over at Turbo Dan's place with Shadoe and Scottie, and we're just drinkin' beers and playing Nintendo and whatever. Then Turbo Dan gets a call from Tory. She's all desperate to come over, but she's stranded at her friend's house and she doesn't have her car. In retrospect, this absolutely makes no sense and should have been a red flag. You have to remember, however, that Turbo Dan took the call, and he had been doing a LOT of drinking, so I wasn't paying that much attention to what he said anyway.

She gives him the address to pick her up, but he's *way* too loaded to be driving. So rather than let him die, I offer to take him over there. After we circle around this really shitty neighborhood for like 20 minutes, Turbo Dan's drunk ass finally finds the right address. He was supposed to call her when we got there, but of course he forgot his phone, so we have to go and knock on the door of some random apartment of somebody that we don't know trying to find her.

So we go and knock on the door, and Tory opens it and literally shoves us out of the doorway and is all like, "Let's go. Now." Then we get like 2 steps and she's like, "FUCK! I forgot my keys. So she runs back into the apartment, but doesn't come back out for like, 10 minutes. Then we start hearing all of this yelling inside. So I don't know what's going on, or what the hell I'm supposed to do, and Turbo Dan is just looking more and more like he's going to keel over, or hurl, or both. Finally he gets all impatient and he's like, "I'm just going to go in there and get her," and before I can stop him he just walks into this stranger's apartment! Now I'm standing there like, "Do I follow his drunk ass in? Do I just wait here? Do I go home and pretend that none of this ever happened?"

So I decide to do the "good friend" thing and at least go and stop Turbo Dan before he does something stupid. I go in the front door and TD is standing there in the living room just yelling, like, "Tory, come on! Let's go!" I hear this other guy's voice in the other room like, "Who the fuck is that?!" I guess here is the place to mention the first thing that I saw when I walked in the door: one very familiar orange ass-chair without a mate.

Tory comes flying into the room with her keys in her hand, grabs Turbo Dan by the arm, and is like, "Come on, let's get the fuck out of here." And right behind her is the voice. That horrible, horrible voice.

"Don't you fucking run away from me, Victoria!"

I shit you not, it was Blake. It was freakin' *BLAKE*! It was like the end of an M. Night Shyamalan movie. I couldn't even begin to form any kind of logic or reason as to why Tory would be friends with this middle-aged asshole dickweed. I half expected to wake up screaming at this point, and that this whole week was a nightmare, and Julie would be laying next to me telling me that it's all going to be

okay. This was not the case.

So he sees me at the same time that I see him, and he stops dead in the kitchen doorway with this look of complete fury plastered across his ugly drunk face. He just starts SCREAMING and he's like, "This is your mysterious boyfriend!? YOU'VE BEEN FUCKING GAY RAY?!" And then, swear to God, he threw a beer bottle at me. LOL! It's funny now only because it didn't hit me. The mighty jock didn't let go until he was too far into his swing and he just kind of spiked it into the carpet like an idiot.

But now Tory's all screaming BACK at him and she's all like, "I'm not fucking RAY, I'm fucking DAN, and there's nothing that you can do about it!" By this time I was so ready to not be there anymore. I knew that there was nowhere this genteel discussion could go except for the hospital or maybe Jerry Springer, so I just grabbed Turbo Dan by the arm and was all forceful like, "Come on! We're leaving! Now!" But before I could move his dumb ass, Blake throws the sloppiest punch I've ever seen, and suddenly Turbo Dan's nose is bleeding. Blake is all "You're going to jail you faggot! She's only 16 years old!" In-freakin'-credible.

Next thing I know, Turbo Dan has shoved Blake and knocked him down. By this time TD just wants to brawl, but I was all like, "If you get arrested the cops are going to get you kicked out of your apartment!" This was total illogical bullshit, but it got him out of there and into my car. Turbo Dan would have ripped Blake to *shreds*. I still can't believe that I actually stopped it from happening. Anyway, the last thing I saw as I was shoving Turbo Dan out the door was Blake on the floor, too fat, drunk, and stupid to get up, and Tory screaming at him about how he's an asshole and he can't control her life.

So I brought Turbo Dan back home, and the poor bastard was so confused. At first he thought that Tory was sleeping with Blake. I had to explain that (unless I'm misinterpreting something) Blake is her *father*. "Tory" is the "Princess Victoria" that he always used to argue with his wife about. I still don't believe it. I guess there's no way I could have known, but damn. I feel like such an idiot. But if Turbo Dan didn't even know any of it, how was I supposed to? I barely ever even spoke to her, it's not like I was her boyfriend. :-P

So Turbo Dan turned belligerent in the car but then passed out like 5 minutes after I got him home. I had to tell this story like 10 times to Scottie and Shadoe before they fully understood it. Shadoe said that Tory's "I'm 23" story never fooled her for a second, but she always thought that she was at least 18 or 19. Once we got talking about it, we realized that her alleged "bitch roommate" must actually be her mom. Moms always get the kids in a divorce, right? Man, everything about Tory is so obviously bullshit now. I feel stupid for having believed it at all. I'm such a retard.

So I guess that's the end of her and Turbo Dan. I never liked her, and I always thought that she was a bad match for Turbo Dan, but I kind of feel bad for him because he does really think that he loves her. It's one thing to have a girl with parents that don't approve of the relationship, but that's not even in the same

ballpark as also having the government and law enforcement agencies of the state of Florida not approve of your relationship. I'm just hoping that Blake doesn't actually get Turbo Dan arrested. Or for that matter, *me*. He doesn't know shit about TD, but he knows my name and where I work. And he already hates me. Shit. I'm so going to jail for this. :-(

However, after this incident one thing is now perfectly clear to me: I need to move to a bigger city.



hawk_one comments...

Ray, your life is now completely off the edge of the entire universe.



halfwayhappy comments...

Honestly, given all of the other things that have happened to you recently, I wouldn't be surprised if the cops did come after you. I mean, it would just be another crazy thing to happen to you! But of course, the cop who arrests you will probably be like, Shadoe's best friend from way back, or Julie's ex-boyfriend, or maybe *Dave's* brother - just to make things interesting...



anonymous comments...

