

# The Job

by Sam McCrea

## **The Job**

Scene 1 opens at Zeb Parker's apartment. His brother Morris has dropped by to see him because his phone calls to Zeb have gone unanswered and he is concerned.

### **MORRIS**

What the hell's going on here, Zeb? You're a mess! How long's it been since you took a shower?

### **ZEB**

Don't give me a hard time, Morris, I've got a lot on my mind right now.

### **MORRIS**

Yeah? Like what?

### **ZEB**

I'm out of money, out of food, and I got an eviction notice today.

### **MORRIS**

An eviction notice? How'd you let things get this far? Haven't you been looking for work?

### **ZEB**

Yeah, but there just aren't that many jobs out there. At least jobs that pay anything.

### **MORRIS**

It looks like you're just going to have to set your sights a little lower, then, otherwise you're going to be homeless. How long do you have before they evict you?

**ZEB**

Thirty days.

**MORRIS**

And how much back rent do you owe?

**ZEB**

\$2400.

**MORRIS**

\$2400! Why'd you let it go so long?

**ZEB**

I kept thinking I'd get another job any day and I had to use what little cash I had for food, electricity, phone bills, stuff like that.

**MORRIS**

You're in it now, boy!

**ZEB**

Tell me about it!

**MORRIS**

Broke, no job, soon to be out on the street. Zeb, this is about as bad as it gets.

**ZEB**

Man, what am I gonna do? Homeless. I can't see myself myself sleepin' on the sidewalks especially when winter comes and you have to wrap up in a bunch of newspapers to keep warm. My hair would start getting' all matted and stuff and I'd start talkin' to myself. All my teeth would fall out. Who'd hire me then?

**MORRIS**

I can talk to Susie and see if she'll let you stay with us for a while if you get booted out, but it's not going to be easy trying to convince her. She still hasn't gotten over the last time you stayed with us.

**ZEB**

Hey, I apologized to her over and over for breaking that vase.

**MORRIS**

It wasn't just that.

**ZEB**

Well, what then?

**MORRIS**

You broke our washing machine, you didn't put gas in the car when we let you use it, you left the front door unlocked, you left your beer cans all over the place, you ran up a \$300 long-distance bill that you didn't pay, you drank milk out of the carton, and you left the toilet seat up.

**ZEB**

And you still think there's a chance she might let me stay at your place, if I get thrown out?

**MORRIS**

Only if you have a job. You've got to make some attempt at helping yourself before Susie would be willing to let you stay with us again.

**ZEB**

I have looked all over town for a job.

**MORRIS**

Have you been to the State Employment Office?

**ZEB**

No. I've heard that they don't help you much. The real jobs that pay anything you have to get through those headhunting outfits. They charge an arm and a leg and right now I need all my arms and legs.

**MORRIS**

I suggest you get down to the State Employment Office tomorrow.

**ZEB**

Okay, okay. I'll go down there and see if they can find something for me. Even if they can come up with something I know it'll be a lot less than what I used to make, but it's better than being toothless on the streets, I guess.

**MORRIS**

Take a shower and shave before you go down there! Here's a few bucks. And don't spend it on junk food and beer. Buy some real groceries. You know if you get a job soon enough and pay off some of your back rent, they may not throw you out. But, you've got to hop to it, Zeb. This is serious. Well, I've got to go. Susie's waiting on me. Let me know how you make out.

**ZEB**

Okay. Thanks for the money. Tell Susie I said hi.

Scene 2 opens with Zeb at the State Employment Office being interviewed by Mr. Wilson.

**Mr. WILSON**

Mr. Parker your application indicates that you left your previous position 4 months ago. Have you had any employment since that time?

**ZEB**

No.

**Mr. WILSON**

You were unemployed for that entire period?

**ZEB**

Yeah, I needed to take some time off to kick back and relax. My last job was pretty intense and the boss was a pretty uptight dude who didn't cut me any slack. I mean if I just took a sick day or 2 here and there he got all bent out of shape about it.

**Mr. WILSON**

Mr. Parker why did you leave your last position?

**ZEB**

I was fired.

**Mr. WILSON**

What were the circumstances of your dismissal?

