McDonald's And Me

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McDonald's And Me

by

Kevin Selbig

My name is Bill; I work at McDonald's and I hate it. Even in 1997 the working conditions aren't great; it's loud, greasy, hot and messy. The people I work with either border on illiteracy or have the personality of a Big Mac. The customers are rude, insensitive people who can't comprehend what a living hell it is serving them -- with a smile. You may ask, then - "Bill, why do you stay if it's so bad?" Well, I'll tell you why: because as a college student who needs cash, I can think of worse jobs that pay less than I make here.

We get to see all kinds of people in our "restaurant," which is kind of exciting. At least it breaks up the monotony. We see men, women, old people, young people, white people, yellow people, black people. We get tall customers, short customers, skinny customers, fat customers, and, if you work the fly-up window you really see some characters. It's like a United Nations of carnivores.

Most of the time, the job is less than rewarding. You get insults hurled at you, along with French fries. Customers think you intentionally mess up their orders; I don't, but I'd really like to sometime. Besides, with all the computers, it's almost impossible to make a mistake, but when you do, watch out. It's not always the "barrel of fun" the application said it would be, I'll tell you that. But one day, it was. Let me tell you about it.

The day started out not unlike any other. The morning crowd came in at about 7:30; we were busy as usual. All the "suits" were reading their Wall Street Journals (do they really read those things our are they just for show?) and eating their McMuffsins while I was wondering if they've ever worked as hard as I do here. What with the technology of today you really don't have to do anything for yourself, except of course in the food service industry. We have to know how to run the computers, which almost takes a college degree to do successfully. The breakfast rush died down and we had to clean up the kitchen area, which is not that hard. We could finish in about 20 minutes if we wanted to, but we take our time. It gives us something to do until the lunch rush.

Well, at about 11:30, the place started jumping. All the registers in front were in use, not to mention all four microwaves and the grill. Then one of the cashiers, Sarah, called back a special order. The way McDonald's is run now, all the food comes prepackaged. So when a special order comes in, it upsets us. Some guy ordered four McDLT's with no mayonnaise, no onions, and extra mustard. I told Sarah I'd take the order out when it was ready. You see, I wanted to see this guy for myself. Well, just as I was preparing the burgers, the grill shut itself down. It seemed that the grill, with all its sophistication, shut itself down because someone had changed the thermostat on the grill itself. My boss, Miss Jones, got it going again and I finished the burgers.

The McDLT's were done and I asked Sarah to point me towards the guy who had ordered them. She also gave me two milkshakes and an order of large fries. I couldn't wait to see this guy. I
I had to guess he’d have to weigh about 300 pounds. When I saw him, my mouth kinda fell open, but I didn’t know why at first. He looked rather normal: he seemed to be in his early 60’s, had white hair, a little bit of a gut — nothing unusual. However, as I got closer, I felt a chill go up my spine. This man had an aura about him. That’s the only way I can describe it. He looked like somebody famous, but I couldn’t figure out who.

When I gave him his order, he thanked me. The way he thanked me was quite odd, though. He kind of sang “Thanks a lot, son,” to me. This was very puzzling. Who was this guy and why did he grab my attention so easily? Other people were looking at him, too. They seemed to be in awe of him. I asked Sarah if she seemed familiar to her, but she didn’t think so. I tried to find out if someone else I worked with recognized him. None of the youngsters (high school kids) I worked with recognized this man. I was so sure I’d seen him before. Maybe he just looked like someone who was on T.V. or in the movies. I just couldn’t put my finger on it.

I watched the man as inconspicuously as I could from the window. When he left, I watched him through the fly-up window. He got in a big “old” car. The type that had wheels. I’d guess it was a 1980 model black Cadillac. I figured he must have had money at one time. It was a beautiful car: black and a convertible with out-of-state license plates on it.

I didn’t realize who the old man was until three days later. I was watching TV, and an old movie came on. I believe it was made in the early 1960’s. The main character of the movie had an aura about him, much like the man I waited on. The movie was Blue Hawaii and the mystery man was Elvis Presley. I had waited on THE KING. This experience and 57 an hour make it all worthwhile here at McDonald’s. I guess working here isn’t so bad after all. I look at it this way: I got to meet a “dead” living legend. How if I could only get someone to believe me.

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My Prisoner Princess

There she stands
Wearing a politician’s smile
Ready to pull Brutus’ knife
From her imitation Gucci handbag

Forced to stop
I talk with her
She rests her body
Against the wall
Too fragile to be left unsupported

Her hair
She claims
Grows naturally blonde
With thick black roots

With effort
She attempts to insert
Her gaudily polished nails
Into her painted on jeans

Too tight
To have wrinkles

My eyes water
I turn away
Not to be asphyxiated
By the cloud of perfume

She implodes
She is a self-made girl
A girl in no way
Has she made herself into

Kenneth P. Kula