Isn't Tory's dad dead? Didn't she say how she got over her dad being dead in two weeks when Shadoe's dad died?



rcaster1138 comments...

Whoa! You're right! I totally forgot about that! Maybe Blake is her stepdad or something? I guess I'll probably never really find out for sure.



Tuesday, February 1, 2005 - 11:21 a.m.

Cold Shoulder Advisory

Current mood: cold

Comments: 0

So I ran into Julie this morning in the breakroom. It was weird because I know her schedule pretty well, so I went there when I knew that she *wouldn't* be there. I wonder if she was doing the same thing to me. :-P

It was... okay. She was nice, but it was an obvious "fake nice", like when you're trying to talk your way out of a speeding ticket. It really hurt to see her like that, considering that she had been actual "nice nice" to me just last week, and I know how warm she can really be. I was being "nice nice" to her. I wanted to be like, "Come ON! Don't act like you hate me now!" It just hurts to be shut out like this. :-(

She asked me about my weekend, and I said that I just kind of hung out. She was like, "Did you have fun with your *friends*?" The way she said "friends" it was like she was saying "puppy anal rapists". I said that I just spent the weekend catching up with Shadoe. I don't think she needs to know anything else about this weekend. I just hope that the sheriff's office is with me on that one. :-\

I know it sounds crazy, but when I saw her I really missed her. I asked her if she wanted to go out to lunch, but she said that she was too busy. Fair enough. I hope we don't end up having to paint a line down the center of the building or anything. :-(\



Wednesday, February 2, 2005 - 11:13 p.m.

More Tory?!

Current mood: uncomfortable

Comments: 0

Shadoe said that she wanted to go out and hang out with the gang tonight, so we went over to Turbo Dan's. I couldn't believe who was there. Mooker. Oh wait, that's not the unbelievable part. Tory.

It was so incredibly awkward. She was just like, "So *you're* the famous Gay Ray, huh?" and I was like, "You're Victoria?" and she's like, "I fucking hate that name. Nobody calls me that but my asshole dad." I'm like, "So he IS your dad! You told me that your dad was dead!" and she's like, "I tell EVERYBODY that my dad is dead. I'm humiliated to share his asshole DNA." Heh.

And from there things got kind of weirdly friendly. We both started comparing stories about what an asshole Blake is, and after we shared all of these painful, horrible memories, suddenly we're like best friends. All I can say after talking to Tory is that I'd rather work with Blake for 100 years than suffer through my first period with him just one time. The horror! The humiliation! The gross and Neanderthal misunderstanding of female biology! LOL!

So Tory and I are kind of like, cool now that we have a common enemy, which is cool, but also sucks, because IT'S ILLEGAL FOR HER TO STILL HANG OUT WITH US! Okay, so hanging out is technically legal, but I had to take Turbo Dan aside and make sure he understood the finer points of statutory rape laws. He's like, "I know all that, but it's not rape. I *love* her." I was like, "That's just what it's *called*, it has nothing to do with consent," and he's like, "I love her and she loves me. What does the law know?" So basically, he's SO going to jail. :-\

But even besides the law aspect, there's the fact that he's dating a girl who's still in *high school*. It's just so wrong. On the one hand, I believe that he DOES love her. I've never seen him so attached to a girl in all the years that I've known him. If you'd have asked me who he'd be with right now on the first day he met Tory, I'd have put him at least 8 girls down the line by now. But he's still with her, and still so happy about it. And if Blake hadn't blown her story, I'd still believe Tory was an adult.

She's pretty emotionally mature for her age. Maybe she's ready for this kind of relationship. I don't know. It's really not my place to say.

But on the other hand, it's just so *wrong*.

Well, whatever. I've said my piece to him. I've done my duty. I'm not his mother. If he wants to go to jail over this, that's his business. I just wish he could see how messed up his relationship is from an outside perspective. :-P



Friday, February 4, 2005 - 11:58 p.m.

Studies have statistically shown that there's less chance of an incident if you do it on a Friday.

Current mood: optimistic

Comments: 2

I was pissed at first
Unfair, but it's all my fault
Shadoe cheered me up

I guess I was naive to think that this wasn't going to happen.

Today my supervisor called me in to his office for a meeting. Julie was there. Long story short, I've been terminated from my job for stealing company property. I have 30 days to return the computer before they take "appropriate legal action".

This is so bullshit. SOOOOOO bullshit. I know damn well that this is just Julie getting revenge on me, but it's not like she doesn't have a case. I can't believe that this all goes back to *one stupid sticker* that I didn't notice. So if I trace it back to the first step *Huckabees* style, losing my job over this can be attributed to one broken, open-box DVD burner. Smooth move, cheap ass. That saved you a *lot* of money in the end. :-P

I suppose it's possible that I could file some kind of counter-whatever that says "Yeah, well she sexually harassed me into a screwed-up relationship!" but I don't think my evidence is as solid in court as hers, especially considering that I never told anyone *before* I got fired. I don't even know who I'd tell it to at this point anyway. I mean, the head of HR already KNOWS what happened, but I somehow doubt that she'd be sympathetic to my side of the story. :-P

Julie stood over me and watched me clean out my desk like I was going to try to sneak out one last Post-it pad or something. She was like, "I'm sorry Ray, but you shouldn't have stolen from the company." I just looked up at her with big sorrowful eyes and was like, "You shouldn't have stolen from me. You shouldn't have stolen my *heart*." I don't know what that was supposed to mean. It just came out. Maybe I was just trying to mess with her. We didn't speak after that.

I was pretty upset about it when I came home (early, with a box of everything in my

desk that wasn't "company property"), but Shadoe talked me down and made me feel a little better. She made me make a list of pros and cons about the job. The cons included work that I never really liked, having to wear a tie, co-workers that I never got along with, and of course a psycho ex-girlfriend in a position of authority. The pros list included "They paid me every two weeks". So in the end, it's not like I lost my dream job or anything. It was just *a* job, and I'll find another that will probably be better. Door closes, window opens. Whatever.