**ZEB**

Well, it was on a Monday and you know how bad Mondays are to begin with. I had been up real late the night before playin' poker and drinkin'. I was thinking that after a couple of hours the hangover would wear off and I'd be okay, but instead I started feeling worse. So around noon I stacked up some empty boxes in the basement, turned the lights out, and lay behind the boxes on the floor to take a quick nap. My boss goes out for lunch every day at noon, so I figured I could get maybe 50 minutes of snooze time and not get caught. Wouldn't you know that would be the one day that

he didn't go out for lunch. He sniffed me out behind the boxes and caught me in mid-snooze. That's the only time I've ever done anything like that and I wouldn't have done it then, but I was feeling real sick and thought that just a quick nap would snap me out of it.

**Mr. WILSON**

Our records don't show you as having received unemployment compensation during the 4-month period you were out of work

**ZEB**

Well, you see I wasn't on that job long enough to qualify for unemployment compensation. I was laid off from the job I had before my last job and I used up all my unemployment benefits then.

**Mr. WILSON**

Do you have a college degree, Mr. Parker?

**ZEB**

Hey, would I be pounding the pavements if I had a degree? I did go to junior college for 1 semester, though. Man, was that a partying school! Those were some of the best months of my life!

**Mr. WILSON**

Did you complete any courses that may assist you in qualifying for a job?

**ZEB**

Nah. I failed them all. I had to drop out because my dad said he wasn't going to pay for any more. He said if that was the best I could do I was on my own and if I wanted to continue on in college, I'd have to pay for it myself. Well, I couldn't see wasting 4 years, not to mention a few thousand bucks, just to get a degree in map-folding or whatever and still not make much more than minimum wage.

**Mr. WILSON**

I see. On your application you list Computer Technician as your job title at your previous position. What sort of duties did this position entail?

**ZEB**

Mainly, I delivered PC's to people's offices and would hook them up to the local area network.

**Mr. WILSON**

So you installed software on the computers, tested them, that sort of thing?

**ZEB**

No, I would take this skinny cable and plug one end into the back of the PC and plug the other end into an outlet in the wall.

**Mr. WILSON**

So you didn't actually do any operating system installations or other office software installations on the computers?

**ZEB**

Nah, that stuff was done by the nerds who worked there and a worse bunch of snoots you'd be hard-pressed to find. They wouldn't show me how to do any of that stuff. I mean I wanted to learn, but they were too selfish to share any info with me. I mean how's a guy supposed to get ahead when people won't help him, you know what I mean?

**Mr. WILSON**

Do you have any other work experience outside the computer field?

**ZEB**

Just summer jobs as a camp counselor. I taught kids how to paddle canoes and stuff like that. Man, those summer camp jobs

were the best, splashing around on the lake all day, getting tan. Then at night we'd sit around the campfire, roast weenies, and scare the kids with made-up stories about serial killers breaking into cabins and hacking people up.

**Mr. WILSON**

I see. Currently, the only positions we have listed that you might be qualified for are day laborer, short order cook, and truck driver.

**ZEB**

That's it?

**Mr. WILSON**

These are difficult times, Mr. Parker.

**ZEB**

You got that right! Well, I've got to have a job, otherwise I'm out on the street in 29 days.

**Mr. WILSON**

I see.

**ZEB**

How much does the truck driver job pay?

**Mr. WILSON**

15 dollars an hour. Do you have a chauffeur's license?

**ZEB**

No. All I have is a regular driver's license.

**Mr. WILSON**

The truck driver position requires a chauffeur's license. Have you any experience in cooking. At a McDonald's or Burger King, perhaps?

**ZEB**

No, I've never had a McJob. I always used to laugh at my buddies who were too dumb to get summer camp jobs and had to flip burgers at McD's.

**Mr. WILSON**

That leaves the day laborer position which pays minimum wage.

**ZEB**

Day Laborer... How does that work? I mean is that like digging ditches, unloading trucks, and stuff like that?

**Mr. WILSON**

The position is being offered by a construction company, so yes it might include duties such as those.

**ZEB**

I see. Well, I guess my Dad was right after all.

**Mr. WILSON**

How's that?

**ZEB**

He always said that I'd wind up being a bum someday and digging ditches for a living. I'll take the job!

**Mr. WILSON**

A wise decision, Mr. Parker.

