

## **Episode 158: Stories from work**

I'm Scott, the host of What Was That Like. And this is a bonus episode.

Normally, on this podcast you would hear someone talking about the time they witnessed a murder, or when they escaped a cult, or when they were swimming and they lost their leg to a shark attack. Those are all actual past episodes, and there are currently over 150 of them to binge.

But we're doing something a little different in this episode.

You've heard me talk about the private Facebook group. That's where we discuss each new episode, as well as past episodes, but we talk about a LOT of other things in there. Every Tuesday I post a new question – something that makes you think. And with almost 6000 people in that group, we get a lot of answers. The discussions we have in there are amazing. You can join for free at [WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook](https://www.WhatWasThatLike.com/facebook).

Well, not too long ago, I posted this question: What's something that happened at work that you'll never forget?

And wow, did the work stories come pouring in. Turns out, a lot of weird stuff happens on the job! So I asked some of the people who answered that question to record their answer and send it to me. What you're about to hear are those work stories.

And a content warning about the first story – it involves a dog who has a seizure and doesn't survive. I put that one at the beginning, so when you hear that story start, you can fast forward about 3 minutes to the start of the next story if you want to.

So I hope you enjoy listening in on what happened at work.

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### **Female 1**

I have worked professionally with dogs for over 10 years. Unfortunately, the kind of crazy things that happen with dogs can often be really traumatic. You're going to run into fights, injuries, health emergencies, and just all kinds of stuff that is not fun to deal with. At the time this happened, I was working at a dog daycare and boarding facility. I was the shift supervisor, which meant that I was in charge of the whole front end of the building - answering the phone, dealing with customers, doing the dog baths for daycare that day, doing laundry, et cetera. I was stretched thin. All my employees are in the back with their dog groups or otherwise busy doing something that they can't leave.

I had a great Dane in the bathtub doing her regular bath that I've done a million times. As I towel dry her, she goes into a grand mal seizure. I just felt so helpless because she outweighed me. I couldn't do anything to help her, and I will never forget the sound she made. I was just in a panic because I didn't want to leave her. I've seen plenty of seizures as a pet professional, unfortunately, but usually the dogs are small enough that you can kind of hold them and keep them still and just make sure they're safe while this thing is happening. Obviously, I can't pick up or hold a Great Dane that outweighs me. So I called in a panic on the little radios we have, "Can

someone please come out and help me? I need somebody to come help me because there's nothing I can do." This girl said, "Oh, I can come." Apparently, she's on her lunch break and she has a few minutes left.

She came out and helped me get her out of the tub, onto the floor, onto some towels, and we called her owners and they came to get her. We find out later that she has several more seizures on the way to the emergency vet, and she didn't make it. I had never been told that this dog had epilepsy. I wish I'd known. It makes you really think, "Did I do something wrong? Is there something I could have done differently?" But I just didn't have all the information.

The most appalling part was that the girl who came out to help me had the audacity to complain later that she didn't get to finish her lunch. This dog that we knew and loved died, and she's worried about a couple of minutes of her break. I don't get it. So just do your best to be kind and compassionate, especially with service workers because you never know what they've just had to deal with.

### **Female 2**

Something that happened to me at work that I will never forget is, one day, in 2021 - August 5th, 2021 to be exact - we had a staff meeting and it was the first day that everyone in my department had been back in the office all at once since our department had shut down due to COVID and we were all working from home. So everyone in the office gathered in the conference room for this meeting and we were all asked to wear a mask. There were about 15 people tops in this meeting. The person leading the meeting was my supervisor and she started by saying, "Before we get started, we have a new face in the room. So let's all go around the table and introduce ourselves."

So everyone in the meeting is looking around because we're all thinking, "Who is new?" My supervisor looked directly at me and she said, "You must be new. Welcome." Everyone looked shocked. Laughter erupts. Everyone said, "She's not new." Mind you, the person leading the meeting was not only my supervisor, but I had been working there since 2019, so I had been in the same department for 4 years. I was sitting about two people down from my supervisor who was leading the meeting. I could reach out and touch her just to give you an idea of proximity. So after all eyes were on me, my supervisor clearly was embarrassed and she blamed it on her cataracts, and then followed it up with, "You look so different without a face." Needless to say, we all got a good laugh out of that. But I was still pretty shocked that she could not recognize me with a mask on.

### **Female 3**

My story takes place in the late seventies when I was about 18. My mother was a manager of three convenience stores, and I happened to work at one of them on day shift. This is where my story takes place. The layout of the store is when you walk in through the doors, the first thing is the aisles of groceries. Then, beyond that, along the back side of the store is the deli counter. Attached to that is the counter with the cash registers. Behind the cash register is where the bank of coolers, which has milk, juice, and the like. Between the deli counter and the bank of coolers is a swinging door to the back room. The swinging door has a circular cutout about five feet up from the ground and it has a two-way mirror. On this particular evening, my mother had asked me to come in and showed the two new girls - one of which was her very first night working there - how to clean the meat case, take apart the slicer, clean it, and put it back together safely.

I was showing one girl how to do that, and the brand new employee happened to be working at the register. A male customer had come in and she was waiting for him. I could hear her say to him, "No, I can't do that. No, I can't do that." I happened to look up and she was waving to me to come to her aid, so I walked up there and I started to say, "Yes, can I help you?" This guy had put a gun up to my face and said, "Open the register or I'll blow your brains out." So I started to open the register and the two girls in the back room where my mother was, she happened to come in that night. She was working on paperwork and they were screaming on the top of their lungs for my mother. My mom's name was Charlotte and they were screaming, "Charlotte, we're being robbed!" So my mother jumped up and she was asking them where I was. They said, "She's out there with him." So my mom tried to hurry up and run up to the window - the two-way mirror - to look through to see if she could see me.