Still, I've been there for about 5 and a half long years now. It's like a whole chapter of my life is closing. Yes, it was a long and boring chapter where nothing happened, but still, it was a big part of my life. It hasn't really started to sink in yet. Probably on Monday morning, when I don't have to get up and shave and put on a tie, it'll suddenly hit me. I don't work at the credit union anymore. Yeah, it's not sticking yet. I guess I should call my mom and tell her tomorrow. The first thing she'll say is "You can move back home if you want." Moms are like that. Parents just don't understand. Word. :-P

Well whatever. Screw 'em. I don't *need* their stinkin' job. I have enough savings to take a break for a month and hang out with Shadoe until she leaves. Instead of sitting in my stupid dark cubicle punching in meaningless bullshit I can spend every day catching up on friend time. So yeah. Go me. Being fired is awesome. W00t. :-\



nostradomnatrix comments...

Join the corps and go with Shadoe. It can't be too late.



gozer2048 comments...

Although I'm all for the Peace Corps, this idea needs to be brought back to reality with one important fact: When you join up you do NOT get to pick where you go. They only guarantee assignment to the same location for married couples. (Now don't let *that* give you any crazy ideas, either.)



Sunday, February 6, 2005 - 11:31 p.m.

Unemployment = Pirates

Current mood: happy

Comments: 3

This weekend was fun
We all have our own mad skillz
We plundered the cove

This weekend was really fun, and being an unemployed loser, it doesn't have to end just because tomorrow is Monday! Go me! :-P In all seriousness though, Shadoe has really helped me to see that my shitty stupid job isn't even worth fighting for. I

hated it there, and to be perfectly honest with myself, I know I was only staying because I was too lazy to leave. I'll bring back the computer and ask for a recommendation, and then I guess that's it. There's got to be a better job for me out there somewhere. The more I think about it, the more the whole thing feels more liberating than depressing. Screw the office. Screw it to hell. I'm done with their crap. I just hope Julie got whatever she wanted out of all of this. :-P

Anyway, Turbo Dan thought that we should celebrate my "freedom from the Man", so yesterday me, him, Shadoe, Scottie, Mooker, and Tory all spent the day at Pirate's Cove in Bradenton. Yes, that's right. We're still tempting fate with Tory. Whatever. I never touched her, officer.

Pirate's Cove is awesome because it gives everybody a chance to kick everybody else's ass at something. Of course on the go-karts Turbo Dan is king. Anyone who doubts that he deserves the name "Turbo" has never seen him race. The best you can hope for is second in a race against him. Scottie and I were pretty evenly matched, and Tory and Shadoe were pretty even too. So even though we all went at the same time, the real races were Me vs. Scottie and Shadoe vs. Tory. Mooker didn't race. We all joked that he would have beat us all if he had tried. It's funny because he's like, the slowest person on Earth. I guess it's probably funnier if you know him.

Laser Tag was all Shadoe. It is awe inspiring, totally hot, and I admit, a little bit spooky to watch that girl handle a gun. I don't even think she aims, she just has this *sense*. She seems to be more accurate the faster she's moving too. I saw her strafe Turbo Dan, Scottie, AND some guy I don't know while she was in a flat-out run from one side of the court to the other. Amazing. I'm glad she was on my team, because I sucked at it. I can't shoot for crap if it's not a point and click. :-P

But I had my moment of victory on the green. Mini golf, beotch. Now you're in MY house! I wrecked the competition. Tory was the only one who even came close, and I still beat her by 8 strokes. Boo yah! Me and my basic understanding of physics say IN YOUR FACE!

Scottie and Turbo Dan did the batting cages, but the rest of us bailed to the restaurant. I know my limits. I didn't need to show the assembled "Teens Night" audience my prowess with a fast-pitch baseball, thank you very much.

On that subject: Saturday night is "Teens Night" at the Cove, and Scottie gave Turbo Dan more crap about that than I could have taken without punching him out. TD has pretty thick skin. Or he just doesn't get it. Eventually Scottie started being the "concerned responsible friend" and the whole "dating an underage girl" argument got torn open again with the girl sitting *right there*. No filter on that guy. Turbo Dan didn't even want to talk about it. I could tell that he was just seething with rage, and I was just waiting for him to totally knock Scottie out, or for Tory to do it, either of which would have been *so awesome*. But unfortunately Shadoe came to the rescue.

She was like, "It's not illegal for you to be in love with a 16-year-old girl, only for

you to have a sexual relationship with her. Just wait for her to turn 18, two years isn't very long to wait for someone if you're really in love." The way she speaks is so diplomatic. She can tell you what you don't want to hear but make it sound like something you do. Anyway, Turbo Dan and Tory made no agreements to actually do what she said. Whatever. At least she tried. I wash my hands of it.



hawk_one comments...

I'm disappointed. Since you are known to be a thieving thief that does thieving things all day and night long, I was expecting that you and the gang actually stole something from the Cove after reading that haiku. :P



anonymous comments...

You and Shadoe are made for each other. Think about it. If you got married, her name would be Shadoe Caster.



gozer2048 comments...

Said the Shadoe, "two years isn't very long to wait for someone if you're really in love."

Am I really the only one to catch that?



Wednesday, February 9, 2005 - 2:38 p.m.

Fate?

Current mood: torn

Comments: 3

How is it possible to be so happy and so sad at the same time?

I've been having so much fun with Shadoe this week. Ever since the "Julie problem" resolved itself we've just clicked back into our old friendship as if we had never been apart for a minute. I'm so happy to have her back in my life, but at the same time, so incredibly sad that she's about to leave again. I've been having fun, but I've been trying to keep an emotional distance from her. I can't stand the idea of getting so close to her again and then losing her again. But this time around the world and probably forever.

