

PRANKS, BUT NO PRANKS

(OR)

PRANK YOU VERY MUCH

(OR)

DAMN IT FEELS GOOD TO BE A PRANKSTA

A tedious and unnecessarily longwinded anecdote
by HawaiianPun



Begun: Friday, [REDACTED], 2002, 12:36 am—
20.5 hours before my 18th birthday.

Completed: Wednesday, [REDACTED], 2004, 11:51 pm—
1,751.5 hours after my 20th birthday...I think. Math isn't my strong suit.

A WRITE IN THE KISSER PRODUCTION



PART I—WARMUP TOSSES

I'll be honest with you. I am a lazy man, a lazy man with little to no career ambition and even less interest in my various scholastic pursuits. The fact that it took me in excess of two years to write a simple account of a high school senior prank—something I *wanted* to do—should attest to the aforementioned sloth-like quality of my person. In no literal or metaphorical senses of the words am I any of the following: A go-getter. A self-starter. A hard worker. A motivational dynamo. A forensic scientist. In short, I am the real life equivalent of Ron Livingston's character from the movie Office Space, except I don't plan on wasting any time with that whole job thing before I start my post-collegiate existence as a doer of nothing.

Nevertheless, my treatise is finally complete, and it is up to you, dear reader, to continue the second half of this adventure on your own. I make no pretenses about my writing ability. It certainly cannot be described as polished or refined, and most of my feeble attempts at wit inevitably fall flatter than my middle school girlfriend. (Okay, so I didn't have a middle school girlfriend, but you get the idea.) If you do derive the occasional chuckle from my awkward and stilted prose, it is undoubtedly the result of some failed attempt on my part to achieve a modicum of sophistication in this otherwise primitive drivel I call writing. Dave Barry, Douglas Adams, and Bill Bryson—the three humorists whose respective works have most influenced my own—would be ashamed and chagrined to learn of my pathetic efforts at stylistic emulation, while Lloyd Kaufman—whose masterful use of comedic and expositional footnotes in All I Need to Know about Filmmaking I Learned from the Toxic Avenger was nothing short of inspired and hilarious—would eruct copious amounts of stomach lining upon perusing the following manuscript and seeing my graceless and unrelenting utilization of this labyrinthine writing technique.

DISCLAIMER:

I cannot give you a reliable default method for following any of my footnotes. Sometimes you will need to read them immediately, lest you lose the thread of the story. Other times, jumping to the bottom of the page mid-sentence will cause your train of thought to derail, killing hundreds of innocent brain cells and possibly forcing you to re-read the entire paragraph leading up to that particularly ill-timed footnote. Yes, I know I'm incompetent. No, I do not wear my underwear on the outside of my pants (most of the time). Yes, I realize that your time is valuable and that you deserve some sort of monetary or sexual compensation for even getting this far in the text. Blah blah blah. Heard it before. Thanks for coming. I suppose that, in general, your best bet is to finish whichever sentence it is that contains the footnote and then go down and read the relevant—or, more likely, irrelevant—blurb.



Footnoting issues aside, I suppose being a no-talent hack with esoteric subject matter and an exceedingly limited target audience does have some advantages. For example, the chances that any person not directly related to me or to the events in question will even read this are basically nil; thus I needn't concern myself too much with the possibility of public denigration. Other advantages include, ummm, a....pony.

But enough self-effacement; what's dumb is done, so we might as well get this over with. (Or, in deference to my English teacher, we might as well over with this get.) This may not have been a story that needed to be told, but it was a story I needed to tell. So with one further ado...ado.

* * * * *



PART II—PRE-GAME ANALYSIS

It was just another April Sunday, and a few of us had gathered at my house for yet another mind-numbing session of calculus problem sets. Alli and Liz had taken off soon after the two hours we usually spent on this exercise in futility were up, so that left just Billy, Ryan, Dan, Sean, Keith, Tom M. (a.k.a., Tommy-Gun), and myself sitting around the dining room table, discharging our firearms at the proverbial manure.

I'm not sure how it came up, but at some point the conversation gradually turned to the ever-fascinating topic of senior pranks. Like every senior class to come before us (and probably every senior class to come after), our prank was going to be the best ever. We had no trouble coming up with ideas for the prank either, but each one was sadly plagued with a plethora of feasibility issues. Some of the suggestions were pretty outlandish: soldering a car around the flag pole, filling the courtyard with sand, moving every desk in the school into the gym, putting a cow in the—

“Wait a minute. What was that one you just said?”

“You mean the thing about the cow? Well, if you can get a cow to walk up a flight of stairs—”

“No dude, the thing before that!”

“Oh, you mean the desk thing. Well, I was just thinking: How cool would it be if all the teachers and everyone came in one morning and found every classroom in the school empty, without a desk in sight?”

“Dude, that'd be friggin' hilarious! We could never do it though.”

“Sure we could. Think about it...”

And think about it we did. For the next hour or so, the seven of us sat around scheming and what-iffing the logistics of Bill's idea. (I *think* it was Bill's idea, at least; unfortunately, I'm way too lazy to corroborate very much of this story.) Regardless, it certainly had the makings to be the best senior prank at Beverly High in the last two decades—maybe ever. Conceptually speaking, the idea was merely mediocre. Moving a bunch of furniture around is hardly the stuff of legends. But as far as scale was concerned, this was history in the making. Nobody—at least, no Beverly High School students—had ever contemplated a senior prank of this magnitude. The envisioned chaos that would undoubtedly ensue *THE MORNING AFTER!!!* lent itself to frequent bursts of spontaneous hilarity that night. For no reason at all, someone would suddenly crack up in the middle of explaining his latest nuance and the rest of the table would be right behind him. However, despite our excited chatter and grandiose conspiring, I think in the back of our minds none of us really expected anything to happen. I know I didn't. This was just another wild dream in the long list of wild dreams that are cool to talk about and rarely ever accomplished. But wild dreams have a way of sneaking up on you I've discovered...

The next few weeks or so were relatively quiet. Everyone in the inner circle casually leaked “the idea of the desks” to a couple of friends, and for the most part it was met with positive, if not necessarily



enthusiastic, feedback. Most people were in the “that’d be wicked cool if we could do it but it’ll probably never happen” boat, the same boat as the original Dining Room Seven. Actually, make that the Dining Room *Six*. For reasons I’ve never been able to understand, Keith had somehow gotten it into his head that we were actually gonna pull this thing off.

Now, before I continue with the story, I’ve gotta give you a little background information on ol’ Keith-o. You see, Keith is one of those clever mathy/sciencey types who’s good with numbers and maps and schematics and whatnot, but not actually a nerd...well, not actually a *big* nerd...which is to say, he’s not actually one of those scrawny, nasal-voiced, Star Wars-obsessed—aww, fuck it, you’ll just have to meet him. To be sure, he’s no Tommy-Gun (more on him later), but Keith is, in his own right, a formidable engineer. Anyhoo, apparently Keith decided that THE PLAN (as I have, for simplicity’s sake, just dubbed it) was a brilliant idea and entirely practical with regards to its pull-off-ability. Consequently, mere days after the topic was first broached in the relative seclusion of my humble abode, Keith began keeping a notebook filled with actual blueprints of the school—displaying its various wings, classrooms, desk counts, etc.—based on his own personal reconnaissance. And “reconnaissance” is exactly the word for it too. Whenever Keith could spare a minute in between classes, he simply headed off to the nearest unaccounted-for classroom, stuck his head through the door, and—irrespective of whether there was a class in there or not—blatantly counted the number of desks inside. If memory serves, by the time I first caught wind of Keith’s notational diligence, he had literally counted every single desk in the school.

Once Keith finally came clean about his double life, THE PLAN gained a second wind of sorts amongst the rest of the Dining Room Seven. However, it had not yet been definitively agreed upon by the rest of the senior class, so we had to figure out a way to get the word out to everyone. Eventually someone came up with a great idea. In just a couple of days, the class of 2002 would be gathering in the main auditorium to—among other things—vote for whether or not we wanted to have a religious prayer-type dealy during our graduation ceremony. The most attractive feature of this event was the fact that no teachers or other faculty members would be allowed in the room during the voting process; we would thus have a few precious minutes to ourselves to let the rest of the student body know of our intentions to assemble in the school parking lot that upcoming Saturday to discuss the senior prank.

Well, it wasn’t pretty, but apparently we managed to make our slapdash proposal coherent enough to convince three dozen or so kids to show up at the high school that weekend. Mind you, the meeting was scheduled for 1:00 p.m., but my heterosexual lifemate, Jeremy (he’s Jewish by the way—trust me, it’s relevant) was late as usual. He happened to be giving a ride to Keith, and by the time the two of them arrived, the rest of the attendees had pretty much canned THE PLAN. (Just to clarify, dear reader, I was not formally in attendance that fine Saturday afternoon, thus forcing me to write this entire section based solely on hearsay and conjecture. Nevertheless, I’m certain I’ve gotten the story exactly right.) So after the deranged hillbilly finally put his clothes back on, Jeremy launched into what I’m sure must have been a passionate though not-at-all-articulate plea on behalf of THE PLAN, and in turn was greeted with a series of looks reminiscent of a herd of constipated cows staring into the headlights of an



oncoming 18-wheeler—an 18-wheeler filled with, ironically enough, three-and-a-half tons of processed hamburger meat. Fortunately, it was ol' Keith-o to the rescue again. After getting Jeremy out of the way by reminding him about the grand opening of Jebediah's Discount Yarmulke Outlet later that afternoon (see, I told you his Judaism was relevant), Keith busted out THE NOTEBOOK and slowly won everyone back over to the side of THE PLAN with an assiduous demonstration of the preparation that had already taken place on our part and a strategic distribution of \$5 bills.¹

Finally, the prank was starting to take shape. No official date had been set at the time of THE MEETING, but we knew we wanted to put THE PLAN into action *before* Senior Week. In the past, the graduating class had always enacted their prank during the weeklong dress-up party ingeniously christened "Senior Week," so the school administrators and local law enforcement agencies tended to ramp up their attentiveness around this time. We weren't about to be foiled by such amateur countermeasures, however, which meant THE PLAN had to go down³ sometime in the next five days in order to catch the administration off guard. Somewhat surprisingly, the finishing tactical touches came together in Mrs. Dube's second-to-last period AP Calculus class.

"But *Trevor*," you rudely interrupt, as you are wont to do. "Was planning your prank *in* the school itself really the smartest idea? I mean, what about spies and stuff?"