Well, I wasn't there and she thought, "Oh my God, he took her." So she happened to peer out and started looking around to see if I was around. It just so happened that I had already called the police because it was real quick. He came in, he grabbed the money, and he was gone. I was already on the phone calling the police and the police had come in. We were making a police report and the police had asked me for his description. They also asked me to describe his gun. It was this little handheld gun, and it wasn't all that big. I described it and I told the police. I said, "Well, I doubt it. I wasn't sure if it was real or not." He said, "No, regardless, you did the right thing. You opened the register. You did right."

Also, I have to tell you that, in the register, there is a slot where there is a dollar bill that's folded in there. Once this dollar bill is removed, there is an electronic connection made where it is supposed to have the video camera started up to take videos. Well, I thought, "Oh, okay, well, they're going to get this video, see this guy, and what have you." Well, it turns out the video camera didn't work, something happened. So as it turned out, both girls still stayed working there and I was there for a while too, until I moved on to my other careers.

### **Female 3**

I was working at McDonald's. It was one of my first jobs. I was between the ages of 16 and 19, we'll say, when this happened - I don't remember exactly how old I was. I was managing when a woman and her sister came in. Her sister came running out of the bathroom and said that her sister was having a seizure in the handicapped cell. She had fallen and she had hit her face on the wall, and she had blood gushing out of her head and her nose.

We called the EMT. When they got there, they realized that the stall door was locked and we wanted them to destroy the door to get to where one of us needed to crawl underneath the stall to let them in. I did that since I was in charge at the time. I was about 6 inches away from this woman's face with her eyes rolled back and blood all over the floor and it was traumatizing. We let them in. They got her out. I went back into the bathroom to clean up, and I noticed that her purse was hanging on the back of the stall door. So, we contacted her family and her sister came back in, grabbed her purse, and said that she was doing fine.

### **Male 1**

In this story, I was 16. I'm in the middle of a trial period as a grocery worker, and I have just climbed a ladder and been trained by a fellow employee on how to change a furnace filter. Now, to kind of set the scene, I'm on top of a walk-in freezer. It's a big metal box. To the right of us is another big metal box, which is this furnace. I'm going to change these furnace filters between one big metal box, the freezer, and another big metal box, the furnace, is a sea of ceiling tiles. What we have to bridge the gap are two 2x4s and they're sitting on top of the freezer. On the

furnace, there's this ever so slight little ledge. Picture it like a window ledge. It's like 3 inches wide and the wood is just resting on it. There are no screws. There's nothing holding it in place, so it's really nerve-wracking.

I walked across, changed my first filter, and then you have to walk backward without being able to see where you're going. You're just making sure that each foot is on the piece of wood because, if you miss, you're a goner. Well, I changed all the filters. I'm on my last one. I'm done. Again, it's really nerve-wracking. So, I go to turn around. I want to walk forward this last time. I take one of my feet from the board and now both my feet are on one board. Consequently, it teeters just a little bit and, now, I've lost my balance. I reached up into the rafters. I was trying to grab a beam or anything, but there was nothing there to grab. I'm on my way down, and this is where every science class you've ever taken snaps into your head, and I decided I need to make myself as flat as possible to reduce my center of gravity and the effect of my feet going through the ceiling - they do right through the ceiling tiles, but I didn't go all the way through because of my arms. I was sitting there only being supported by those little metal support beams and I was starting to feel them slowly dip down.

I was like, "I need to get off the ceiling because this thing is going down." I still don't know how I did it, but I picked up my whole body and just threw it back onto the freezer. I remember landing, turning around, picking up the ceiling insulation, and pulling it up to look through the new hole that my feet had just made to see my manager who said, "Nice of you to drop in. Are you okay?" And I said, "Yes." As I looked, I could see that I would have landed on a big table that was used by the butchers to cut all the meat, and I'm really glad I didn't land on a giant table full of knives. To this day, I'm still a little hesitant about heights.

#### **Female 4**

Back in around 2001-2002, I was working as a case worker for the government in a big office with around 100 other co-workers. One day in December, we were all called into the conference room for an announcement. We all assumed that it was going to be about Christmas coverage. In those days. The manager stood in front of the room and informed us that one of our supervisors - I'll call her Mary - had been arrested that day for stabbing her husband to death.

What I learned from the grapevine is that she had discovered that her husband was having an affair with a co-worker at his job and she had made phone calls to that husband's job and asked the managers to fire the girl. She had tried to run them over in the parking lot one night. I guess he was about to leave her and their three children - one of them had severe autism - and she went downstairs, grabbed a kitchen knife, came back up to their room, and stabbed him. She started stabbing her about 12 times. She lost an eye in the struggle. His mother, who they also lived with, who rushed in to intervene had also been injured.

But here's the kicker. She was in jail for about a month, and she got bailed, and came back to work, albeit it was in another office. She got to keep her job as a supervisor, and she went to trial, and she got a year of jail time, then arranged to take a leave of absence so that she could come back to her job in a year. At the other office she went to, they actually threw her a going-away potluck lunch. We were all slurred by it, and it really split the office in two. Some people thought that she only deserved a year, and other people thought that she should have been in there for a lot longer.

#### **Female 5**

Quick story about something that happened back when I was working security at an annual music festival back in 2016. I had just come off of a 12-hour shift. They had a buggy driving around to pick up guards and take them to where they needed to go, and I was being taken back to sign off with another guard. We stopped so that they could check on some others who hadn't finished work yet, and there was this young man standing there looking very glassy-eyed and intoxicated. He was looking into this bush and I was suspicious. He noticed me looking at him and he pointed to the bush and said, "There's a horse in there." I thought, "Okay, sure. There is." So I kept watching him. Next thing I knew, he leaned over into the bushes and he pulled out this pink toy horse head on a stick. At first, I didn't even react because I just thought, "Wow, there was a horse in there." And then I just had to laugh.