I know it sounds stupid, but lately I've been thinking about what Shadoe's dad said to me about how you should be willing to throw everything away for what you believe in, and I realized that I've never really "believed" in anything. I mean, I believe in UFOs, but that's different. I've never believed in a god or anything like that. But then it occurred to me that I do believe in something: fate.

I've been convinced that it is my fate to lose Shadoe in the end. That seems to be the

way the cards are dealt every time. The asshole hand of fate seems to delight in building me up just to smack me down again every time.

If everything happens for a reason, then why am I supposed to keep losing Shadoe? It obviously wasn't so that I could find true love in Julie instead. Actually, I couldn't see any good that came out of losing Shadoe to California at all. All it did was make me want her more than ever when she came back, making the pain of losing her for real this time so much worse.

But then somebody left this completely random comment on my last post: "You and Shadoe are made for each other. Think about it. If you got married, her name would be Shadoe Caster."

I literally just sat and stared at that for like, 10 minutes. I never realized that. Yes, I've thought about being married to Shadoe, but I'm not like some little girl with a crush who writes "Shadoe Caster" 100 times in my math notebook or something. That can't be a meaningless coincidence. That HAS TO be fate.

What if every little piece of fate's great *Huckabees* puzzle isn't pushing me away from Shadoe, but pulling me *towards* her? What if her leaving to California and me dating Julie was just to show me how bad life is without her, and her coming back is supposed to be my chance to set it right?

I have to ask Shadoe to forfeit her acceptance into the Peace Corps. I know that it's important to her to help fix the world, but there's all kinds of fixing that can be done right here in the US. In Florida even! Maybe it's all part of fate's plan. What if she's meant to become a hero right here, and I blow it by letting her go to Vanuatu where her talent is wasted? How much could they need Peace Corps volunteers there anyway? They can't be that bad off, they filmed a freakin' reality TV show there for cryin' out loud!

Does any of this make sense, or have I reached the point where I'm just telling myself what I want to hear? I'm so torn apart right now. I can't stand to lose her again. When are they just going to invent transporters already and make it so that nobody ever has to be more than a flash of rearranged atoms away? :-(



halfwayhappy comments...

Shadoe Caster... That's great. It's a sign.

You only live once. Tell her how you feel. Don't end up as one of those old men telling kids to live for the day - carpe diem - because you let "The One" get away.



hawk_one comments...

OK, you may hate me for being awfully blunt here, but I personally believe the

whole "fate" thing to be bullshit. And as such, I wouldn't put too much meaning into the name Shadoe Caster, or anything else.

It's getting painful to see your posts. Over and over, no matter what the problem is, you keep resigning. You keep allowing things to run their course until either you or someone else explodes. That's how you ended up with HR Julie. That's how you ended up splitting with HR Julie. That's how Blake could be a pain in your ass for such a long time, and that's also how HR Julie was able to fire you so damn easily. I mean, how many times have you relied on your online friends to come up with solutions to your problems for you? Too many times, in my opinion...

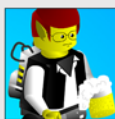
Now, here is the thing: If you keep just letting things happen to you, and if you keep expecting things to go wrong, then **that's precisely what's going to happen!**

If, on the other hand, you start taking charge of your own life, then you may find that things generally work out better. You will be in control of the circumstances, not the other way around.



deech comments...

Just go. Now. Stop discussing your problems strangers on the inter-web -- we can barely tie our shoes without dying in the morning. Go talk to Shadoe. Now. Now Now.



Friday, February 11, 2005 - 3:16 p.m.

Mystery Date

Current mood: excited

Comments: 1

Shadoe's got something planned for us tonight, but she won't tell me what it is. She says it's a surprise. The anticipation is killing me! :-)

It's kind of a relief though that she's not mad at me, because we kind of had our first argument this morning. I guess it wasn't an argument as much as a disagreement. I've had much worse with Julie, that's for sure.

I asked her not to go into the Peace Corps. I told her how much she means to me, and how I didn't want to have her leave my life for 2 years, and you know, everything. She said that she didn't want to lose me either, but we won't be losing each other, we'll just be "separated but not apart". I told her that she could do volunteer work here just as easily and she didn't have to go anywhere at all. She said that even if she wanted to ditch the Peace Corps (which she doesn't), at this point she can't just go to them and be like, "Oh, you know what, I changed my mind. Nevermind!" I could tell that she was starting to get annoyed at me being all pathetic clingy boy, so I dropped it for now. :-(

So like I said, it didn't really escalate into a fight, but I still came out of it feeling like kind of a selfish jerk. So whatever. Mystery date in 3.5 hours!



hawk_one comments...

Well, you can't do anything about Shadoe's commitment to the Peace Corps. She's clearly taken charge of her life and decided to do this. While I still believe you should be more proactive in your own life, that doesn't mean you can control hers. So now is the time to simply focus on making these days count.

And of course, get yourself a new job. But that goes without saying.



Saturday, February 12, 2005 - 2:43 p.m.

As you wish.

Current mood: jubilant

Comments: 6

Last night was the best night of my entire life.

Shadoe's mystery date was so romantically awesome. She was like, "We don't have a lot of money, so I was trying to find something free for us to do and I found this. I hope it's not too girly for you." It wasn't too girly. It was perfect.

Last night at Palma Sola Botanical Park in Bradenton they had a free outdoor showing of *The Princess Bride*. I don't care if you do call me gay, I love *The Princess Bride*. It was so awesome to watch it out under the stars with Shadoe. I don't want to sound like a gushy little girl, but it was just *sooo romantic*. :-)

And then after the movie she took me back to my place and... well... she did what you do when you take someone back to a place. :-D *eee!* I don't want to ruin it by being some kind of "kiss and tell" asshole, but it was just, I don't know, it was *absolutely perfect*. I had no idea that this was how it was supposed to feel. After every other time I always felt pretty good, but with this indescribable feeling of guilt and shame mixed in, and I thought that's how it was supposed to be. With Shadoe it feels like I want to pick up a car and run up a mountain singing Hall and Oates songs.