"Well, my imaginary question-asker," I thoughtfully and patiently respond, as *I* am wont to do. "We really had no choice. You see, shortly after THE MEETING, a few of us had arbitrarily chosen Wednesday night for our end of the year mischief, and to that end I had gone ahead and printed up the following handbill to pass out amongst my classmates:

¹ I couldn't figure out a way to slip this casually into the above paragraph, but Jeremy wanted me to mention that, for no discernable reason whatsoever, there were scads of senior citizens hanging around the parking lot during the meeting that afternoon. While I don't agree with his Christ-killing, penny-pinching ways, I do agree that any reference to old people automatically makes something 17% funnier, as determined by the Department of Redundancy Department in their "Shit That Makes Stuff Funnier" study of 1973.²

² Sorry to bring you back down here so soon (or, more accurately, sorry for not yet allowing you to return to the actual story), but I should mention that, at some point during THE MEETING, Tommy-Gun entered the school and quasi-unlawfully—which isn't nearly as bad as *illegally*—credit-carded his way through various locked doors in order to obtain the operations manual and wiring diagrams for the school's public address system and photocopy the relevant pages therein. I'll get to why later on.

³ Any credible espionage/spy/action-type story must include the compound verb "to go down" at least once in its telling for it to carry any weight with its target audience. Other requisite terminology includes references to "auxiliary forces," "contingency plans," "secondary mission objectives," and "the man"—used either singularly or as an intentionally ambiguous and frequently paranoid plural. Collect all five!



NO ONE BUT SENIORS CAN SEE THIS!

- What/When: Senior “Assembly,” 11:00 p.m.
- Where: Park cars in North Ridge housing development (across from Soccer Etc.) From car, move discreetly down hill to playground and then over to basketball court. Beyond basketball court is a small clearing that fades into shadows. GO THERE QUIETLY!
- Bring/Wear: Dark clothes, flashlight, cell phone (RINGER OFF!), large beach towel, spools of yarn or string
- NO BLOODY CAMERAS!
- We move out by 11:45. Please be there by 11:15.
- The success of this “assembly” depends upon efficient organization and execution. When instructions are being given, please SHUT THE HELL UP! You may have a better idea, but we don’t have time.
- If things go to hell, it’s every man for himself (hint: get the hell off school property and worry about rides later)
- All other details will be given after everyone has arrived
- If possible, casually spread news to underclassmen about the big prank coming up this Monday.

ONCE AGAIN, NO ONE CAN SEE THIS EXCEPT SENIORS! EAT IT IF NEED BE! (I’M SERIOUS!)

(I’ll admit: it’s a bit melodramatic. Then again, I’m a big dork, so what are you gonna do?) Anyway, after distributing dozens of these things, I got word from an actual resident of the aforementioned housing development that the people who lived there tended to call the cops at the slightest disturbance; as such, there was very little chance that a 100-plus rowdy high school students would escape their attention. With that in mind—and with the school day ending in less than two hours—we had to come up with an alternative meeting place, thus our less-than-secure math class setting.”

“Oh,” you cunningly reply. “I guess that makes sense.”

“Yes,” I condescendingly acknowledge. “I guess it does.”

Fortunately for the denizens of AP Calculus, Mrs. Dube had to run some errands that period and ended up leaving us in the capable hands of Lou Diamond Philips and his famous math-related movie...uhhhhh, something or other.⁴ As soon as she had left the room, of course, poor LDP was forgotten (though not without some mournful glances from the fairer sex) and we started tossing ideas around. Some bright-eyed youngster eventually proposed the new Burger King eatery on 128, which was (and is) conveniently located just off Beverly High School’s highway exit. The idea was unanimously hailed as mediocre. However, nobody else could come up with anything better, so we quickly agreed to hit the cell phones as soon as school ended and spread the word. In the meantime, Jeremy and I had work to do.

After last period, we headed straight for our cars to grab some supplies: a couple heavy duty pruning shears and a roll of reflective duct tape. You see, we knew we couldn’t possibly sneak a huge

⁴ Gun says it’s called Stand and Deliver. He’s such a smarty.



group of people into the high school via the parking lot without arousing some attention, so we decided to cut a path through the woods. The path would start at the top of the hill on Tozer Road and end by the tennis courts next to the practice football field. We figured a few designated drivers could shuttle kids back and forth by car to the top of the hill in groups of five or six, while Jeremy and I took turns leading them down the steep and treacherous trail I shall now refer to as THE TRAIL ('cause I'm clever like that). Marking the way would be a few brightly colored tennis balls⁵ and some strategically placed strips of duct tape that would hopefully allow us to navigate the meandering path in the dark, with a little help from our red Saran Wrap®-tinted headlamps, of course.⁶

Now, I bet you're probably wondering, "Why the hell am I still reading this garbage?" I, unfortunately, cannot answer that question for you. In fact, I can't even figure out why *I'm* still reading this garbage, let alone still writing it. However, those of you without jobs or a foreseeable future might be asking yourself a slightly more topical and plot-related question. For example: "How do these kids plan on getting into the school in the middle of the night?" Well, I'm glad you may or may not have asked, because it allows me to segue smoothly into a relevant anecdote that I really should have included earlier but didn't because time no longer holds any meaning for me.

Temporal dissonance aside, the problem of getting into the school wasn't actually that much of a problem. Taken literally, we didn't have to get into the school at all; we merely had to *stay* there. You see, months earlier, Jeremy and I had ingratiated ourselves with Mr. Robert Dunn, Beverly High's resident media teacher and a positively superb fellow who would later confess to deriving many a laugh from our nighttime escapades. On one particularly providential day, Mr. Dunn entrusted us with the keys to a special video editing suite in the old high school television studio where we could spend our free periods working on Toast Dusters, the unanimously agreed-upon *greatest* toast-themed movie of all time. Later that same day—and completely by accident—I ended up taking the keys to True Value Hardware. Of course, I had absolutely no intention whatsoever of making copies of them so that we could still access the room after returning the original set.

But then I did.⁷

Luckily, nobody seemed to notice that we were turning the room into our own little lounge...which was actually pretty stupid of us, come to think of it, considering the only way to access the room was to walk through the adjacent office staffed by Beverly High's resident police officer. (I remember skipping out during lunch one day to drive to Phil's house and abscond with his oxymoronically⁸ large mini-fridge. After wrapping it in a sheet, Phil, Jeremy, and I managed to sneak it past three teachers and that very same cop by claiming the bundle was actually some new computer equipment.) Fortunately, nobody ever

⁵ Props to Jeff K. for coming through with those.

⁶ By this point, Jeremy and I were pretty sure we were actual secret agents on a dangerous and important mission. We figured that, not only would red plastic wrap look wicked cool over our flashlights, but it would actually serve a practical purpose and reduce the beam to a discreet glow.

⁷ The keys proved even more serendipitous when we discovered that they also opened most of the other doors in the building, thus solving what could have been a huge problem, since we didn't realize until much later that the janitors locked up the inside of the school every night, in addition to the outside.

⁸ LOBSTER POT!!!



questioned our presence there, and as prank time approached, we realized it should be relatively simple to hide out in the room after school and wait for everything to close down for the night; later, we could let the rest of the pranksters in by way of one of the unchained side doors.

Of course, just because the plan sounded good in theory (Communism anyone?) didn't mean that it would work in practice, so we had to stage a test run in order to measure its practicality. I was too much of a coward to volunteer for the first mission, but luckily, Jeremy, Rich G., *and* Brendan offered their services for the night (the night in question being the Monday before THE PLAN was officially scheduled to take place).

As it turned out, their stakeout was fairly uneventful. Apparently, Jeremy conducted the first half in solitude, as Rich and Brendan neglected to return to the school until well after it closed, thus giving the J-man approximately five hours between the final bell of the day and their late arrival to contemplate the coin flip that ultimately decided his lifelong religion.

For dramatic effect, I will now describe the rest of their evening in a bulleted and arbitrarily chronological format. (In other words, the following times are entirely made up.)

- 6:00 p.m. – Jeremy begins to experience the first signs of hunger. He regrets finishing his entire thermos of Matzos Ball soup at lunch.
- 6:01 p.m. to 7:29 p.m. – Jeremy makes friends with a sociable insect and teaches him how to walk that fine line between cute and annoying.
- 7:30 p.m. – Rich and Brendan finally arrive. They come bearing sandwiches, drinks, and the classic board game Risk (or possibly Stratego). There is much rejoicing.
- 7:31 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. – Using their indoor voices (so as not to attract unwanted attention), our advance team proceeds to live it up...and occasionally turn off all the lights and hide in cupboards when they hear scary noises.
- 10:01 p.m. to 2:37 a.m. – After removing all footwear, our three miscreants summon the courage to slink stealthily around Beverly High School's empty hallways. At one point, Jeremy and Brendan think they hear something and tell Rich to be quiet. Rich complies as only Rich can: by asking "WHAT?" in a loud voice and then accidentally knocking over a trashcan.
- 2:38 a.m. – The heebie-jeebies officially set in and our intrepid trio comes to the conclusion that their experiment has proven successful. They proceed to haul ass back to their respective automobiles and eventually return to school the next morning with extremely exaggerated tales of their not-so-derring-do. (Not that they really needed to initiate the dialogue themselves. As it happened, people Jeremy had never even met before were coming up to him in the halls and congratulating him on his adventure from the night before—and he hadn't even told anyone! Who'd have thought a secret like that could spread through a public high school so quickly? I guess I don't watch enough 90210 after all.)



Anyway, that pretty much does it for the expositional and rising action portions of the story. In fact, you'll probably need a Trojan or two before we reach the end of our adventure, because from here on out, it's climax *climax CLIMAX!*

* * * * *



PART III—KICKOFF!

The day of the prank had finally stumbled onto the calendar and I had a few hours to kill before starting to round everyone up for the night. In truth, I have no idea what I or anyone else did during this downtime, but some logical possibilities include eating dinner and updating our last wills and testaments. (One drolly prescient exchange occurred at Gun's household, where Tom's mother half-jokingly informed her son that she would sleep with the telephone tonight, just in case the police called.) Regardless, by the time 10:00 p.m. rolled around, everyone was raring to go.⁹ The Durango and I were in charge of transportation for our crew, but we hit a tactical snag after picking up the last recruit. On the way to Burger King, we received word that a small entourage of inebriated seniors (who shall remain nameless...and dickless) was already on school property and looking to do some damage. We decided to swing by and see if we could convince them to leave, but after one particularly aggressive douchebag informed me that he was going to kill me and piss on my head, I decided that further rhetoric would prove ineffectual. With our little detour out of the way, we were now fifteen minutes late for the established 11:00 p.m. rendezvous time. I began to worry that perhaps everyone had given up on us and gone home. As it turned out, that wasn't quite how the evening ended.

Upon pulling into the Burger King parking lot and exiting the Durango, Jeremy and I were greeted with a sight grand enough to rival that of the Million Man March: dozens and dozens of high school seniors dressed entirely in black, exploding from their various motor vehicles and rushing headlong toward the two of us.¹⁰ As I reveled in the swelling cheer that accompanied my fellow classmates' enthusiastic bum rush, I finally understood how Jesus must have felt when he led the Trotskyites into battle against King Neptune and his army of disgraced environmentalists at the famed Battle of the Bulge.

"I could get used to this," I thought.