### **Female 6**

I work in an office setting. We have about 30 people in this office and we meet about once a week to go over our schedules and our workloads. In this one particular meeting, it was mentioned that one of my coworkers was going to be going on paternity leave. He was actually going to be starting his leave in the next day or two because his wife was getting ready to have a baby. We were all really surprised. We did not know that his wife was pregnant and we told him that if we had known we would have thrown him a shower or gotten them a baby gift, and we all felt really bad about it. But he just sort of brushed it off and was quiet about the baby, which was unusual for this particular person.

So we all go back to our cubicles. About 10 minutes or so later, we all received an email. This email was sent from that coworker whose wife was pregnant and it was sent to our entire department - employees, the supervisors, everybody. 30-some odd people were included in this email. He wanted to let us know that the reason that he had not said anything about his wife being pregnant was because she was having an affair, and the affair had resulted in her becoming pregnant. They had decided to stay together and to raise the child together alongside their other young children that they had. He just went into some detail about how it was a bad circumstance for him and he was sorry that he had not let us know, but that's what was going on in his life. So you can imagine the amount of messages that went on back and forth after we all received the email.

I actually ended up replying back to him privately and just mentioned that I knew it was a bad circumstance that this child was being born under, but I had to give him some credit for allowing this child to be in his life and raising it. I knew that he would be a good father to this child the way he had been to his children that he currently had. He went on paternity leave. He and his wife are still together. That was about seven years ago and they are still together. The child has been raised along with the rest of his children and they've actually had another child since then.

### **Female 7**

I had just gotten a job working in customer service. I had been there maybe a month or two. I was on the floor when a gentleman approached me and said, "The men's bathroom needs a little bit of attention." I was like, "Oh, okay, thank you." So I went and checked it out, and I can't even describe correctly the scene that was placed before me. I walked in there, and there was poo all over the place. It was all over the walls, all over the floor, all over the toilet, and even a couple droplets on the ceiling too. I don't know. It looked like they barely made it, and it shot from the back of the toilet, and it just projected all over the place in every direction. I thought, "Oh, hell no, I am not touching this."

So I went to my manager and I let her know, assuming that there was a biohazard team or something that was going to come in and clean it up. She said, "Oh, I actually have a really bad gag reflex. So can you clean it up?" I didn't say this to her, but I was just like, "Are you kidding me? I just started this job and you want me to go clean up fecal matter?" Anyway, I'm a people pleaser so, of course, I did it. They didn't even have the correct cleaning tools, so I literally just had to use a mop. So, I was mopping the walls, the ceiling, the toilet, and everything. I didn't know what else to use. I disposed of that mop head afterward. Yeah, it was pretty bad. I think that he might've even left his underpants on the floor there too. It was pretty bad. Sadly, that's not the only human poo story at work that I have, but it's the one that I will always remember.

### **Female 8**

Many years ago, when I was a bank teller, there was an elderly customer who was leaving the bank just as another customer was entering. The woman entering saw what looked like poop on the ground and let us know about it. So we notified our branch manager so that 1) he would clean it up because none of us women would do it. And 2) he would watch the surveillance video with us to see what happened. As we're watching, we see the elderly man stopped, shook his leg, and a turd plopped on the ground. He just kept walking, and in came the other customer who noticed it. To me, the craziest thing about it is that, years later, I was working at a different bank as a teller and telling my coworkers about this incident. Not long after, that same old man came into that bank. Thankfully, this time, he did not drop a poop bomb before he left.

### **Female 9**

I worked for Pizza Hut and I was 19 years old. A different Pizza Hut across town had been robbed the week previous, so our managers had an all-staff meeting on Sunday, got us all together, and explained that if we were robbed, this is what you would do, this is what you would not do, make sure that you try to remember what they look like, how tall they were, this kind of thing. Then, they told us that they were going to take everybody off the cash register who was not a manager because it was not our responsibility.

That Friday night, I was closing and - it was just about 15 minutes before close - about midnight, a guy came in and I heard the bell telling me that there was a new customer. I looked at him and it was in September 1989. It was a hot summer. I think the high that day had been close to 90. It was really only getting down to about 60, so it was very nice weather. He was in a leather coat - like a bomber jacket - and he had it zipped all the way up to the top. He had his hands in his pockets, he had a Bandana on his head, like a durag, and he just gave me a really bad feeling. I thought, "Oh, this is not good. He's going to rob us." Then I thought, "Well, I don't have to worry about it because I'm not a manager and I'm not supposed to be at the cash register anyway, so I'm just not going to worry about it. My manager will come out."

So I kept myself busy doing my side work. Pretty soon, my manager didn't come out to him. So, the guy came out to the restaurant to me. I turned around and there he was. There were a couple of tables in the restaurant, but they weren't paying too close attention. I said, "Can I help you?" And he said, "Yeah, I want to make an order to go." And I thought, "Oh, well thank goodness." So I started walking to the counter through the restaurant and he was walking behind me." I was thinking to myself, "Oh, I was just being so dumb. How did I get so worked up?" And I guess that they just kind of implanted that thought in my head.

So I just kind of ran with it and it turned around the counter. He was behind me and I turned around the counter. Now I'm facing him and he has a gun out and he has it pointed at me. And I thought, "Oh, I knew it. I should have trusted my instincts. He's definitely a bad guy." And he

said, "Give me all your money in the cash register." So I opened the cash register and I proceeded to give him the money. Well, we dropped the big bills in the safe every hour on the hour - that was a rule forever, definitely, when people were getting robbed across town. He didn't even ask me to open the safe. I opened up the cash register and he said, "Where are the big bills?" because I was giving him ones and fives and tens.