Even if it's hard to accept, I guess inside I know she's right. I can wait 2 years of being "separated but not apart". I could wait 100 years if I had to. I love her more than I've ever loved anything before, and I know that she loves me too. :-)



halfwayhappy comments...

OMG I'm going to cry!!! That is so cute and adorable and omgomgomgomg!!! I'm so happy for you!!!!



hawk_one comments...

Great for you that the evening worked out absolutely perfectly in every single respect! Remember, just because I've been a bit of a bastard doesn't mean I don't want good things to happen to you.



rcaster1138 comments...

It *was* perfect. I know it sounds so stupid, but I feel like an empty spot inside of me is all full of warm soup now. *glee!* :-)



deech comments...

That's just... that's just gross.

That's just the...

Look, I'm taking away your simile license. I'm sorry, but it had to be done.



webgodd_s comments...

As far as waiting two years goes, millions of families with loved ones in Iraq are doing the same waiting game. If they can do it, so can you. It sucks, but it's do-able. Send lots of letters and care packages!!!

Keep us posted of developments (as if I had to ask). :)



rcaster1138 comments...

That's true. At least she's probably not going to be in any real danger while she's gone. That's a big plus.

And of course I'll keep you all posted. I'll need a lot of support from my online friends if I'm going to have to live without Shadoe for the next 2 years. :-(



Sunday, February 13, 2005 - 6:45 p.m.

Rocked and Rolled

Current mood: annoyed

Comments: 0

OW! Man my feet are *sore*! We went out roller skating with Turbo Dan and Tory today. I had to rent skates, and they didn't quite fit right, so I got blisters after like, 10 minutes. Plus they really hurt my ankles after a while, but that might just be

because I haven't skated since I was about 8 years old.

But besides that it was actually a lot of fun. Apparently Turbo Dan and Tory do this all the time, so they were really good at it. They were doing all of these cheesy roller disco things where they'd spin each other around and stuff. It was pretty funny to watch them, and to watch other people watching them and gawking like they were the Lords of the Rink. Tory was wearing a shirt that said "Jailbait" across the front. LOL! Does she *want* Turbo Dan to go to prison?

Shadoe and I both pretty much sucked at skating, which was fine, because it meant that we spent a lot of time clinging to each other and the wall as we wobbled our way around the rink. After she fell and bruised her leg we called it quits and just watched TD and Tory rockin' it out. But it was still a fun day, even with all of the bodily harm. I so don't want Shadoe to leave. I know it's "only" 2 years, but I want every day to be like this! I love her! :-(

But then after this big fun day we get home and there's a message on the machine from Julie. She's was using her "businesswoman" voice and she said she was calling to "remind" me that I needed to return the computer to the office, and that I only had 21 days until "legal action" may be taken. WTF?! Okay, so yes, I've been dragging my feet on the computer thing, but dude, it's SUNDAY NIGHT! Nobody makes business calls on a Sunday night. This was all personal. This is so bullshit. She's just being hostile now. :-(

So it looks like I've got to get a new computer. Maybe I'll finally get that customized Cyborg Green Alienware Area-51 5550 I've had my eye on. Sure it would suck my savings account dry, but *droooooo!*!

Whatever. I'll see how my finances look in another 21 days, beotch. :-P



Monday, February 14, 2005 - 8:51 p.m.

Holy crap, I'm a Valentine's Day cliché...

Current mood: loved

Comments: 5

I don't really know how else to say it, so I guess I should say that I have good news and bad news.

First the bad news. This morning Shadoe and I had our first real, actual, yelling at each other fight. It was about the Peace Corps again. I was trying to get her to quit again, and trying to explain how I don't want her to give up her dreams of helping people, but could she at least consider helping people that *aren't on the other side of the planet*. And she was yelling at me about how if I cared so much about her that I would understand why she has to go, and that I wouldn't be so selfish. She was saying that I was "making her the bad guy" for joining the Peace Corps, and that nothing was stopping me from joining too if I couldn't stand to be apart. I was like, "Ah ha! It doesn't work like that! **gozer2048** told me that even if I DID join the Peace Corps we STILL wouldn't be put together unless we were married!" And

she's like, "Well why don't you just marry me then?!"

It was like the argument slammed into a brick wall. We both stopped yelling, and then she was all like, "That wasn't a proposal, it was just an alternative." But at that moment she finally got it through my thick skull what she's been wanting me to do. So I looked her in the eye, and I was all like, "Well okay then, this IS a proposal!" I don't really know how real people do this, so some part of the back of my brain took over and just I did it like they do it on TV. I got down on one knee and told her how she is everything in the universe to me and that I couldn't live without her, and that I would be honored and humbled if Shadoe Moon Beaupre would agree to be Mrs. Raymond Caster.

So here's the good news: She said *YES*! :-D

The girl of my dreams has agreed to be my wife. GO ME! This is the best day of my life! :-) I keep almost crying as I type this out, I'm so happy. :-) We've spent all day celebrating and being all lovey. I know that this doesn't magically solve all of our problems, and that we're still going to be apart, but it just feels so good to make an official commitment. It just sets my paranoid, no-self-esteem-having mind at ease to know without a doubt that she loves me enough to be bound in the holy eyes of God and Jeb Bush. It's not that I doubt that she loves me, but sometimes I just can't *believe* that a girl like her is in love with *me*. But she is! Pretty soon I'll have OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS TO PROVE IT!

Okay, so I didn't exactly have an engagement ring in the junk drawer in my kitchen or anything, but I did have one ring in my apartment. Actually *the* One Ring. Yes, I am now engaged through the power of officially licensed New Line Cinema *Lord of the Rings* merchandise. Haa! I'm such a dork. The funny thing is that it's not even the *good* One Ring. It's the cheesy Applause version that comes in the little light-up plastic Mt. Doom. At least it's really made of metal. I just hope it doesn't turn her finger green. LOL!

When I called Mom and told her the news she cried, but said that it was the first time that she has felt happy on Valentine's Day in 22 years. Then that made me cry. We're an emotional mess today! Ha ha! She can't wait to meet Shadoe after all I've told her about her. :-)

I never thought that I'd do a "sappy love thing" on Valentine's Day out of respect for my dad, but Mom said that he would have been happy to hear about it, because he was a "hopeless romantic" himself. I hope he's somewhere smiling at us today. :-)



amayasumi comments...