Unfortunately, the time for self-adulation had not yet arrived. I was quickly informed by one faithful adjutant that Dunkin Donuts had already called the cops, so an alternate site of assembly needed to be established in a hurry. Apparently Dunks had sounded pretty panicked over the phone, too, because moments later, two squad cars screamed into the rest stop with lights-a-blazin' and sirens-a-blarin'. There was just enough time to yell the words, "MEET US AT LIBERTY TREE!" before the parking lot emptied faster than a crowd of French citizens faced with the prospect of confrontation.¹¹ As we pulled onto the highway again, I caught sight of one of Beverly's finest pulling over their first—but by no means their

⁹ I've never seen anyone use the expression "raring to go" in a written document before. I guess that's because the word "raring" looks rather queer on paper, even though it sounds quite exciting when said out loud. Just thought you'd like to know.

¹⁰ Jimmy easily won the prize for greatest espionage-esque ensemble. He was decked out in a black spandex jumpsuit with black face paint and a webbed yellow vest, to which he had attached a flashlight, cellular phone, walkie-talkies, and a Motorola pager. It was at that moment that I first began to regret my NO BLOODY CAMERAS! directive.....God, Jim looks good in spandex.

¹¹ Tom O. points out that the French fought valiantly on our side in World War I, but I say why let history get in the way of some mean-spirited frog bashing!



last—car of the night. Later estimates would place the number of Beverly High School cars pulled over that evening around ten, with Jeremy himself becoming the final victim.¹²

As luck would have it (and why wouldn't she?), Star Wars: Phantom Menace was premiering that Wednesday at the Liberty Tree Mall movie theater. We assumed that a gaggle of oddly attired, rambunctious teenagers would attract little notice when combined with the rest of the freaks sure to be attending such an event. Needless to say, we assumed wrong. A mere fifteen minutes after reconvening in the movie theater parking lot, Mall Security tells us that the police were on their way and that we'd best be on ours. We had lost a few small factions by this point, but certainly not enough to put THE PLAN in jeopardy, so we decided to get back on the road and coordinate the remainder of the night through our respective mobile networks. (Holy Ghost would I like to see a tally of the cellular activity in the greater Beverly area that night. My phone alone must have sent and received at least fifty calls between the hours of dusk and dawn.¹³)

The third and final group assemblage occurred sometime after 1:00 a.m. behind the local health and racquet club. By now, we were down to about forty people, but I knew that those who had remained faithful for so long were the absolute *crème de la* [insert something funny here] and worth their weight in desks...which is to say, I valued each person's life that night at approximately 3-5 desks. It was at this point that three disparate prank-related crises converged to divert my attention from our ultimate goal:

1) Brendan, our inside man, called from the school in a fit of paranoid hysteria and demanded to be gotten the hell out of there.

2) I noticed that our primary auxiliary force—including one Tommy-Gun, head technician in charge of the secondary mission objective (annexing control of the school's public address system)—had broken away from the group, bound for places unknown.

3) Someone notified me that those drunken sots from earlier in the evening had already attempted to break into the school, setting off the alarm in the process.

Unfortunately, dear reader, I lack the digital dexterity required to coherently narrate three simultaneous story lines (not that the rest of this schlock is exactly a paradigm of cogency), so if you'll bear with me, I will instead take things nice and easy and focus solely on achieving narrative accuracy. As usual, any attempts at style or references to chronology are purely arbitrary. Also, as far as organization is concerned, I suppose the easiest way to deal with these various sub-plots is in the same manner I dealt with them on the night in question: poorly.

¹² I found out the next day that it was Katie C. who earned the honor of being the first ne'er-do-well flagged down. I don't remember for sure, but I think she had like eight or nine kids crammed into her mid-size sedan and was forced to undergo a battery of sobriety tests even though she and the rest of her companions were clearly sober.

¹³ It never occurred to anyone that this form of communication might not be the most secure. I later heard from multiple kids whose parents had been following our exploits via police scanner that the cops had actually been monitoring our phone calls the entire night, leading to descriptions and subsequent targetings of various vehicles, among them Sean C.'s very conspicuous blue pick-up truck and my dad's aforementioned SUV.



“Aww SHIT! There goes the goddamn prank! Why couldn’t those assholes just succumb to alcohol poisoning?”

(Okay, I didn’t really say that. But I thought for sure THE PLAN was done for. Little did I know...) After mulling over the latest developments concerning our balefully inebriated brethren, we decided that perhaps the situation could be taken advantage of (or that perhaps it was a situation of which advantage could be taken). If the cops had already responded to the high school’s alarm and then departed, assuming the prank had failed and efforts had halted, we would have free reign for the rest of the night. To test this theory, I dispatched a few scouts to reconnoiter the scene; they quickly reported back with the news that Beverly High School did, indeed, appear deserted.

“Thank Vishnu for small favors,” I thought. “Now to address the Brendan crisis.” You see, Brendan had been in the building for eighteen hours straight, and he’d spent the last six or so in more or less pitch black seclusion. For obvious reasons, we’d banned anyone from calling him directly, lest some somnambulant janitor be alerted to his presence. Consequently, we’d been forced to wait for him to contact us before making further arrangements. Unfortunately, Beverly High School offers very little cellular reception in general, and Brendan’s hidey-hole (our editing suite) provided no signal whatsoever. In fact, his 1:00 a.m. call was the first time any living person had spoken to him—and, conversely, the first time he had spoken to any living person—in over nine hours. When I first heard his voice, I thought he’d lost it. The connection was horrendous, but I doubt I’d have been able to understand him anyway, as he was babbling frenetically about ghosts and bottles of urine and not wearing any pants (or something along those lines). Nonetheless, the overall message was clear enough: we had to get Brendan the hell out of dodge.¹⁴

Despite all the setbacks, we still had faith that THE PLAN could be carried out successfully. We couldn’t do it without our inside man though, which meant that when Brendan came out, someone else had to go in. The problem was solved a mere thirty seconds later when—in a stunning display of valor and gallantry going above and beyond the call of duty—both Phil *and* Tim C. volunteered for this undeniably hazardous and possibly suicidal mission. I promised to take care of their children if the worst should happen, and then the four of us (including Jeremy) set off to extract our comrade from behind enemy lines. Just after exiting the parking lot, we spotted two squad cars in stealth mode (i.e., sans lights and sirens) pulling slowly into the main entrance, probably hot on the trail of their latest cellular interception. Fortunately, we were able to get a call off before going silent ourselves, and only one car ended up being detained out of the dozen or so that were still parked behind the health club.

¹⁴ The next morning at school, Brendan was even more manic than usual. His experiences from the previous night, when combined with his acute lack of sleep, were sufficient to put him in a state of hyperactive schizophrenia for the remainder of the day. He was slightly mollified, however, once the entire school began treating him like some sort of demigod. Chief amongst Brendan’s tales of wow and woe: 1) Having to pee in a discarded juice bottle because he was too afraid to make a run for one of the nearby bathrooms; and 2) Walking around the school in his underwear because he didn’t want to risk any swishy pants’ noises after summoning the courage to go out and explore. Personally, I’d be more afraid of getting caught wandering around a public high school in a pantsless stupor, but that’s just me.



In a surprising reversal of luck, the substitution went off without a hitch. Brendan got out in one piece—physically, at least—and Phil and Tim took his place, promising to call in fifteen minutes for further instructions. Unfortunately, that switch would prove to be the only truly successful venture of the night. As the kids say, all heck was about to break loose!

I won't say I'd forgotten about the aforementioned contingent of super-commandos on their way to hijack the school loudspeaker, but with everything else that had been going on, they certainly were not at the forefront of my mind. In fact, it wasn't until 1:45 a.m. that I even remembered to call Jimmy and check on their current status. By that time, the police presence at and around the high school was quite thick indeed, and most of us had abandoned any pretense of hope regarding THE PLAN's success. As a result, a handful of us had returned to my house in order to officially spread the word that the whole thing was off. That's when I called Jim. The following is pretty much an exact transcript of our conversation. (It wasn't very difficult to remember.)

Me: "Hey, Jimmy, where are you guys?"

Jimmy: [in a ragged whisper] "*They're chasing us!*"

Static. Then silence.

I didn't talk to Jim or anyone else with him until the next day at school. Suffice it to say, I was damned curious about their exploits the night before, but the story was definitely worth the wait. Here's what went down:¹⁵

After getting kicked out of the movie theater parking lot, a select squadron of senior swindlers—including engineer extraordinaire, Tommy-Gun; technical advisor and general goof-off, Jimmy; project supervisor, Billy; and miscellaneous muscle Craig B. and Matts R. & D.—had assembled at a new location in order to focus on accomplishing their specific mission. I'm not sure how they got there or from whence they came, but eventually their party arrived on foot at the top of the hill that would lead them down to the Beverly High tennis courts. Completely by chance, they happened to meet up with a smaller group of prospective pranksters comprised of Tom O., Steve D., and Liz M. (yup, *a lady*) at this same spot. However, despite the sudden reinforcements, there was, as usual, a problem: they couldn't find THE TRAIL. Jeremy and I had hidden the entrance so it couldn't be seen from the street, but since we had assumed that there would always be somebody available to act as a guide, we never bothered to show anyone else where the path began.

Oops.

As a result, Gun and company had to blaze their own trail through hundreds of feet of dense spring foliage, with a profusion of pricker bushes and mud pits thrown in for kicks. After venturing halfway down the hill, they came upon the corner of an extensive barbwire fence. Rather than go around it,

¹⁵ I wanted to subtitle this next section Bill and Tom's Excellent Adventure, but figured that wasn't really fair to rest of the guys involved...even if it is brilliant.



someone decided that their best bet was to climb over the fence and continue their journey on the other side. (Hey, makes sense to *me*.)

To complicate matters further, a recent rainfall had created an impromptu pond at the bottom of the hill that the group would be forced to navigate before reaching dry, flat land. Gun took the initiative and gracefully traversed the moist morass, stepping deftly from dry spot to dry spot. Apparently it wasn't as easy as he made it look, however, because while the rest of the guys were literally following in his footsteps, Jimmy managed to trip and knock both Bill and himself into the muck. Bill didn't think it was too funny, but everyone else was heartily amused and morale improved greatly.

