

Dick Be Gone

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One thing about being a musician—more specifically a drummer—struggling against the cost of living—more specifically the cost of living in the Bay Area—is that I will do just about anything to earn money. I'll do odd jobs. I'll build your deck. I'll clean out your garage, rain gutters, or tool shed. I'll pull weeds and uproot overgrown rose bushes, and I'll do it with my bare hands if you wanna see me bleed.

Ever opened your door to a pimply delivery kid and saw his/her shit car parked on the curb with a glowing Pizza Hut sign on top? Well, during the last half of the '90s, the greater San Jose probably saw a lot of me delivering pizza in my rape-mobile. Quick background on that: I drive a white windowless industrial van so that my band can haul our equipment to and from gigs. It's the kind of van notorious for roll-overs, robberies, or abductions, hence my friends have so eloquently coined it the "rape-mobile." Example: "I gotta move a dining room set across town. Can I borrow *the* rape-mobile?"

The jobs I've done could mirror a social lobster or crab, meaning sometime in my life, I've probably cleaned the bottom of the ocean. I've removed live rats from glue traps and hand-carried them over the highway to freedom in the open fields. I've worked graveyard as a security guard outside a shelter during the '90s when that serial killer went around Oakland slitting the necks of the homeless. I've worked a graveyard cleaning dead flowers out of the ground vases and washing headstones with a sponge and bucket of soapy water. I've scrubbed the bathrooms in both retail stores and corporate high-rises, and the only thing that differentiated retail crappers from corporate ones was that someone, be it a customer or disgruntled employee, pulled a Mark Renton at least once a month. So yeah, I've cleaned shit off walls too.

Lately, though, I've worked a mind-numbing job as a factory secretary in San Leandro: answering phones, making coffee, running the copier, and booking appointments. It beat cleaning out glue traps until this morning, when a warehouse driver hopped up on meth came into the office screaming curse words in a near nonsensical manner, and then demanded his paycheck by screaming, "Fucking bitch, give me my fucking money!"

So, work has this no tolerance to violence policy, meaning even if someone is beating the gooey shit out of your intestines, you have to lie on the ground covering your face and taking it because at the first sign of fighting back, you're fired just as fast, if not faster than the person who started the altercation because that person can always claim insanity and would therefore be protected under some disability act, sue the company and everybody else within sighting distance for millions, and win because this is California—more specifically, Northern California—and shit like that happens all the time.

Bear in mind, I was not thinking about ADA or Cal/OSHA technicalities when this twitching meth-head came at me with the knife, so I grabbed his wrist clenching the knife, and bent his arm downward away from my body. Had I known—in the struggling chaos of preventing a good ol' fashion shanking—that his hand would bungee toward his crotch and cut through the front of his pants and maybe a few other things too, I would never have tried to defend myself. Maybe.

All I know is that it ended with him shrilling in the fetal position against the carpet as he cupped his hands against his bleeding crotch.

Forget that he's a meth-head who almost knifed me, but nobody in the office seems to care about the circumstances behind the de-balling, just that it happened and I'm being told that I should feel lucky that I was merely suspended pending an internal investigation for the highest level of workplace violence at the company as opposed to being thrown in to the slammer pending a criminal investigation.

And even though I'd feel like a pussy if anybody asked me how I was holding up, I find it strange that no one has. No, it's all about the meth-head who's ball sack is hanging on by a thin membrane of skin, and whose dick was also nearly lopped off in the process although I hear he can still piss naturally which means it can't be as bad as everybody's hyping it up to be.

After I gave my statement at the police station, my bandmate had to pick me up because the cops impounded my rape-mobile during my interrogation. Apparently, there'd been a recent abduction and my rape-mobile fit the profile. That, and the nylon straps bolted to the van walls that we use to hold down our band equipment during transit looked like the perfect accomplice in a good ol' fashion abduction.

In the car, on the way home from the police station, my bandmate says to me,

"You should sell your story for a shitload to that guy who did *Scared Straight!* You'd never have to work again and you could do music full-time. The tagline could be, 'just say no to meth. Because you won't just lose your teeth; you might also lose your balls'."