SO SO SO SO CUTE!!!! i'm so proud of you!

NEXT STEP: join peace corps! show her you do love her THAT much!



halfwayhappy comments...

That brought actual tears to my eyes! You're living a fairy tale. :)
Congratulations!!!! I'M SO INCREDIBLY HAPPY FOR YOU - and I
haven't even met you in real life before! LOL :)



webgodd_s comments...

Wow! Congrats on the engagement! Yay! Go you! But...
(rain cloud alert)

Do you, Ray Caster, really want to go and join the Peace Corps? If it weren't for Shadoe, would you ever have considered joining? Give your head a chance to think things through before you follow your heart off a dangerous cliff.



rcaster1138 comments...

I'm really researching it now, and honestly, the Peace Corps scares the crap out of me. You're right, I *wouldn't* have ever thought about joining up if it wasn't for her, but I'm not sure that's a bad thing. Our differences are what make us a good team. Nothing is boring if we can introduce each other to new things.

I love Shadoe, but I'm scared shitless of the Peace Corps.



webgodd_s comments...

Well, either one of 'em will make a man outta ya! XD



Tuesday, February 15, 2005 - 10:05 p.m.

Paperworkout.

Current mood: exhausted

Comments: 0

I think I've processed more forms today than a Scantron machine.

How do people like Britney Spears just decide they want to get married and then have it done before the beer buzz wears off? I'm amazed at what a huge hassle getting a wedding license is. We had to file all of these affidavits and read all these handbooks, and then sign affidavits saying that we read the handbooks. At least we didn't have to do blood tests. Seriously, I've heard that you have to do a blood test. We didn't, so maybe that was just somebody being funny. Whatever. Best \$88.50 I ever spent. ;-)

I also think it's funny that there's a 3-day waiting period before the license is valid. That's better than the 7 days you have to wait for a gun. We were trying to work out why that may be, and Shadoe said that it's so that you can get your gun and marriage license on the same day, then get married, and then shoot your husband for his money all in the same week. Should I be worried?

So after the wedding papers I started going through the Peace Corps application. Yeah, I know. It's a stupid idea. Still, I have to at least consider it as an option. But to be perfectly honest, it scares the crap out of me. The amount of commitment to the program that they require is really serious. It's like, dude, I just got engaged! My commitment tank is tapped for this week, okay?!

Anyway, I filled out the papers, but I'm still undecided as to whether I'll actually send them in or not. If I did, I'd wait until we were officially married anyway, so that buys me some thinking time. But seriously, from what I've read online and on the forms, it probably doesn't even **matter** what I decide. I'm absolutely unqualified for any position that they have in the whole program. The online test thing said that they "may have a position for someone with my skills", but I think that's probably a long shot. Somehow I don't think some village of Pacific islanders is going to need somebody to manage their financial spreadsheets and keep their new system synched with the company's legacy database. :-P



Thursday, February 17, 2005 - 4:28 p.m.

The future

Current mood: accomplished

Comments: 0

Today Shadoe and I did a lot of serious, serious talking about our future together, and we made some pretty big decisions.

I guess the most important thing that we decided is that it would be pointless for me to apply to the Peace Corps. She realizes that I'm not ready to make that kind of commitment to a volunteer organization, but she says she doesn't think any less of me because of it. It still makes me feel like kind of a selfish dick though. :-\

But even if I was all psyched up and ready to commit to the program, applying just so that we could be together is still pointless because of the time frame involved. Shadoe had a "fast" application process because they needed people that have strong French language skills, and it's **STILL** going to be about 8 months between her first application and actually leaving the country. Since I don't have any special skills, she may be back in the US by the time I even left if I applied now. With my luck, that's what would happen, and we'd end up spending 4 years apart instead of 2. :-(

Then we talked about marriage. I was so worried that she was going to call the whole thing off since the Peace Corps thing wasn't going to happen, but she just said that I was being ridiculous, and that she said she's going to marry me because she loves me, not because of a legal technicality. Awww! She makes me all melty

inside. :-)

Plus we thought that even outside of the Peace Corps, it's probably important to be married before she leaves just from a legal standpoint. I've seen very special episodes of *ER* where people can't see their loved ones in the hospital because they're not technically married (usually because they're technically gay, but that's beside the point). I don't know how international law works on this matter, but I figure that it can't hurt to have official documents if something goes horribly wrong for either of us.

We both want to have some kind of big outdoor wedding ceremony with all of our family and friends but, with her leaving the country so soon, we kind of have to accept that that isn't going to happen right now. We decided that we'll do a quickie "legal" wedding before she leaves, and then have the "real" wedding when she gets back. I have to remember to schedule an appointment at City Hall tomorrow. Blah. That's sooo romantic. Oooh, maybe I can renew my driver's license while I'm there. :-P

Anyway, on the positive side we decided that since we're having this stupid little DMV wedding, and we don't want to destroy our poor mothers' hearts, that we're going to spend our "honeymoon" on a trip to New Jersey and then California so that we can all finally all meet each other in person before Shadoe has to leave. I need to get on priceline.com and start working out some flights. It sucks that this is so last-minute (like everything I ever do...) I just hope Shatner's got the hook-up for us.



Sunday, February 20, 2005 - 5:48 p.m.

Theoreticals

Current mood: optimistic

Comments: 3

Married in 2 days

Research sets my mind at ease

I wonder "what if?"

I still can't believe that in 2 days I'm going to be a happily married man. I'm excited about it, but it's so hard to get truly worked up about this "DMV wedding" knowing that it's not like, the "for real" ceremony. My stomach is all knotty, but it's not because of cold feet. The reality is finally setting in that Shadoe is really, actually leaving for Vanuatu in 3 weeks. I've got this "the honeymoon is over" feeling and the honeymoon hasn't even started yet! :-)

I realized the other day that one of the reasons that I'm so terrified about Shadoe going to Vanuatu is because I don't know anything about the country except that a *Survivor* was filmed there. I had this terrible image in my head of that Sally Struthers commercial full of parched desert and little kids with bony limbs and bugs crawling on their faces.