We would put the big bills underneath the tray with the checks and the checks just stayed there all night long. So I pulled them out and there were all these checks and he didn't want the checks. So then, I'm divvying them up - check the bills, check the \$20 and \$10. The guy is shaking his gun and he's saying, "If you stay calm, I'll stay calm." I'm thinking, "Dude, I am calm. Calm down your fingers on the trigger. You're making me nervous." But he just shoved all that money into a paper bag that he brought with, that he had in his pocket, shoved the gun in the paper bag, and then he put it all in his pocket and he went out the door.

After it was all said and done, I gave him a few minutes and then I locked the door behind him because that's what they told us to do. I called 911. My manager was there. I dipped my head in the management office and I told him that we'd been robbed. He said, "I know," and I said, "Okay, well, did you call the police then?" And he said, "No, you can call them now." So I called the police and I was upset, but I found out later and it makes sense that he did see the guy and he knew that we were being robbed, but he didn't want to spook the guy and let him realize that he was in the office, come out from this door and freak him out and get shot. He didn't want to call the police because he thought he'd probably hear him and didn't want to cause a big ruckus. PS, four years before that, a Pizza Hut across the state had been robbed and they did kill the manager who was on duty. It was a warranted worry.

### **Female 10**

When I was a teenager, I worked at a Burger King in Connecticut. It was right off the highway, so it was always pretty busy. One time, I had a carload come up and order food through the drive-thru. They drove around to pay. It was two parents and a child in the back. I took their money and proceeded to turn around and give them their change. I went to grab the food for them, and they had the whole thing, with fries, burgers, a milkshake, I believe, and sodas. So I turned around with the food, and they were gone - totally gone. They had just driven off, paid, but did not get their food. I have a feeling it was because their child was crying in the back and it was so close to the highway that, once they got back up on the highway, they probably realized they didn't have their food or whatever and just didn't bother coming back. It was an eye-opener for me.

I've seen similar things like that in grocery stores and I know I've been in a grocery store and just left all my stuff with my child in the cart. I took him out, left all the stuff, and left because he was having a meltdown. I can totally relate that somebody would buy all their food, drive through, and then take off.

### **Female 11**

In 2001, I was living and working in Pittsburgh, and I had gone to work early that day to work some overtime. One of my co-workers came out and told us all that a plane had just hit the Empire State Building. I told her, "No, that can't be right. It's too far inland and there are too many other taller buildings that will prevent that from happening." She's like, "Go look for yourself." I walked out into the break room and the TV was on, and it was on the Trade Tower and all the smoke and everything. So, I was shocked, but also realized she had the building

wrong. It's the World Trade Center, not the Empire State Building. As I was standing there watching the coverage, that's when the 2nd plane hit. I got to see that live.

Seeing that we were in Pittsburgh, and they knew that there were other planes, and one was lost somewhere above us. There was a citywide notice to clear out of the city. Cell phones weren't used back then. I was trying to call my husband to come get me because I have to get out of town, and he was my ride that morning. If I had taken transit then I wouldn't have been able to get anywhere because my car would be in a parking lot and the phone lines were just jammed. A friend let me use their cell phone. I called my husband and he came and got me. Then, I hung out in the lounge at his job the rest of the day, just continuing to watch the news. Of course, right over here, the plane came down the next county over with Flight 93. It was quite a day.

### **Female 12**

In 2010, I was a new manager for one of the largest online retailers in the world. New to my career. They were opening their largest facility on the East Coast, and I was living on the West Coast, and they moved me, and I was excited for the new adventure. The labor pool was pretty rugged. We would find shanks hidden in the library bins, which I don't know why, but we did. There's a lot of theft, but one of them got really creative and decided to fill up backpacks full of laptops, iPads, and iPods and put them by the turnstiles. We have to go through metal detectors to get in and out of the building and there are turnstiles.

When you pull the fire alarm, the turnstiles run free. Somebody started pulling these fire alarms and we'd have to evacuate between 300 to 500 people whenever they did this, and it was very cold. We would be stuck outside for an hour at the very least, and I'd have to take roll calls for a large quantity of people, get them riled up, and get them ready to cooperate for roll calls, which was almost an impossible task. But anyway, after probably the fourth time this happened, the fire marshal decided to quarantine us in a break room, 300 people at this time. So we were, like, trapped in the break room like sardines. It was very cramped, very uncomfortable, and emotions were high because they were sick of this happening. We had to keep working overtime because we couldn't make our shipment promise dates because we had to keep evacuating the building.

Well, anyhow, we've had people trip and fall over speed bumps in the parking lot and hurt their wrist. We've had people get super duper cold and we'd have to buy, like, fireman's blankets to put on them once we realized this was a normal occurrence. Finally, two weeks went by after probably the fifth one and we evacuated again because I was walking through, checking on my team when I saw smoke coming from the third-floor library bin. Somebody had literally lit the books on the shelf on fire and the fire was spreading fast. So I pulled the fire alarm and we all evacuated and it was pretty miserable. HR and the fire department started interviewing individuals they thought potentially could have been involved. There was a lot of finger-pointing and misidentifying people just because people wanted to get this situation over with. It was quite an ordeal and it made a lot of people quit. Turnover was high and the fire marshals were angry.

### **Female 13**

On January 8th, 2007, I was working in the dining room of an upscale retirement community - luxury condos, fine dining, concierge services, and assisted living wing for when anyone reached that point of needing that level of care. I had a split shift schedule so, every day, I had a couple of hours to do as I pleased between lunch and dinner service. I was just shy of my 21st birthday, living with my parents again, and very much enjoying my young partying years, but a little too much. So breaks at work usually consisted of me taking a nap in my parents' room at



home or going and smoking weed with my coworkers. That day, I went home to nap. I remember how eerily quiet it was, and I assumed that no one was home. For some reason, I decided to nap on the couch.