After finally reaching the practice football field, our Super Troopers circled the school looking for the best way inside. They had no way of getting in touch with Brendan/Tim/Phil at this point (I'm not sure whether the switch had been made yet), so they couldn't just go in the side door like we had originally planned. Eventually, someone thought to scale the courtyard wall and see if there was an open window in the library or cafeteria. Gun and Bill drew the short straws—although Tom had to go by default and Bill probably volunteered—and the rest of the guys hoisted them up onto the roof. (An unconfirmed report claims that a police car drove by while they were climbing the wall, but I heard it from Jimmy, so it's probably bullshit.)¹⁶ In any event, the two troublemakers eventually found themselves in the middle of the courtyard, trying to locate an unlocked window to serve as their means of entry. The best they could come up with was one of those half-hinged windows opening into the cafeteria, which took Tom almost five minutes to wriggle through even with Bill helping from the other side. Since there was no way for Bill to get through without assistance, Tom went to see what else he could open. Unbeknownst to Mr. Gun, however, he was now mere moments away from one of the biggest shocks of his promising young life. That's right folks, as an unsuspecting Tommy-Gun credit-carded his way through several of the high school's more secure passageways, the unwriteable happened: [REDACTED]

!!!¹⁷

Tom told me that this may have been the single most terrifying experience of his 18-plus years of corporeal existence. He's pretty sure that the janitor said something to him at that point, but he couldn't quite remember the exact words, what with the slamming of the door in the guy's face and running away like a little girl and all clouding his mind (to say nothing of the sudden onslaught of autonomic nerve action as stimulated by his adrenal medulla). Tom's central nervous system aside, it wasn't long—as in, five seconds—before he ended up back in the cafeteria, diving headlong through the window into Bill's waiting arms. From there, the two of them climbed back onto the roof with the aid of a nearby trashcan, only to find themselves staring headlong into a multitude of high-wattage police spotlights emanating from six different squad cards, all while Beverly's finest yelled at them through bullhorns to "*get off the roof!*"

¹⁶ Actually, both Tom O. and Tom M. have—on separate occasions—verified this information. Sorry Jimmy!

¹⁷ Get it? It's unwriteable, so you'll never know what happened! Muah-HA-ha-HA-ha ETC!!!¹⁸

¹⁸ Actually, what happened was that Tom walked smack dab into a janitor who had been waiting for him in the shadows just beyond one of the locked doors!!!



After swiftly analyzing the situation, the terrified twosome came to the conclusion that surrendering themselves was probably not the most beneficial course of action at that particular time. Their immediate plan was to jump back into the courtyard, run to the other side, and climb up on the roof over there. To their credit, they executed that part of the plan perfectly. However, when the view from the other side of the school revealed even more squad cars with angry police officers shining spotlights on them, they had to come up with yet another plan. Unfortunately,¹⁹ this one involved lying face down in a giant puddle and hoping that nobody had seen them, a hope that was quite dashed once the cops relayed to our two honor students through their bullhorns that, “yes, we can see you!”

Remembering that Bill was project supervisor, Tom took this moment to ask him what their next course of action should be. *Señor* Guillermo, level headed guy that he is, decided that giving themselves up was now their most viable option, so the two of them proceeded—sopping wet—to climb back to their feet and assume the most pathetic hangdog expressions they could muster. Predictably, their pitiful appearance went quite unnoticed and they were roughly tackled and handcuffed almost before touching the ground. In a moment of sheer made-for-cable comedy, Bill and Tom were then locked in the back of a cruiser and subsequently enveloped in an elevator-y cocoon of semi-classical music oozing from the car’s speakers, a maddeningly incongruous counterpoint to their harrowing night. To make matters worse, one of the cops began pawing through Tom’s backpack, which held (among other things) a Discman, two radios, several feet of miscellaneous wiring, various wiring diagrams, some wire solder, multiple hand tools, and a jumbo-sized container of petroleum jelly. Upon finding the latter, the increasingly perturbed officer walked over to our two detainees and began to ask them about it. As Tom explains it, however, he apparently changed his mind mid-sentence and walked away, muttering something about not really wanting to know after all.²⁰

After sweating it out in the back of the cruiser for another 20 minutes or so, Tom and Bill were finally brought down to the precinct and treated to a little good cop/bad cop routine. One of the officers confided in them that—conservative Republicans forbid—he, too, had taken part in such nefarious activities as a youth, while the other continually threatened to inform Tom’s and Bill’s respective colleges of their situation. (Officer Anal was rendered momentarily silent upon learning that these hardened criminals would actually be attending Boston University and Cornell University in the fall, as opposed to the East Bumfuck institutions of lower education he had probably taken for granted.) Incidentally, it was right around this time that our two heroes caught a glimpse of the station’s dispatch computer, which was currently scrolling information regarding a certain Mark S., whose car had just been pulled over. Although we didn’t know it at the time, this turned out to be the same car that Jeremy and I had witnessed being chased by the police along Herrick Street while we were hanging out on the sidewalk, amusing ourselves with the leftover chaos occurring in the vicinity of Beverly High.

¹⁹ I seem to use this word a lot.

²⁰ For all you perverts out there, let me assure you that the Vaseline was actually a key component of their plan. You see, it had been Tom’s intention to smear the lubricant all over the public address apparatus upon completion of its electronic usurpation, thus making it that much harder to dismantle, or even turn off.



After informing the necessary guardian units of their sons' indiscretions,²¹ the police decided to call high school principal William Foye and notify him of the drama unfolding at his beloved academy. The following is a near verbatim account of the first twelve seconds of that conversation:

[Ringing]

Mr. Foye (groggily): "Hello?"

Policeman (rather brusquely): "William Foye? This is officer Pencildick with the Beverly Police department. We are currently holding two of your students—Thomas M. and William C.—here at the police station."

Mr. Foye: [brief pause] "Well, that's weird. Let them go."

Classic.

In any event, our venerable principal had no desire to press charges against these two teenage pillars of the community, and Bill and Tom were eventually allowed to return home. Tom says he was in bed by three and I assume Bill was right behind him...in a different bed, I mean. But whatever happened to Jimmy and the remaining members of team Doomed-from-the-Beginning? Well, it turns out that they had all spent the last few hours either lying prone in the practice football field or wallowing glumly in the puddle-laden tennis courts, unable to make good on their escape as squad car after squad car zoomed around the parking lot, spotlights swinging in all directions. Coincidentally (though nonetheless irrelevantly), Jim and company pretty much made it home right around the same time that Tom and Bill were collapsing into bed.

In a far more noteworthy bit of coincidence, however, Phil and Tim—somehow entirely forgotten after replacing Brendan as our inside men—finally got tired of waiting around in our dimly lit haven of academia and decided nothing more would be accomplished that night. They subsequently exited through the rear of the building and, according to Ethan (who was actually watching them from the front porch of his house on Herrick Street), began zigzagging haphazardly across the baseball and football fields in a feeble imitation of evasive maneuvers. It wasn't their bumbling attempts at subterfuge that saved them though, but rather a minor lull in police activity occurring exactly at that time. You see, Phil and Tim had been painfully and completely oblivious to the fact that Tom and Bill had only just been arrested. If they had left the building literally two minutes sooner or two minutes later than they did, they almost certainly would have been spotted by the circling squad cars and apprehended. I guess Phil had the Big Guy on his side that night.

Soon after reaching the safety of the nearby gas station, Phil called to tell me that he and Tim needed a ride home. Jeremy and I abandoned our post in my basement—leaving the few remaining stragglers to fend for themselves—and headed off to collect this "pair of pathetic peripatetics."²² After picking them up and noticing how lively the high school still seemed to be, we ended up parking on Herrick and hanging out for a while. It didn't take long before we met up with Matt M. and Ethan, who

²¹ Bill's mom easily wins the parental prize for this one, reacting to the call by asking, "Which son?"

²² Colorful characterization shamelessly filched from one of many brilliant *Calvin & Hobbes* comic strips. *What does it mean?* What does it matter—it's luminous!



happened to be watching Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back and eating nachos at Ethan's house. At 2:00 a.m. On a school night. We ran into Chris G. soon afterwards, and he gladly joined us in hiding behind parked cars to observe the police cruisers that flew by every couple of minutes with their lights flashing (eventually pulling over the aforementioned mystery car comprised of Mark S. and others). After a half-hour or so of this vicarious excitement, we finally called it a night—a gloriously giddy and exhilarating night, but a night nonetheless—and turned toward home with every intention of actually going there.

Except we didn't. Not as quickly as we had originally intended, anyway.

In one of those moments of inexplicable imprudence that everyone is lucky enough to experience from time to time, we (Jeremy, Phil, Tim, and I) opted to drive through the nearby housing projects for one last look at the chaos before dropping everyone off. So imagine my lack of surprise when we pulled conspicuously out of a parking lot we had never entered and were promptly pulled over by a nearby patrolman. Of course, Jeremy's car—a 1984 POS Toyota Camry—was not the most convenient vehicle in which to be legally accosted, so it again came as no surprise to anyone that Jeremy was unable to locate his registration in the moments preceding our inevitable verbal sparring with “the man.”

The officer approached with the unhurried air of a fellow who had been up half the night pursuing masses of rowdy teenagers. After making the standard request for license and registration, Jeremy admitted his current inability to find the latter, but assured the officer that it would soon be forthcoming. In the meantime, we were asked to explain our presence in the housing projects at three o'clock in the morning. Were we perhaps involved in the large scale scavenger hunt reported to be taking place that night?

Although unsure as to the basis for his scavenger hunt reference,²³ I nonetheless opened my mouth to categorically deny our involvement in any of the events occurring in the last five hours. Before I could speak, however, Jeremy reluctantly “confessed” to having heard through the grapevine that something was taking place at the high school tonight, thus our attendance here at such an uncouth hour. Seeing as how this (admittedly bogus) admission was probably far more compelling than anything I could have come up with, I quickly shut-up. Jeremy then found his registration and we were allowed to continue on our way...*after* receiving a lovely \$30 parting gift encouraging Jeremy to fix a taillight at his nearest inconvenience.

And that was that. Or so I really and truly believed.

²³ Rumor has it that the concept of a scavenger hunt originated after Steve D.'s car was pulled over by the police and they questioned him about any knowledge he may have had concerning the various brouhahas taking place that night. Steve responded with a brilliant improvisation to the effect that we were all involved in a giant scavenger hunt. When the officer asked him to name some of the things he was supposed to be looking for, Steve just started listing random items already in his trunk. After verifying the contents of his trunk—skateboard, tire jack, McDonald's wrappers, etc.—the police allowed him to continue on his way.



PART IV—HALFTIME SHOW

The following day at school was pretty much what you'd expect after an evening such as ours. Little non-prank related gossip was permitted to proliferate, as pretty much the entire school devoted the next six hours to discussing our inevitably—yet entertainingly—embellished antics. Teachers sympathized with our plight and the administration turned an intentionally deaf ear as we passed the day in a supremely satisfying state of manic bemusement.

The lone dispiriting aspect of the whole affair was quickly rendered moot when I learned that Tom and Bill's only punishment would consist of writing a letter of apology to our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. William Lupini. In addition to this merciful reprieve, the entire incident would be stricken from their public record, returning each boy's reputation to its usual pristine condition. Yes, life was good. Sure, we had failed in our quest, but what was a little failure amongst friends? In one fell swoop the entire senior class had transformed itself from a seemingly unalterable profusion of stereotypical high school factions into a single tranquil mass of universal goodwill and unprecedented inter-clique mingling. Not to get all sentimental and whatnot, but it was really quite amazing, the sense of unity that resulted from this fantastically enjoyable fiasco. Kids who had never once hung out with each other outside of the classroom actually began socializing *without* the mind-numbing miasma of high school existence forcing them together. I tell you, it was a fucking revelation!