So I spent the past few days doing a lot of research, and it really put my mind at

ease. The country actually sounds really nice for somewhere that the Peace Corps would send volunteers. I was surprised to find that tourism is one of their main economic staples, and that a bunch of major cruise ship routes have stops there. It's right next to Fiji on the map, and Fiji is, of course, where Dave Lister wanted to go if he ever got back to Earth. So at least it's in a nice neighborhood.

There was one thing I read on a website that really caught my attention: "Vanuatu, as a Christian country with high beliefs, is one of the safest and most peaceful in the South Pacific. The population is renowned to be the friendliest in the region with little or no resentment towards expatriates based in the country. The streets in town are safe to walk at night and the island communities welcome guests with open arms."

Friendly to expatriates? Hmm. You know, I've been seriously itching to expatriate for just over 4 right-wing, empire-building years now! I always thought that I'd end up in Canada, but now all of this stuff I found out has me thinking in wild hypotheticals.

Sure I can't join the Peace Corps, but would it be at all possible for me to just *move* to Vanuatu while Shadoe is there? I know she'll be really busy working, but she DOES get 2 vacation days every month when friends and family are allowed to visit her. I mean, I'm not stupid. I realize that the country is a huge chain of islands, and where the Peace Corps volunteers are probably isn't exactly going to be next to the Hilton, but I'm just thinking, what if?

What's the BEST that could happen if I stay here in the US? I would just sit here in Sarasota, find another job, and spend all of my time sitting by the mailbox waiting to hear about the all the life-changing adventure that Shadoe is having without me. I know that's pretty much exactly what's going to happen. :-(

On the other hand, I'm thinking what's the WORST that could happen if I tried to go to Vanuatu? Maybe they don't let me stay in the country, or I just hate it there, and I end up back in Sarasota doing exactly what I would have done anyway if I never even tried. But even then, at least I would have taken a sweet little honeymoon with Shadoe on a tropical island that loves tourists. That's pretty good for a worst case scenario!

But then there's the BEST case scenario. What if I DID like it there, and I DID find a job, and they DID let me stay? I know I'd still only get to see Shadoe no more than 2 days a month, if even that much, but still 2 days a month is a billion times better than never for 2 years! Especially now that I've got myself all geared up not to even set eyes on her until 2007! Just that little bit of hope seems like winning the lottery!

But this is all just crazy talk right now. Don't worry, I'm not about to sell all of my crap and jump on a boat or anything, but I am going to do some serious research into the feasibility of any of this actually happening. When I told all of this to Shadoe she said that it was the sweetest, most romantic thing that anybody has ever wanted to do for her. But then she immediately told me not to get too excited about

this plan, because it's so *so* unlikely to happen. Yay for the vote of confidence. :-\

Anyway, the closest major town to where Shadoe is going to be working has a few international banks, so I just emailed some resumes out. I don't even know if I want to work in banking anymore, but that's what my education and experience is in, so it's probably my best shot. What the hell, right? It never hurts to try. :-)



gozer2048 comments...

It sounds like a decent place. I hope you do find something over there. Beyond the occasional chance to see Shadoe, I think it would be a great experience to live in another culture in a totally different part of the world. The fact that English is predominant in business there makes it quite doable for you.



webgodd_s comments...

I think it's good that you're keeping your possibilities open. Sounds exciting!

I'm curious as to why the Peace Corps sends people to a place that doesn't seem to need any help. Did they tell Shadoe what the mission would be?



rcaster1138 comments...

She's going to be working in the "Youth Development" program. I think she'll do really well in it. She was always a lot more patient with those art kids she worked with than I would have been. She's got "people skills".



Tuesday, February 22, 2005 - 8:48 p.m.

I do! I did!

Current mood: espoused

Comments: 2

The knot is tied! I am officially somebody's "ol' ball and chain". :-)

The "ceremony" was as beautiful and romantic as one would expect it to be in the sanitary chambers of the Sarasota County courthouse. When it was over and all the paperwork was filed, Shadoe was like, "Somehow I don't feel like we just got married as much as I feel like we just entered into the sacred vows of RV ownership." LOL!

After we had gone home and, um... officially explored the rights and privileges of our holy covenant, Shadoe wanted to visit our lifeguard stand at Lido Beach. She said that it's not where we technically saw each other for the first time, but it's where we truly met and where she first fell in love with me. Awww. :-) If I had been more romantic I bet I could have got somebody to come out and marry us there instead of downtown. Oh well, there's always the "real" ceremony for romantic gestures. I'll

start keeping a list so I can be ready for the big day. That's one thing that I promise I won't wait until the last minute to plan. :-)



webgodd_s comments...

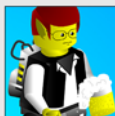
Congrats dude!!! I'm so happy for you!!



gozer2048 comments...

Throws a couple handfuls of rice pilaf

Congrats, bro! So very wacky, so very sweet! May you both grow stronger together and bring each other joy for uncountable days!



Thursday, February 24, 2005 - 10:43 a.m.

A journey of 1000 miles...