That evening shift, I'd say it was around 6.30 or 7 pm. I walked to the back of the kitchen to turn in an order. While I was coming back, I saw my boss on the phone at the hostess stand. He was partially obscured by a wall, but I could hear him using comforting language with the person on the other end of the line. As I approached, he turned to me with a look on his face like he had seen a ghost and he slowly handed me the phone and said, "I'm so sorry." It was my mom calling to tell me that she had just returned home from work to find my dad's body in the bed right where he was when she left for work that morning. It was then that I realized that some sort of divine intervention had occurred to make me nap on the couch that afternoon. I collapsed on the floor and remembered the sound of my own screaming more than anything else. A few of my co-workers helped me into the office where I had a proper breakdown before arranging a ride home, and my boss told me to take as much time as I needed.

Upon my return a few weeks later, I parked in the employee area that faced the back of some of the condos, and I heard a woman scream as I was walking in, and I looked around to find that a resident had jumped from his third story balcony. He had advanced cancer and his girlfriend was out of town, so I guess he took that opportunity to end his own suffering. I watched him take his last breaths as we waited for paramedics to arrive. Not surprisingly, I had a mental breakdown on the job shortly after that and ended up taking an extended leave of absence from which I never returned, but it's all good because I took a job a few months later and met the love of my life as soon as I sat down at my desk and we've been together ever since. Now, the story of how I married and divorced a bank robber somewhere in there, I'll have to save that for another day.

## **Male 2**

I used to work in a mall shop that was an electronics store. It was one of the many chains that would eventually get bought by GameStop, and we had a real problem with roaches. It was nasty. There were roaches of all different sizes, breeds, and varieties. I've never been in a place so roach-infested. I happen to have a buddy who used to be a manager there, so I asked him one day, I was like, "Did you have a lot of roaches there?" And he said, "Oh, you don't know, do you?"

"Yeah."

"You know what? Before it was that store, it was a hot dog place, not a very good hot dog place, but man, it was a place that sold hot dogs and I guess other stuff, French fries, whatever. But the guy that owned it closed one night and then just left and he never came back. So what happened was nobody really did anything until they could rent the space out or, I guess, figure out what to do with it, but the neighboring stores started really complaining to the mall office about the smell. They said there was something awful. It just reeked.

When they finally opened the place up and went in, they discovered that, oh yeah, he did just walk away one night and didn't empty out the stockroom. All the stuff in the fridge, all of that was just there and had been rotting for months and was infested with bugs. It was really nasty. I'm glad I wasn't there for that, but what I was there for was, one of our store managers in one of his more lucid moments somehow convinced somebody to be able to do bug spraying in our store.

There was one night after close where they came in and they did their thing and they sprayed all over the place.

I came in the next morning to open the store and I stepped into the back room. I looked over and the door leading out the very back of the store was covered entirely, top to bottom, in roaches, all dead. It was a literal carpet completely coating the door of roaches that had run to escape the poison and then just died on the door. It was the nastiest thing I've ever experienced and I hope I never experience anything like it again.

### **Male 3**

I'm an expat Canadian based down here now for 18 years, and this story goes back to Calgary, Canada in the year 2000. I was working for a technology company back then, and I arrived at work one morning. I was a bit late. I can't quite recall the time of year. I believe it was September-October when I was arriving at work and pulled into the parking lot, and it was all blocked off by the police. There were emergency vehicles there. There was a marquee tent in the field across from our office. It was all taped off. The police were marshaling people, pushing most people back, but allowing us to get into the parking lot. So I went to work and no one seemed to know what was going on.

About an hour later, a group of us were called into the boardroom by the CFO of the company at the time. He sat us down and explained to us that one of our engineers - a female engineer - in the company had been murdered outside in the parking lot. We were in absolute shock. Of course, it turns out it was her ex-husband. From what we gathered, as time went on, he sort of hid behind a car in the parking lot. When she pulled up to work, he pursued her, and she ran across the street into the open field trying to get away, but he tracked her down and, unfortunately, she was killed.

This particular story really stayed with me for a long time because, this particular morning, I was a bit late. Most days, I would arrive based on my standard commute to the office by, let's say, 10 to 8 or something like that. This day, I think I arrived at about 8.15. I'd stopped to do something. I remember something had held me up and I arrived a bit after when I normally did. This really stayed with me because I often thought to myself, "What if I had driven and come across the scene with her being pursued?" At the time, I was driving a big Range Rover that had a big metal bumper bar on the front.

I've run over in my mind many times, "If I'd had the opportunity to try to assist or maybe just have him meet the front of my truck, I would have been able to save her." But that's been a little tough. It comes back to me from time to time, but this didn't go through the courts. I remember it took several years. I think I'd actually already moved to Australia before it was resolved. It took 5-6 years, I think, for this to reach an outcome. But in the end, he's in prison, I think, for life. Unfortunately, for this family, they were Serbian immigrants and they had a young son. He was probably 8-9, I think, at the time, and he was left without any parents or any family in Canada. So, a really tragic story. It's just very unusual, something you would never expect to happen, but I remember it had a massive impact on the people in the company. She was a really soft-spoken, gentle, caring lady, and she certainly didn't deserve that. It was horrible.