By the time Friday had chugged into the station—and despite having slept less than four hours during the 42 hour period between 7:00 am Wednesday morning and 1:00 am on Friday—I was feeling surprisingly spry. Of course, it may have had something to do with the fact that █████ was a personal holiday for yours truly—the 18th anniversary of my earthly naissance (and earthly nuisance), in fact—but nonetheless, I was feeling exceptionally chipper for someone with little physical right to be.

I had no plans for any sort of celebration that night, even eschewing an offer by my parents to simply go out to dinner with them. However, I had an unexpected change of heart in the late afternoon hours and decided to hit the phones in hopes of scaring up a couple of unsuspecting ne'er-do-wells in the mood for some classically boring birthday fun—i.e., Chinese food and a movie. As it turns out, my popularity had recently taken a turn for the better (it would pretty much have had to) and well over two dozen people ended up at my house in the next couple of hours. As we lounged around the kitchen, chattering animatedly about the events of the past week and gorging ourselves on approximately \$140 worth of beef teriyaki, chicken wings, fried rice, mien of the chow and lo persuasion, beef and broccoli, and fried wontons, I mused contentedly to myself, "Life is a very grand thing indeed." Maybe it was the monosodium glutamate talking, but at that moment, I was supremely and utterly satisfied with my current lot in this world.

Inevitably, the conversation drifted away from the topic of our extremely entertaining (if ultimately unsuccessful) prank attempt and transitioned into the equally engaging subject of possible pranks we could still pull off in the upcoming week. I assumed that this was mere idle banter and didn't take any of



the suggestions—or the idea of another prank attempt in general—too seriously. Various propositions were put forth, among them: hiding dead fish in the classroom ceilings, piling up old tires around the flagpole, and putting instant mashed potatoes (the “just add water!” kind) in every sink in the school and then, as the instructions indicated, just adding water, but no one seemed very keen to actually execute any of these ideas and I assumed that was that. Upon exhausting this line of dialogue, we retired to the upstairs romper room and proceeded to watch *THE WORST* horror movie of all time.

That’s right, *THE WORST*. As in, this movie is so bad that Trevor is forced to refer to it in italic capital letters because to do any less would be to perpetuate an appalling injustice against the car accident that calls itself The Mangler 2.

Seriously, this movie was so ferociously terrible in every way that it was actually borderline brilliant. Almost.

How bad was it? Ummm...well, it was not good at all, if that helps. Want me to elaborate? Fine, let’s see:

A) The movie was produced by Banana Brothers Entertainment. That right there should be a clue.

Second of all, writer/director Michael Hamilton-Wright has a hyphen in his name. Oh yeah, and he wrote the entire screenplay in eight days. Granted, it only took God six days to make the universe, but I don’t think Michael Hamilton-Wright is omnipotent (though he may be short a chromosome or two).

3. The entire soundtrack is techno music. Now, I admit that there are many different methods that horror movies can use to create and maintain suspense. However, I assure you that sounding like a third-rate European discotheque is not one of them. Trust me; it just isn’t.

Lastly, every single copy of The Mangler 2 DVD is missing a scene. Not just in the “well, that was oddly edited” sense, but in the “hey, what the hell just happened, weren’t they just somewhere else?” sense. In this case, one second everyone is walking through the school gymnasium, and the next second they’re all outside on the lawn—minus one character—and mourning the sudden death of said character. Perhaps you’re supposed to infer that he was crushed to death under the bleachers when they suddenly pulled back into the wall, but I prefer to think that this particular actor—and I use the term loosely—finally realized he was in a movie called The Mangler 2 and just went home.²⁴

So to sum up: this is a Banana Brothers horror movie with a techno soundtrack that was written in just over a week and is missing an entire death scene.

In other words, I totally recommend it!²⁵

²⁴ I know it may seem like I’m harping unnecessarily on this movie, especially as it is wholly unrelated to the actual pranking endeavor, but I find myself strangely compelled to make sure that I get across just how frightfully awful this film really was and is. Just for the hell of it, here are a couple of quotes from movie reviews taken at random off the net: Kage Allen from *Moda Magazine* writes, “There isn’t enough suspension-of-disbelief in the world that could get me to find anything redeeming in this direct-to-video piece of crap.” And Kevin Lee from *DVD VERDICT* suggests that “if you’re thinking about watching this movie, you’d be better off jabbing a pencil into your eye, because a trip to the emergency room is a whole lot more fun.” In case you were wondering, these are some of the more *favorable* reviews I happened to find.

²⁵ WHY ARE YOU STILL READING THIS?!? GO OUT RIGHT NOW AND RENT THIS GODDAMN MOVIE!!!



Now back to our irregularly scheduled narrative.

By Sunday afternoon, any thoughts of attempting another senior prank had been pushed completely from my mind. After all, next week was Senior Week, and there were plenty of other things to think about...like which sheet should I use for my toga? (I chose an old Simpson's one, by the way.) As it happened, Tara called that night to invite herself—as well as Anna D., Em M., and Katie S.—over to eat re-heated Chinese food and make our togas for the following day. I, of course, agreed in a heartbeat, for Tara was to be my date for the Senior Prom, and I knew that one wrong move could cost me dearly. It was a small miracle she said yes in the first place, seeing as how I'm, well, me. Anyhoo, the girls showed up and we passed a gay old hour scarfing down a variety of two-day-old leftovers and having pillow fights in our underwear.

And then Jeremy called.

"Hey, I think we're doing it tonight."

Me (a little slow on the uptake): "Uhh, you think who's doing *what* tonight?"

Jeremy: "*It*. The *Prank*. I just heard there's nobody at the high school right now. Let's go."

Me (rather lamely): "Ummm, I'm kinda busy right now."

Jeremy: "Doing what?"

Me (even more lamely): "Uhh, making togas. Besides, I thought we were done, that we'd all agreed to end on our spectacular failure or whatever."

Jeremy (incredulously): "Are you friggin' kidding? Trev, this was practically your idea! Stop being stupid and come pick me up."

Me: "Dude, forget about it. We're not doing this tonight. Just come over and enjoy some congealed MSG."

Jeremy: "You suck."

This highly intelligent repartee continued for a few more exchanges until I finally gave in and agreed to come over, but only so we could verify his information—I wasn't committing to anything. After explaining the situation to the girls and telling them to cover for me with my mom (I didn't expect to be gone more than a few minutes), I headed over to Jeremy's in the Durango. He came out the front door clutching his hypoallergenic Shitzu/Poodle cross-breed (the Shit-Poo), explaining to me as he got in the car that, if anyone asked what we were doing on school property, we could use his dog Oreo as an excuse. I raised an eyebrow in response but said nothing as we drove away.

Our first point of business upon arriving was to circle the parking lot—sans headlights—to make sure there really weren't any cars hanging around. There weren't, so I drove to the back of building and parked. We decided that Jeremy should actually put the dog on his leash and walk him around the school while I hopped the wall into the courtyard to see if any of the windows we had opened the week before were still unlocked. As it turns out, the process involved in hopping over a twelve foot tall wall is fraught with difficulties, so I climbed up it instead and then jumped down to the inner lawn. A quick test of the



library windows confirmed their securely fastened nature, so I crossed the yard to see how the cafeteria windows would respond to my efforts.

To this day I have no idea whether or not I was the one responsible for setting off that alarm—or whether it was even an alarm at all—but I do know that if I hadn't heard what I did at that exact moment, there is every chance I would have been royally screwed. *Royally*—as in Marie Antoinette. You see, the very instant I placed my hands on the cafeteria window, an oddly muted ringing began to sound. I wasn't even sure if the noise was coming from inside the school or from somewhere far off in the distance, but I sure as hell wasn't going to stick around to find out. After freezing in panic for what seemed like a full minute (but was probably closer to three seconds) I bolted for the wall, scaling the bricks so fast that I'm convinced Sam Raimi would have dumped Tobey Maguire in an instant had he been present at my impromptu Spiderman audition. In any case, just as I reached the opposite side of the roof and prepared for an even quicker journey back down the wall, a car pulled headlong onto Kittredge Street, its headlights momentarily blinding me as it headed directly for my position. The situation deteriorated even further during the split second in which I allowed myself to think, for in that split second I noticed a distinctive plastic bar located just above the windshield and stretching the entire width of the car.

"Oh shit," I thought. *"It's the fuzz."*

There were really only two possibilities for me to consider at this point, neither of which was particularly enticing. Either I had to assume I'd been spotted—a rather likely scenario considering that I was, after all, standing upright on top of the roof, clearly silhouetted against the night sky—or I could hope like hell that the car's angle of approach or a tree branch had temporarily obscured any view of me. If I acted on the former assumption...well, I guess the phrase is "run like hell." After last week's auspiciously light punishments following Bill and Tom's arrests, I had no doubt that any further missteps would be handled in a rather more severe manner. However, if I were to try and bluff my way through on the off-chance that nobody in the oncoming squad car had noticed me on the roof, and it then turned out that I *had* been seen, I would be equally screwed.

After an excruciating moment of indecision, I chose to apply the age-old adage that the best defense is a good offense, at which point I threw myself off the roof and began moving briskly *toward* that all too familiar Crown Victorian shape. As I approached at a slow jog, waving my arms, the officer came to a stop and rolled down his window. Before he could begin speaking, I asked in a breathless voice (only somewhat faked) whether he'd seen a small dog anywhere nearby, explaining that my friend and I had been out walking him when he suddenly broke free and ran around to the back of the school, thus my presence here at such a late hour.

Naturally, the guy looked a tad skeptical (which is to say, there's no way in hell he believed me), but to my instant and utter relief, he assured me that no dog had passed his way in the last 30 seconds or so. I thanked him a bit too profusely and then, in a sudden fit of inspiration, asked as casually as I could if his nightly surveillance took him by the high school on a regular basis, or if he just happened to drive through on a whim this particular night. He helpfully informed me that Beverly's Boys in Blue made it a



habit to check out the grounds at least once a night during Senior Week due to the annual increase in vandalism usually occurring around this time. I thanked him again and strolled unconcernedly back to the car, where I found Jeremy just finishing his walk with Oreó. I told him every lurid detail of my fantastically close-encounter of the first kind while he looked on, slack-jawed. Then, after collecting my thoughts, I put the car into drive and headed for the exit. On our way out we saw the police officer with whom I'd been chatting earlier, so I pulled to a stop and rolled down the window to wish him a good night. He took a long look over at the passenger seat and said, with just the tiniest hint of a smile, "Oh...so there really was a dog." And with that he drove off, leaving Jeremy and I to bask in our own wit and foresight.