Current mood: contemplative

Comments: 3

Me and the all-new Mrs. Shadoe Caster leave on our 2-week "honeymoon" to go see our moms in NJ and CA first thing tomorrow morning, so today is officially my last chance to return this computer to the office before I'm past the 30-day deadline. Yes, I waited until the last possible minute to do something, can you believe it? I tried to peel the Apple sticker off the front of it just now and it made this huge sticky glue mess. I hope they don't give me crap for "vandalizing" the computer or something. :-P

It's going to be nice to see Mom and to meet Shadoe's mom, and I know we're going to have fun, but this whole trip seems so depressing to me. This could very possibly be the last time I see Shadoe for 2 years. :-(I was sitting here this morning thinking that when I get back and I get a new computer I'm going to be doing a *lot* of whining to my online friends. I was actually thinking in my head about what I'd write when I got back. How pathetic is that? I've become such a little blog exhibitionist that I'm trying to put my feelings into words before I even have them. That's so messed up. :-(

It made me think of something that **hawk_one** once said to me:

"It's getting painful to see your posts. Over and over, no matter what the problem is, you keep resigning. You keep allowing things to run their course until either you or someone else explodes. That's how you ended up with HR Julie. That's how you ended up splitting with HR Julie. That's how Blake could be a pain in your ass for such a long time, and that's also how HR Julie was able to fire you so damn easily. I mean, how many times have you relied on your online friends to come up with solutions to your problems for you? Too many times, in my opinion..."

You know what, **hawk_one**? You're right. You're absolutely right. All I ever do is

sit here and whine to my online friends about every little problem that I ever have. I'm so pathetic. It's like I barely even exist outside of this journal.

The more I think about it the more I feel like I'm at a very symbolic crossroads in my life that I have to face on my own. In 2 weeks I will be all alone with nothing but a savings account with enough money in it to buy one of two things that I really want:

On the one hand there's the Alienware Area-51 5550. Or as I like to call it, *my precioussssss...* If I had the money for it 6 months ago I never would have stolen this stupid computer in the first place. I know I could get some shitty Dell for like, 500 bucks, but I figure if I'm going to put down the cash for a new computer, I'm going to get the most bad-ass one that I can, because I know that with Shadoe gone I'm going to end up spending all of my free time parked in front of it geeking out.

But on the other hand, I could use the money to buy a Qantas flight to Vanuatu, and with it the very real possibility of being with my one true love. I've already received an email asking for more information about my work experience from one of the banks there. It's not exactly a job offer, but it's definitely not a rejection either. I found out that even without a visa you're allowed to stay in Vanuatu for 30 days. If I had some solid interest from an employer before I left that's enough time to nail it down and apply for residency. Shadoe says that the first time she gets her days off she's going to do some local field research for me on the immigration front. This option definitely wouldn't be easy, but it definitely wouldn't be impossible either.

So yes, I DO believe in fate, and I DO believe that fate has led me here. But **hawk_one** is also right. I should stop sitting back and letting fate do all the work for me. It's time for me to stop asking *everybody else* what I should do, and for once just figure out what *I* think I should do.

At this point in my life, am I satisfied to keep sitting on my ass and whining into cyberspace about how miserable my life is, or is this the time to finally pull the plug, get out of the chair, and actually DO SOMETHING about it?



marcus132 comments...

A choice between the Internet and the woman you love, eh? Well I think Amanda is glad that I never had to make *that* decision...



amayasumi comments...

find a balance, man. balance is good.



hawk_one comments...

I think that right now it is completely unimportant that we disagree on the nature of fate, and very important that we agree that you have to be an active part of your life, no matter what else may or may not be influencing it. :)



Saturday, February 26, 2005 - 4:32 p.m.

Sure as you can't steer a train...

Current mood: optimistic

Comments: 0

I've only been gone for a day and a half and I'm already in the hospital! Heh. No, don't worry. We're just visiting Mom at work. She just let me jump on "that Internet" from a nurse's terminal to check my email. She's been taking very good care of us. I can't remember the last time I've been this well fed. :-)

Within the first minute that Mom met Shadoe at the airport yesterday she was like, "Did you know that Ray used to have a cat by that name?" LOL! Smooth, Mom. I guess it runs in the family. And to all of you who don't like to miss out on a cliché, yes, she has been showing Shadoe all of my humiliating baby pictures. :-\

Anyway, I heard back from that bank in Vanuatu that wrote me before. They wanted to know more about what software I know. So that's encouraging. I also heard back from 2 of the other banks. One was a flat rejection, but the other was another request for more information. WOOT! Fingers crossed! :-)

I can't believe that I'm getting such a strong response so quickly. This is really starting to feel like it could actually work out. Part of me wants to be very skeptical and pessimistic, but I just have such a good feeling about this. I feel like I'm really taking charge of my life. But I also feel like fate knows that Shadoe and I cannot be forced apart, and it's doing its part to make sure that it never happens again.

I just wrote back to those 2 banks and told them everything they wanted to know. Hopefully they'll like what I had to say. From what they were asking about, I think I'm actually really well qualified to work for them. I guess the most important thing to do now is to just stay positive. For once, Ray Caster is going to take charge of his own fate.

It looks like Mom is ready to go home, so I guess it's time to log out. She doesn't have a computer at home, and Shadoe's mom doesn't have one either, so this will be my last post for a while. I plan on spending the next few weeks offline and enjoying the company of my family, both old and new.

After that, who knows where fate's path will lead me?





Marcus Alexander Hart

Marcus Alexander Hart's writing credits include *The Oblivion Society*, a post-apocalyptic comedy novel; and *Walkin' on Sunshine*, a quantum physics sex farce. He is perhaps best known for his dual role as editor and movie critic for the comedy website *misinformer.com*.

In addition to his writing, Marcus is also an award-winning digital animator. His resume includes over ten published video-game titles, including *Scan Command: Jurassic Park* and *American Idol*. His short film *A Narrow Martian of Error* has been screened in festivals around the world.

To find out more about Marcus, visit *MarcusAlexanderHart.com*.



Raymond S. Caster

Marcus Alexander Hart and Ray Caster have been a successful writing team for many years because of one simple fact: They are the same person. Realizing that his life was more pathetic than he would ever dare admit, Marcus created his own social inferior in 1996. Ever since then,

Caster has quietly taken the blame for Marcus' failings in comedy, business, and interpersonal relationships. Though he claims it stands for "Simon," Caster knows his middle initial truly stands for "scapegoat."

About Caster's Blog

Every journal entry in this book was posted online in real time at *rcaster1138.livejournal.com*. With the exception of four accomplices, none of Caster's Internet friends were aware of his true nature until the publication of this book. For more information, please visit *CastersBlog.com*.