### **Female 14**

I used to be a breakfast server at a restaurant and a hotel in our city's downtown area. I worked only on the weekends. So we had a lot of really interesting people come in. This was, I believe, a Saturday morning. Me and the other server were just hanging out at the bar. It was really slow

so far. Not a lot of people had come down. We were just kind of hanging around talking. All of a sudden, this lady comes around the corner into the restaurant. I looked at her and was like, "Those are some really fleshy-looking leggings." Then I realized, "Oh my gosh, those are not leggings. She's 100% completely naked, one arm across her chest, the other just dangling freely."

I didn't know what to do and was kind of stunned for a second when my manager walked over and said, "Ma'am, can I help you?" She pointed back into the kitchen and was like, "Yeah, I'm going to go up the stairs real quick." There were no stairs back there and my manager said, "No, I don't think so. Let's go back this way." So she turned her around, walked her back to the elevators, asked what floor she was on, and just sent her back upstairs. Not only did she walk past the front desk agent who completely ignored her because she didn't want to deal with the situation, but she also had to walk through a lobby full of teenagers who were in town for a school event.

I don't know what happened to her after that. I asked my manager if we should call 911 and she said, "No, don't worry about it. I hope she made it back to her room safely and is doing okay though."

### **Female 15**

Last year, I was working for a local gym here in Sioux City, Iowa, and I was filling in for one of the smaller satellite locations. One day, I'm just sitting at the front desk by the front door, and this guy walks in. He checked in with the electronic scanner, so his name came up, and I greeted him when he came in. I said, "Hi, how are you?" And all he did was just stare at me. It was really scary because he— it didn't matter what I said to the guy, he would not respond. It was almost like he was staring into my soul. So he walks away and I forget about him for a while, and I do my work later on.

I end up going upstairs and there are two separate ways that you can go upstairs. I chose the left way to go upstairs. When I get down the hallway, I can see down the stairs to the right staircase. I found the guy who still was just kind of standing there acting funny, so I asked him again, "Is there anything I can help you with?" And he just was not responding. He just stared at me. He had basketball shorts on and he had both of his hands in the front of his shorts. So, finally, I just got really uneasy and I started to walk toward the office. That's when he starts walking up the stairs towards me. I'm getting the keys out of my pocket and I managed to get the door unlocked before he could grab me, and I slammed the door in his face.

I was pretty freaked out. I didn't know what to do. I was there by myself. So the first thing I did was I called down to the main location and I had my supervisor at the time come down and try to help me. Anything she was saying to the guy, he was just kind of arguing. She finally told him he needed to leave because he was not working out or using equipment. He was just kind of making people nervous. At that point, he started to get really angry and was saying that it was because he was black that we wanted him to leave. So he's standing inside the gym by the front door. He lights up a cigarette and he's just standing there still yelling at us like we're racist or something. So, we ended up calling the police.

When the police showed up, it took him a little bit to get him outside because he was so crazy. After talking with him, they basically came back in and told me that there was nothing they could do because mental health is a real problem around here and they basically just let him go on his way. Well, I didn't hear anything for a good two weeks until word got passed around and finally

his membership was terminated, so he wasn't allowed back. Then, we all find out that this guy ended up being arrested for multiple armed robberies in this area and was just actually convicted of, I would say, 7-9 charges just a few days ago.

I thought maybe he was going to try to, like, physically attack me, rape me, I had no idea. But then, to find out that he actually had a gun on him is terrifying. Nobody really checked to see. I mean, anything could have happened and I was just lucky to be able to get in the office when I did.

### **Female 15**

In the last 10 years of my finance career, I had a team of mostly young women in various stages of getting married and having children. I jokingly got the reputation of being the manager with the most finance babies born in that 10-year period. I'll never forget the day that one of the women went into labor in the office. She had the foresight to have an emergency kit with towels and plastic bags in her desk. We were having a discussion by her desk when her water suddenly broke. After a quick moment of disbelief, we sprang into action. She used one towel to go to the restroom and clean herself up, while I spread the second towel on the floor to cover the water. After a quick conversation with her, I felt reasonably sure that she wouldn't have the baby in my car, so we used a plastic bag to cover the seat and off we went, as quickly and safely as possible. Most of the car ride was me just telling her that everything was going to be fine, and secretly hoping that I had not misjudged her labor time. Her husband met us at the entrance where, to my great relief, I handed her off. I'm happy to say that everything really was fine. She delivered a healthy baby girl. That was truly an exciting day.

### **Male 4**

I'm a critical care nurse and I've always worked cardiac ICU, cardiothoracic ICU, and just all the ICU units. Back then, we would take care of patients who had heart attacks, heart failure, and post-procedure. We were experts at running code-blue situations. That's when your heart stops beating and goes into what's called fibrillation. This quivering of the heart lasts four or five minutes and that is your window for defibrillation or shocking the patient. You actually lose about 10% survival for every minute you're in fibrillation. This is how it would happen. Our monitors detect what's called Code Blue, and we would grab the crash cart and we'd go to work.

We were very successful. We did this all the time. You would have one nurse doing compression, one nurse pushing drugs, one nurse recording times, one nurse to shock the patient, and usually a respiratory therapist who would be managing the airway. Unlike today, back then, you literally charged the paddles, leaned over the patient, you would yell three times "Clear", and then you'd shock the patient. If they did not convert, then you would continue CPR and you'd recharge. If they did convert, then the patient would slowly regain consciousness and then open their eyes several times over a time period.

So what happened that day was me and my friend Neil - I worked with Neil for a long time - we heard the code and we ran into the room with other people. I was doing compressions and Neil was going to defibrillate. So we charged the paddles. Neil was standing there and Neil yelled "Clear", and he shocked the patient. As soon as he shocked that patient, the patient sprung up - like, sat up instantly - and wrapped his arms around Neil. Neil's arms were flailing, trying to get away, and we were all laughing hysterically to the point of crying. It had just never happened before, and we were all in shock. We finally got the patient off Neil, laid him back down gently, and started the post-arrest treatment. I worked with Neil a few more years after that, and we

laughed every time we went to a code about the day he was bear-hugged by a man that he brought back from the brink.