We returned directly to my house and regaled the girls with tales of our heart-stopping encounter with Johnny Law and how—with a little help from our furry compatriot—we affected our brilliant escape. Tara, of course, was nearly inconsolable during the entire retelling, hysterically begging me to never do anything so brave and foolhardy again, lest I possibly jeopardize our chances of going to prom together. I couldn't stand to see her like that and soothingly agreed to her tearful request.

Once again, that (as far as I was concerned) was that. We'd had our mischievous fun, pushing our luck on multiple occasions to the very breaking point. There was no shame in giving up. We were already minor legends and nobody would fault us for just relaxing and enjoying our few remaining days as high schools students. Yup, the most sensible and stress-free course of action was to just call it a year and revel in our (near) glory. And that's what I fully intended to do...until *HE* sucked me back in!

Goddamn Jeremy.

* * * * *



PART V—HAIL MARY

Okay, to be fair, my re-involvement wasn't *entirely* Jeremy's fault—a few others also subjected me (and him) to the inexorable siren call of Lady Peer Pressure. But we'll get to them in a moment.

In the meantime, I was *out*. Skippingly and gloriously OUT, with just two final exams standing between me and summer vacation. Of course, in the nicetime, there was Senior Week!

As one would expect, Toga Day was the absolute sheet and the air nigh on crackled with adolescent electricity as we began counting down the final days of high school in earnest. I have no idea what Tuesday's theme was—except that it probably sucked—but Wednesday was gonna be a friggin' howl. It was superhero day, and for the first time ever, the world was about to learn the truth. What was the truth? Just this: that the man-boy everyone had come to know and lust after as mild-mannered Trevor was, in reality, none other than that legendary champion of conservative stay-at-home mothers everywhere, *SAFETY BOY!!!*

Faster than a speeding Tetanus shot! More powerful than a local anesthetic! Able to leap tall pillows in a single, carefully supervised bound! With the aide of his trusty aluminum scooter and his archest nemesis/keenest ally, The Bathroom Bandit, Safety Boy unflinchingly accepts the thankless task of patrolling Beverly High School's perilous hallways day after day! Snappily attired in two knee-length science lab smocks, plastic safety goggles, reflective jogging vest, wrist and knee pads, hi-tensile durawear shin guards, and a Bell bicycle helmet, grateful citizens everywhere universally agree that Safety Boy brings a touch of class and sophistication to an otherwise redundant superhero contingency.

Suffice it to say, I was off my rocker that day. Scootering through the halls, blowing the fabled safety whistle wherever danger reared its unexpectedly handsome head, I refused to step out of character even when Jeremy wanted to discuss the possibility of doing the prank that very night. Who had time to talk tofurky when there was carpal tunnel to avert and good hygiene to promote? Not *SAFETY BOY!!!*, that's who!²⁶ Of course, by the end of the day, the only person in school not sick of *SAFETY BOY!!!* was me, which was fortunate, considering the metaphysical dynamics involved. In any event, I returned home pointlessly satisfied with my performance and eagerly anticipating the night's upcoming festivities, in which much of our class would be returning to school in order to participate in the annual hall decorating contest.

Not quite needless to say, I was forced to deal with some flak from the Jeremy front regarding my current apathy toward THE PLAN before indulging in the simple pleasures of paper streamers and

²⁶ Tangential anecdote: Right before third period, Evil Principal Man confiscated *SAFETY BOY!!!*'s safety scooter and safety whistle, irrationally claiming that I was causing a disturbance and that scootering at high speeds through crowded areas was a danger in itself. I managed to ignore the more lethal portions of his soporific rhetoric and quickly enlisted the help of the aforementioned Bathroom Bandit—a.k.a., Swedish Lumberjack and former inside man, Phil. The Bathroom Bandit then lived up to his name (well, the second part of his name, anyway) and snuck into the principal's office to re-appropriate the safety scooter and safety whistle. Thanks Bathroom Bandit!



guerilla photography.²⁷ He was still quite smitten with the whole concept and kept insisting that this would be the perfect night to pull it off. In the end, I agreed to come to the contest that night with an open mind, more to shut him up than anything else. However, by the time I arrived at the high school and began blowing up balloons at a Herculean pace, I'd pretty much forgotten my promise, quite content to just wander aimlessly from person to person while simultaneously avoiding blacking out and hyperventilating. I should have realized that that wasn't going to be the end of it.

Just before 10 o'clock (decorations were scheduled to cease at 10:00 pm, exactly), Chris G., Sean C., and Jeremy (with Julie and Em M. in tow) cornered me in a deserted classroom, a look of uniform determination etched across their respective faces. From there, the five of them surreptitiously dragged me into our little media room and began explaining in hushed—but by no means uncertain—tones that we were doing this *tonight* and there was nothing else to it. Chris and Sean would not be leaving the high school with the rest of us, so I might as well get my ass in gear and make sure they weren't stuck hiding in a pitch black closet until the wee hours of the morning for no good reason. With such impeccable logic supporting their every word, I found that I had little choice but to comply with their demands. After making sure the coast was clear, Em, Jeremy, Julie, and I beat a hasty retreat to my car to begin preparing for the hours to come.²⁸

Our primary objective was to enlist as many students as possible for the upcoming mission, which—after last week's unqualified participatory success—we assumed would be a cakewalk.

It wasn't.

In fact, if I was the abbreviating type, I would probably take the time right now to annotate such a misguided notion with various space-saving emoticons, like the ubiquitous LOL or the less popular—though far more provocative—ROTFLMAO.

Fortunately for you, I'm not the abbreviating type.

Personal diction preferences aside, let me say that finding willing volunteers to assist us in our dirty work proved far more difficult than we could have ever predicted.

Geeze, get two people arrested and suddenly everybody's washing their hair all night. "Oh, it's not you," they promise. "It's me. I need to work on myself a little before getting involved in another relationship. I hope we can still be friends though."

Or maybe I'm thinking of something else.

Regardless, it didn't take too many calls for us to begin to appreciate the impetus behind the military draft. Goddamn hippies! Jeremy thought we should have at least 20 recruits before attempting our little endeavor, but after a half-hour of frantic cell phone manipulation, we were still well short of our goal.

²⁷ This is a self-coined term referring to the process of taking pictures of oneself on other people's cameras when their backs are turned. If memory serve's, 'twas Emily K.'s camera that had the pleasure of recording my first surprise snapshot of the evening.

²⁸ Unbeknownst to me, Jeremy—despite having viciously accosted me every day for the last week regarding my obstinate indifference toward the prank—was actually having second thoughts that night about the whole idea. But after Chris spent the entire hall decorating contest bugging him about it, Jeremy finally came back over to the dark side, once again determined to convert me as well...or maybe he just wanted to take me down with him. Who knows?



There was certainly no dearth of wretched excuses—general fatigue, a vague fear of parental or administrative reprisal, explosive diarrhea—but probably the most prevalent pretext for refusal was downright apathy, a condition to which I could wholeheartedly relate. In fact, Danielle (who shall remain nameless) even suggested that we abandon the idea entirely and instead come over to Brendan’s house and watch a movie with them. Eventually, we just said screw it and told everyone who was cool to meet us at Beverly Depot, where we would organize before the initial assault.²⁹

To our finite relief, Brendan and company came away from their senses and joined us at the station to beg for clemency and humbly offer their collective services (with the notable exception of Brendan himself, who was still wiggly from the week before and couldn’t stand to spend another hour in Beverly High’s haunted halls). We still didn’t have the Twinkling Twenty Jeremy had hoped for, but we’d definitely reached critical mass, and it was time to put our deutschmarks where our desks were. Here, for the first time ever in print, is the complete list of everyone physically involved in THE PLAN that night.

- **Movers and Shakers (in alphabetical order by first name):** Bryce, Chris G., Chuck, Ethan, Harry,³⁰ Jenna, Jeremy, Josh M., Kelly, Mark S., Meg D., Meg O., Phil, Rich G., Sean C., Tom O., and Trevor.
- **Lookouts (in no particular order):** Matt R., Kenya, Julie, Danielle, and Stef T.³¹

Now back to the action!

I dropped off Jeremy and Phil (our guides) at the entrance to THE TRAIL and then began shuttling people back and forth while the lookouts took their positions. After parking the car in a nearby lot, I made my way down THE TRAIL alone, marveling at the miserable job we had done marking its boundaries. I made it through alive, however, and set off across the field in a cautious lope, every nerve in my body tingling with anticipation at what I would see upon first walking through the door.

I was not disappointed.

Progress was well underway by the time I finally arrived in lower G corridor (we had already nixed the gym idea since it was locked separately at night), with an estimated 100 desks having already begun their stately march across the monotonous expanse of tile that for four years had silently acknowledged our resigned shuffling back and forth atop its scuffed and tarnished veneer. Ironically (and not the Alanis Morissette kind either, but actual irony), the event that had made this evening possible was now proving to be—quite literally—our greatest obstacle. You see, with the completion of the hall decorating contest a mere two hours ago, four major school corridors had been transformed into an uncooperative jungle of flimsy cardboard wildlife, feral paper streamers, and untamed ballooning. Unfortunately, our goal that night was not wanton destruction, but rather wanton disruption;³² a lot of people had put a lot of work into

²⁹ We met at a *train station*. HA! How sketchy can you get?

³⁰ Harry was a friggin’ junior, fuck Ryan out loud, but we needed every kid we could get after the recruitment debacle of the past hour. “Oh man, there’s no way my parents will let me stay out all night again, not after last week! Sorry Trev.” Yeah, well, WHO NEEDS YA BITCHES!?!

³¹ Note: names kept the same to screw over the guilty.

³² In an amusing bit of foreshadowing, Principal Foye had unwittingly okayed just such a prank earlier in the year. We were in Life class, and Scott B. had just duped Miss Duff with a phony parking ticket on her car when Foye walked in.



their various creations and we weren't about to spoil that for the sake of our prank. As a consequence, we were forced to dodge, duck, dip, dive, and...uh, dodge our way around these various inconveniences, all the while supporting that most ergonomically inefficient of contraptions, the academic writing table, also known as a desk.³³

As far as ease of transportation was concerned, it was borderline hilarious just to watch poor, diminutive Jenna lug one of these beasts back and forth through the halls. Don't get me wrong, she's jacked, and she never complained once, but the bodily machinations necessary for her to weave in and out of these things in order to obtain some amount of leverage was just too funny. She was a trooper though—everyone was. By 3:00 a.m. almost every classroom had been cleared of its most prevalent furniture, with the painful exception of upper A corridor. In order to bleed this wing of its deskual inventory, we would be forced to conquer two grueling flights of stairs on every passage, made all the more punishing when you add the extra weight of a desk on each gravity-assisted journey.

Obviously we were all exhausted by this point. Nobody had gotten much sleep these past few days as it was, and hauling these mothers back and forth for the last three hours wasn't exactly relaxing. Thus, everyone who wished to return to their cars and head home at this point was allowed to do so, providing they left discreetly, of course. As it turned out, this was most people, including that turncoat Jeremy! (Actually, he had to go and serve as a guide on the return journey anyway, so we agreed it was dumb to risk him coming back once everyone had gotten away safely.) I then called the lookouts and requested they come play taxi, a proposition they eagerly accepted after having sat in their cars doing nothing for the past three hours.³⁴ Once everyone had departed, the six remaining pranksters headed upstairs to begin the last phase of THE PLAN.

It took all of seven seconds for us to realize that it would totally suck to carry another 250 desks all the way down to the ground floor, so we quickly resolved to clear only a few specific classrooms of their deskly belongings...as determined by the specific teacher whose specific class happened to take place in that specific classroom. We were just finishing up our third or fourth room when some sharp-eyed miscreant spotted a police cruiser driving leisurely down Sohier Road. As this was the first squad car anyone had seen all night, we correctly interpreted it to be a sign from Loki, the God of Mischief, telling us that it was time to depart.³⁵ In a swift but orderly fashion we exited the building and melted quietly into the woods.

As Duff was telling him about the little joke, Steve Q. piped up to say that such a prank was the best kind because it was disruptive but not destructive. In response, Mr. Foye pointed at Steve and told him in complete seriousness, "You're head of the committee."

³³ I could have just written "desk" and omitted that whole "academic writing table" nonsense, but ending the sentence with such an abrupt, percussive word caused me great literary discomfort, hence its redundant conclusion.

³⁴ To my great annoyance, Julie told me later that everyone had gotten bored with their surveillance job within the first half-hour and ended up parking in the same spot so they could all talk to one another. Thanks for your help, guys.

³⁵ Actually, this was *not* the first squad car anyone had seen all night—only the first one *I* had seen. According to Jeremy, a far more distressing sighting had taken place during the early stages of the mission—around the same time our "lookouts" happened to be abandoning their posts, as a matter of fact. I must have been somewhere else at the time, but apparently someone in upper C corridor had actually spotted a cop driving *through the parking lot*, right by the very plate glass windows behind which we were so diligently toiling! There very nearly occurred a mass



Alas, all was not well. Upon reaching the top of the hill, I began patting my jacket in search of the keys to our escape minivan, *only to discover that each and every pocket that could have possibly held a solid object was horribly and undeniably empty.*

"Holy *shit*," I thought, while my heart descended to somewhere around my ankle region. "Where are my keys???"

Then it hit me, with all the force of an obese woman rolling down the Hoover Dam in a barrel but none of the subtlety: *they must have fallen out in the school.*

Well, that was it. I'd floated naively up Fecal River and now there wasn't a paddle in sight. There was no way to get back into the building at this point, and once my keys were discovered lying amongst the fallout of our late night remodeling session, I was as good as suspended. In addition to having one of those cheap, personalized souvenir key chains with my name etched mockingly into the side, I'd cleverly attached to that very same ring a copy of the key we had used to open every door in the school.

For a few paralyzing moments my brain completely ceased to function. I didn't even try to tell someone; I just stood there, completely unable to process the depths of my stupidity.

And then I had a thought. A sudden, inexpressible ray of hope worming its way bashfully through my nearly impenetrable pall of self-misery.

Maybe I hadn't left my keys in the school. Maybe, just maybe, *they were still in the car.* With that, I snapped back to reality.

Putting on a burst of speed, I caught up to the others and then hurried past them, frantic to reach the car and thus confirm or deny my unbearable suspicions. Yanking open the door, I threw myself headlong into the driver's seat, craning my neck in a distinctly non-humanoid manner to catch a glimpse of those beautiful bits of metal.

There! In the ignition! Was it—? Could it be? YES! *MY KEYS!!!* I visibly crumpled with relief...and was somewhat startled to notice five rather confused individuals staring apprehensively in my direction.

"What the hell was *that* all about?"

"Oh, uh—I, yeah. There...umm—A bug! I mean a light! I thought I saw headlights coming up the hill."

Whether they actually believed me or were just too tired to give a damn, I'm not really sure, but I do know one thing: nobody will ever know how close I came that night to being forever referred to as "you fucking moron." SUCKERS!

* * * * *

exodus at this point (*why didn't anyone tell me this???*), but eventually cooler heads prevailed and everyone got back to work.





PART VI—POSTGAME WRAPUP

After a revitalizing three hours of sleep, I made my lethargic return to the scene of the crime, where I was somewhat surprised to see far more students than usual milling about the parking lot, huddled together in small groups and talking rather excitedly about something or other. (As if I didn't know!) I sidled up to one such group of underclassmen, and—to my considerable amusement—was told that any student who had the misfortune to enter the school at this time was immediately “recruited” to carry desks back to the vacant classrooms.

“*Really???*” I replied, with a cunning affectation of surprise and admiration. “There are desks out in the *hallways*? Well *I never!*”

My faithful informant responded by explaining that, not only had the desks been moved into the hallways, they'd actually been transported all the way into lower G corridor and carefully aligned row after row! I grinned at his enthusiastic clarification and strode away to join a nearby party of equally animated seniors.

“Man, you should see it in there!” somebody gushed. “Lupini's running around squawking like a horny rooster. They've called in janitors from all over the city to help clean up!”³⁶

I was understandably thrilled with the above news, so I was anxious to get inside and see the magnitude of our calculated chaos. I restrained myself, however, remembering the previous warning about having to move desks if we entered the building and wisely deciding I'd had enough of that particular exercise to last me several reincarnations.³⁷ Eventually we had to enter or risk being late for class, so I sauntered on in, trying not to appear too eager to reach lower G. To my utter dismay, by the time I got down the stairs, there were only a few desks left in the corridor. Apparently they'd been working on the problem since 6:30 that morning and, despite having to fight gravity, they'd been able to repopulate the classrooms in less than two hours thanks to the absurd number of available “volunteers.” Nevertheless, I took a grim and somewhat perverse satisfaction in the knowledge that some poor souls had been forced to cart over 100 desks *up* two flights of stairs in order to reconcile the discrepancies in upper A.

I'm kind of an asshole that way.

A short while after my initial disappointment at the view in lower G, I passed my Spanish teacher in the hallway. She stopped me for some unknown reason to express her opinion that the senior class

³⁶ At lunch that day, I found out that Dan F. was one of the people the superintendent had been venting his spleen on that morning. Dan had the misfortune to be caught recording the events with his video camera. When Lupini saw him, he grabbed the camera from Dan's hands, ripped out the tape, and told Dan in no uncertain terms that if his name was even mentioned in connection with the prank, he would be instantly suspended. I assured the Danimal that, if it came to it, I'd turn myself in and fully exonerate him, but it wasn't necessary. Lupini eventually came (partially) to his senses and returned the tape with a curt apology. It's too bad really. I was rather looking forward to playing the role of Spartacus. “No, *I am Deskmoverus!*”

³⁷ Bryce told me that while he was helping with the re-desking, he had to force himself to look awkward and encumbered because he'd gotten down such a fluid rhythm the night before. He was worried that some sharp-eyed administrator would spot how adept he'd suddenly become at this particular activity and put two and two (or some other numbers) together.



was going to hell in a hand basket. I responded by saying that I didn't know what everyone else's plans were, but I was actually going to Bowdoin College in the fall, most likely in some sort of automotive vehicle.

She didn't think that was very funny and strode back to her classroom in a huff.

Her response was tame when compared to a lot of people's though, so I give her credit for that. However, I'd have to say the most imbalanced reaction to the prank—even more so than Dr. Lupini's, whose behavior was at least understandable, if a tad/tremendously excessive—belonged to Mrs. Sudak. When she got to school that morning and witnessed the turmoil therein, Sudak absolutely flipped her wig. She burst into B-wing and began raging through the hallway, tearing down and ripping up any and all senior decorations that crossed her path. The way some people described it to me, it sounded like they were expecting at any minute to see a crowd of panicked Japanese people run by screaming "GODZIRRA!"

Not every teacher was in a bad mood though. As mentioned previously, Mr. Dunn—a brilliant thespian and all around cool dude—readily admitted to enjoying the morning's pandemonium, while Ms. Marescalchi was thrilled to get a whole new set of furniture for her classroom, directing students to ignore her old graffiti- and profanity-ridden desks and grab some nice clean ones instead.

Even Foye wasn't overly perturbed...yet. In fact, if it weren't for Lupini, I bet the whole thing would have blown over with much less fanfare. As it was, the school day had barely begun before the senior class officers were dragged into the principal's office and sharply interrogated by the superintendent in front of the assistant superintendent, Principal Foye, and all assistant principals. While Lupini ranted and raved, firing question after question at our five elected peers, Foye sat calmly by taking notes and not saying a word, other than to clarify the odd point here or there. As it happened, none of the class officers had even been with us on the night in question; nonetheless, they did their best to avoid naming names without actually lying. Of course, Brendan was in this thing up to his ears thanks to his participation the week before, but for some reason he kept trying to answer questions anyway. Steve Q. told me that every time Brendan opened his mouth, he placed his foot squarely in it, starting to say something and then realizing that it would not only blatantly incriminate his friends, but him as well. With Sarad's help though, everyone survived the dragooning and left the office intact—if somewhat moist from the flecks of spittle issuing from Lupini's perpetually sputtering maw.³⁸

Soon thereafter, citing "safety and student behavioral concerns," Principal Foye made the decision to cancel the high school's annual Memorial Day ceremony, much to the annoyance of the rest of the school and community at-large, as well as to the extreme consternation of several of the veterans scheduled to attend. Despite the cancellation (or, more likely, because of it), more than 200 students elected to assemble in the gym at the scheduled time anyway and hold an impromptu summit in support

³⁸ I should note that, earlier in the year, Superintendent Lupini had actually appeared in a seminal episode of the Barely Humorous Show—Jeremy's and my public access sketch comedy show—in which he played the role of a cackling, *Boo-ya!* shouting prankster wreaking havoc on the unsuspecting citizens of Beverly High School. I mean, how funny is that?



of our troops, past and present. As soon as he learned of the demonstration, Foye stormed down to the field house, going from listless to livid in mere seconds while soundly chewing out the entire crowd in an unprecedented display of vocal prowess. Nobody had ever seen our principal this angry before, but the kids held their ground. In fact, it would take another twenty minutes of furious vitriol before anyone even budged, by which time it was quite clear who wore the pants in this school.³⁹

The very next day, *The Salem Evening News* ran a front page, *above-the-fold* story describing the entire affair. It wasn't very charitable toward the students, but thanks to a connection down at the paper, I was able to score some phone time and, with a few carefully worded quotes at the end of the article, spin the matter to make the senior class seem slightly less culpable and the administration overly rash. That wasn't the end of it, however.