### **Female 16**

Back in 1975, when I had just turned 15 and was allowed a work permit, I was hired at a brand new Baskin Robbins store on the outskirts of Portland, Oregon. The price of a single scoop of ice cream was 28 cents. We had crowds of people when it opened, and I learned my job quickly. As time went on, we had a number of regular customers who would come in and get the same thing time after time. We also had kids who would come in excited to get an ice cream cone. Many times, the parents would park the car just outside the windows at the front of the store and send the kids in with the money to get their ice cream.

One particular day, a child came in and I scooped the ice cream onto a cone. The child handed me a quarter and I said, "Oh, it's 28 cents. You'll need three more cents." The child went out to the car and, the next thing I knew, an angry dad marched in and started yelling at us, telling us how ridiculous it was that his kid couldn't get a single scoop of ice cream for a quarter. He then slammed the pennies onto the counter and stormed out. We were stunned. Because of that experience, I have never forgotten what the price was for a single scoop of ice cream at Baskin Robbins in 1975.

### **Female 17**

The thing that happened to me at work was that I had a new hire trainee that passed away in my arms. This was the 1st week back with the new class of trainees right after the holidays. This was in the middle of COVID. We had this new hire class. We would have a new class about twice a month, and it was a warehouse training them on how to process the new stuff going in and out. This gentleman was really excited and very engaged. He was an array of French, and I just really enjoyed having him in my orientation. Tuesday morning comes along, and he is rather quiet, which was unusual, given that he was so engaged in orientation that Monday.

One of the other trainees comes up and tries to see if he's okay and says hello, and he's kind of frozen in his seat. She yells to me, and I come over, and I check on him, try to say his name, try to see if he can react to me. And try to say his name, ABCs, and he could not speak at all. My first instinct was to get him on the ground and lay him on the floor, so I had a few trainees help me with that. Then, I started giving orders to call 911, go get one of the supervisors whose first aid trained, and I started doing chest compressions. When the other supervisor comes in, we start to alternate. The next thing I know is that we have EMTs there, but I refuse to leave him. The only person who was making eye contact was me. It was very obvious that he was scared and I just did not want anything to happen to him. He'd be all alone with medical personnel or EMTs coming to do him in masks and he couldn't see anything.

I immediately took my mask off and I just started talking to him and calming him and holding his head while everyone else was doing their chest compressions. The only time I backed off was when they had the AED and the EMTs trying to utilize that. I was there with him while he lost his bowels. It was a pretty traumatic experience. He ended up passing away in my training class.

### **Female 18**

I was working at a hotline office when I was 21. The summer before my senior year of college, I was volunteering in my county and we had a county hotline for a variety of mental health services. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline ran a call line through our office so calls that were nearer to us would be routed to our office as opposed to other ones - they kind of route

locally when you call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Most of the calls that I answered were on the county line. Those were a lot more frequent, but we would sometimes get Suicide lifeline calls come through. I actually didn't have any really serious calls until my very last day. I had a few calls, one or two of which I had to send intervention for, but never super urgent, never any really serious attempts, more mild attempts, but medical assistance was necessary, or mental health assistance was necessary, and this was nine years ago.

But on my last day, I got a call where she was in a really severe crisis and it was a really intense call and went actually well over the time that I was supposed to even leave. So I never really ended up finding out what ended up happening because she ended up hanging up. Then, I subsequently sent an intervention. If there was a serious attempt, you could uncover the caller information that was normally covered up on the line to keep things anonymous, which is what we would do unless intervention needed to be sent, and it was really an emergency. So I actually never ended up finding out what happened, and that was a really kind of intense way to leave a position where I had not had to ever really have a serious emergency. I had been there for two months.

What's actually kind of ironic is I got sober two years after that, and I woke up in the middle of the night and ended up calling the county line. It was, like, the only resource that I could think of someone to talk to, and I have been sober for 7 years after calling that same hotline where I worked and asking for resources.

### **Female 19**

My name is Rachel and I'm a mobile dog groomer. I drive a truck and a trailer from one client's house to another, grooming their pups in the trailer right in front of their house, and I love my job, and so do my two little dogs who get to come to work with me every day. I was working in a town about 40 minutes from my house one morning and got a notification on my phone that there was a severe thunderstorm warning for both the town I was working in and my hometown. I had just finished grooming the dog that I was working on, so I brought her back inside to her owner and mentioned that I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to get through all of my grooms on schedule that day because the storm was supposed to be severe and maybe even produce hail.

Thunderstorms and hail are really loud inside of my grooming trailer and most dogs are pretty scared of them, so it's not usually very safe to work on those days. So, I left that client's house and began heading to my next stop. When the rain started coming down really hard, I decided I'd have to go ahead and reschedule the rest of my day. Less than 10 minutes into my drive home, that severe thunderstorm became a tornado that no one had seen coming. It wasn't on any of the radar forecasts, nothing. I was still at least half an hour away from home and traffic had slowed to a complete crawl because of the highway flooding and the rain coming down so hard. You couldn't see 20 feet in front of you. I had to swerve around semis that had taken refuge under the overpasses because they couldn't see where they were going. So it wasn't safe for them to drive either.

I could see the funnel cloud forming literally right next to the driver's side of my truck. It looked like it was matching my speed and I was doing my absolute best to hurry on to the nearest exit. I was trying to be able to get off that exit and drive in the opposite direction to safety. So I was struggling to see an exit, and then the streetlights started actually exploding behind me. Each one would make a giant popping sound and then a burst of light. Of course, because of that

distraction, I missed my exit and had to keep driving right alongside the funnel. And then, at that point, the streetlights were literally twisting off halfway up like celery.