In their next installment, *The Beverly Citizen* ran not one but *two* articles decrying the senior class and our prank. Refusing to stand idly by while our good names were indirectly besmirched and our reputations dragged through the mud, I penned a lengthy editorial defending myself and my peers. Thirteen-hundred words of dripping sarcasm and uncharacteristic righteousness later, I triumphantly—and, I'll admit, somewhat haughtily—delivered my masterpiece to the editor's office, only to be informed that they could not publish an anonymous letter. After quickly editing out a few paragraphs directly implicating myself in the prank (I hadn't graduated yet, after all), I resubmitted it, still triumphant, though definitely less haughty. It was published the very next week and seemed to bring the matter to a close, as talk of the prank pretty much ceased after that...with one exception.

During the commencement ceremony for the graduating class of 2002, I walked up on stage to receive my diploma from the president of the Beverly School Committee. As I went to shake her hand, she looked me in the eye and, in a moment of sublime personal vindication, told me that she had read my article in the *Citizen* a few days earlier and had thoroughly enjoyed it...adding that, if the mayor weren't standing nearby, she would have had her way with me then and there.

How sweet it is.

* * * * *

³⁹ Originally I had assumed that everyone skedaddled the second Foye entered the room, prompting me to pen the hilariously astute simile, "and the bleachers emptied faster than a Phish concert confronted with the prospect of a drug sniffing canine unit." Then Jeremy (who was actually there at the time) gleefully informed me that this notion was entirely off base...and that my mother wore combat boots. I found the latter half of his comment rather boorish but nonetheless agreed, for accuracy's fickle sake, to correct the misconception.



PART VII—SIDELINE COVERAGE

Here are just a few more amusing prank-related anecdotes to top off this painfully long chronicle that I couldn't figure out how to weave into the primary exposition since I'm narrationally incompetent. The first one comes from Jeremy himself.



It's the morning after our glorious failure and, as per usual, I'm arriving at my first class about 20 minutes late. I walk in, trying really hard to be casual (*nothing happened last night—especially nothing that I was a part of*), expecting to get an evil but playful eye from the English teacher, Ms. Hart, but instead I'm met with a very masculine voice.

"Are you Jeremy Levine?" the voice asks before I am even halfway into the classroom. It belongs to a substitute teacher I have never seen before and I sheepishly answer, "Uh, yes," as I continue walking to my desk.

"You need to report to the front office. The Superintendent has been looking for you all morning," the substitute continues.

"Oh," I reply, and nearly wet myself. *Guess I'm not going to make it to the safety of my desk this morning.* I wander back outside into the hallway and it feels kind of like that walk that death row prisoners take before they are to be executed. The hallways leading to the office appear to go on forever...or maybe I'm merely walking in half steps. Either way, after what feels like two grueling hours—but is probably more like two grueling minutes—I take a deep breath and enter the front office, where I'm greeted by a receptionist with far too large a smile on her face.

"Hi Jeremy," she beams (sarcastically? I wonder). "The superintendent left a message for you."

"Oh. Haha. That's weird," I sheepishly reply, unconsciously channeling Michael Cera even though *Arrested Development* won't even debut until the following year. "Why would he want to talk with me?" Then I laugh a terribly awkward laugh.

The receptionist picks up an ominous piece of blue paper and slowly, slowly makes her way over to me. The paper is folded in half and has my name on the front of it. She leaves it on the counter and it lies there, mocking me. I hesitate. Finally, I close my eyes and open the note.

Raising my eyelids a fraction of an inch, I spot the word "committee." Then, opening them all the way, I read the note in its entirety. Written in quick secretary cursive, it says: "Mr. Lupini wants to know if you are filming the school committee meeting this week. Please call to confirm." And it lists his number.

I laugh like a psychotic toddler and skip out of the office. *In your face, world!*

Yes, it's true, I was the A/V nerd who filmed school committee meetings. And I had never been so happy to be that nerd.





My mom (back to Trevor's point of view now, remember?) knew about our *failed* prank attempt because I had chanced asking her approval on the night in question. However, she had absolutely no idea that I'd been out all night the following Wednesday when we actually pulled it off. She found out though. "How?" you don't ask. Apparently, some woman she vaguely knew (and whose name she no longer remembers) waylaid her in the supermarket a few days later and asked if she was the woman whose son Trevor had been one of the perpetrators behind the furniture fiasco. *Awkwarrrrrd!* Naturally, Mom was somewhat taken aback to hear this news from a near stranger in the local deli, but luckily for me, enough time had passed that it wasn't worth her getting pissed at me.



A few days after my mom's rude awakening, there was a Beverly Town Meeting at which Steve Q. and a few fellow music officers were to be presented with commemorative mugs from Dr. Lupini himself. Our senior class president assures me that it was all Lupini could do to look him in the eye with even the slightest semblance of civility after their little exchange in the principal's office the week before.



In a similar situation occurring a few weeks after the Waterdesk Scandal, a contingent of Beverly High students who had attended Ayer's Elementary School were gathered at Ayer's Scholarship night to receive (as the name implies) scholarships. The good doctor was also at the event to praise each of the seniors receiving an honor, including one Tommy-Gun. After the presentation, Gun intercepted the superintendent, hoping to explain to him how he had been one of the kids arrested on school property three weeks earlier and then apologize in person. The instant the first half of Tom's spiel left his mouth, Dr. Lupini's entire demeanor changed. He proceeded to thank Tom rather stiffly for his honesty and then quickly wrapped up the conversation to go congratulate someone else.



Probably the most amusing instance of cognitive dissonance occurred shortly after the school year ended when Jeremy received an "After School Hero" award from the state of Massachusetts for some miscellaneous charity work. He didn't get a key to the city, but they did present him with a lovely certificate and a giant pencil with the words—wait for it—"Keeping Kids on Track" stenciled on the side. Some Jews have all the luck. And all the irony.



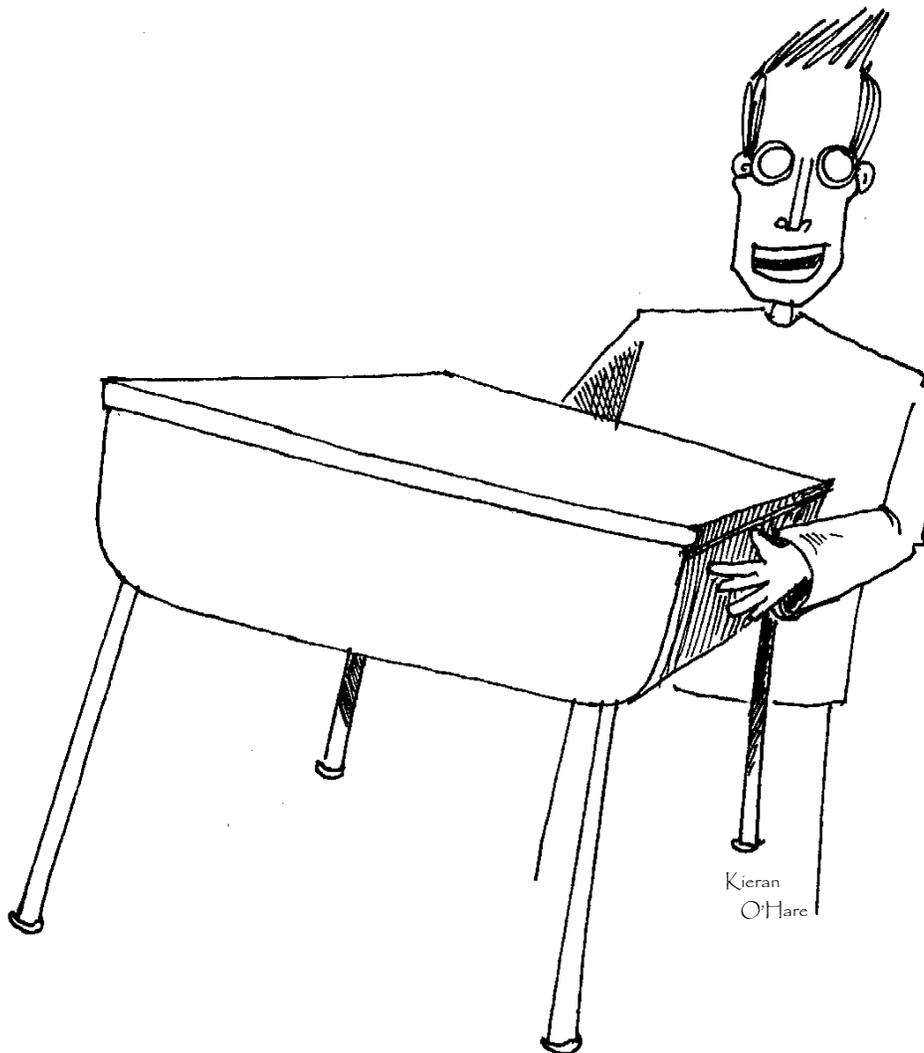


Finally, during the summer following graduation, Dan F. began work as a janitor at the very high school from which we'd just been released. While around his co-workers, Dan studiously avoided the topic of the senior prank, since he—like the rest of us—assumed that it was a bit of a sore spot with them. One day though the subject came up in conversation, and much to Dan's surprise and relief, not only were the janitors not resentful toward our class or the extra work required to undo the mess wrought by the incident in question, but they actually congratulated Dan for pulling off a prank that managed to so thoroughly exasperate Superintendent Lupini.

What a world, huh?

What a world.

* * * * *



PART VIII—HITTIN' THE SHOWERS

Okay, so my ending ain't exactly Faulkner (thank God), but I never thought I'd finish this thing anyway, so cut a slacker some slack. And forgive me if the previous 16,000 words are overly self-centered, but it's difficult to write a first person narrative without making yourself a sympathetic main character. In fairness though, I really did play a pretty substantial and consistent role in the entire pranking process, equaled only by Jeremy in terms of overall relevancy. I'm also really really ridiculously good looking and have kick ass sideburns, which gives me a slight edge over other contenders like Bill, Tommy-Gun, Keith, and Brendan.

Also, I know that the final couple of pages probably make Dr. Lupini sound like some sort of cartoonishly hot-headed jerk—and, I admit, he almost is at times—but I really believe that he's not a bad guy. Comedic hyperbole aside, I have no desire to join the ranks of arbitrary Lupini bashers out there, because Dr. Lupini has never been anything but pleasant to me, even during our post-prank encounters. The mere fact that he agreed to appear on the Barely Humorous Show—as an itinerant prankster, no less—will forever cement my opinion of him as an overall decent (if occasionally misunderstood) human being.

So that's it. Show's over. Go home. Nothing to see here people. Move it along. That's all she wrote. The fat lady has sung, the cows have come home to roost, and the Popsicle stand has been blown. So make like a tree and leave. Make like a fetus and head out. Make like a busty woman out for a jog and bounce. This train has sailed and my moon has set. Game called on account of David Blaine. I'm in like sin and out like a fat kid in dodgeball. Peace to the east and my best to the west. Later haters. Till we eat again. Keep your eyes clean, your nose up, and your chin open. Don't take any nooden wickels. Et cetera, insanelly etc.

Truly Yours &
Yours Truly,

~ TREWOR



This sentence is lonely.