I thought I was going to die. My entire rig was being thrown around the highway by the gusts of wind and I was barely driving 10 miles an hour because of the complete lack of visibility, but I finally saw an exit advertising a motel and took the exit. I pulled my truck into the only area in their parking lot that was long enough for it to fit, ran around to the back door to grab my dogs, and ran all out around the side of the motel to get inside. I didn't even stop to lock the truck or anything. I barely made it inside, completely soaking from head to toe, holding my two dogs who were also soaked, terrified, and in the middle of a massive panic attack.

When the tornado passed right along the parking lot of the motel, there was water rushing into the lobby where several employees, two young girls and their parents, and myself were riding out the storm. I'm pretty sure I really freaked out those little girls with my bursting in there in full-on panic mode. I was trying really hard to hide it and talk to them about puppies instead. We all hung out for about 15 minutes until the storm had passed and then went our separate ways. Then, I shook the entire way home, which took about two hours that day. There were gigantic trees that had fallen over the highway, several fires, and there was no power anywhere. So, it was pure chaos the whole way. Thankfully, my pups and I made it home safely and there wasn't any damage to my grooming rig, but that was quite the experience.

### **Female 20**

I worked in IT at the State Supreme Court. The IT department was in the basement, and two sets of large glass doors separated over 40 employees from the rest of the four-story building. The Supreme Court building had one state police officer on site, but no other form of security, such as metal detectors. Most offices were not locked during business hours, and the business was open to the public per state law. The primary courtroom, where appellate cases were heard, was also open to the public. All staff received an email one day, about five years ago, from the Chief Justice, which included a picture of a man. We were advised to contact the Chief or the state police officer who was on site if we saw the man in the building. Evidently, earlier, the man had been in the Supreme Court wielding a knife. He was irate as he lost an appellate child custody case. He attempted to access the area where the appellate judges work, but, thankfully, the door was locked.

One of my long-term friends is an appellate judge, and I was, and still am, concerned for her safety. I later asked her if she was scared, and she said, "No," because anyone can access the main courtroom during appeal court sessions and she is always vulnerable. That day, among coworkers, we all joked about the incident, who would save who if the guy came back, or if something else happened. Even though we joked, deep down, I think most of us were pretty rattled. Thankfully, nobody was hurt.

### **Female 21**

When I was in my twenties, I worked for a pet care company. I was a dog walker. I was a pet sitter. In the afternoons, I worked a shift at their dog daycare. I had been working at the daycare for a few months, maybe a year when this incident happened. I was in the back area where the big dogs played, and there were, I don't know, maybe 15-20 dogs back there. Two dogs were playing together and one got their lower jaw caught under the collar, so they were stuck together and they were freaking out, squealing, panicking, and making a ton of noise. I went over to separate them.

I had taken about two steps and I felt something grab onto my leg - I don't mean grab onto my pants. I mean, teeth sinking into my flesh kind of grab. I turned around and I saw a yellow lab attached to my leg. Now this dog had been the absolute sweetest dog in the entire place. He was constantly letting other dogs climb all over him and chew on him, and he never made a fuss at all. He would just stand there and look a little put upon, but never fussed or anything about it. So I was extremely shocked to see this particular dog just biting me the way that he was.

I kicked him off and I'm still going towards the other two dogs to separate them and the lab comes back and grabs onto my other leg. I fell down, kicked him off again, and he came back for a third bite. At this point, things get a little bit hazy. I don't exactly remember what happened. I don't think I passed out or anything, but I don't know if the shock or the surprise or whatever caused me to forget this. But in any case, the next thing I remember, the managers and the other workers are coming back and pulling dogs away from me and putting them in kennels and making arrangements for me to go to the hospital because, at this point, both of my legs are bleeding very profusely.

I ended up needing a total of 25 stitches in my legs. It took well over a year for me to get full feeling back in the areas where I was bitten. I limped pretty significantly for a couple of weeks. It honestly took a little bit of time for me to become totally comfortable working in the daycare again, especially when dogs got really rowdy and they were really noisy when they were playing. It kind of made me a little bit jumpy.

To this day, I do not know what happened to this dog. Apparently, after I was taken to the hospital, he tried to attack two other people. As I said, this was so out of character for him. Something medically, chemically must have went wrong in this dog's head because this was such a 180 and out of character for him. I know that, in pack or group situations like that, when two dogs are fighting or getting into it, dogs will frequently nip at them to try and separate them. Maybe this is what he was trying to do, but he just took it way too far. I still work with dogs to this day. I'm currently a pet groomer. I've got a little dog on the table right now who's waiting for me to finish her. So I'm going to get back to her.

## **Female 22**

I'm a baker in the food service industry. Years ago, I worked for this very prestigious private university in Austin, Texas. There was a new boss and he was always rooting for the underdog to the point that he literally hired people right off the street. Now it's really sweet that he wanted to help people, but it never worked out for us. Here's an example.

One day this guy showed up to work, high as a kite. He looked like he hadn't bathed in over a week. He had greasy hair and this holey shirt that honestly looked like it was stained with urine. With wild eyes, he told me to be careful that the CIA was after him and that the whole place was bugged. The bakery was situated right behind the sandwich station and I watched in horror as he made himself a sandwich with his filthy hands. He then hopped up on the checkout counter with his bare feet, hopped down, and hit the ground running, sandwich in hand.

The head chef and the manager came bursting through the door a few minutes later. They'd followed him over from the other kitchen on campus. Apparently, a guy hopped up on meth can get places three times faster than two chunky guys in a golf cart. There was no way they were ever going to catch him, and he never showed up to work again. Did I mention that all of this happened on the guy's day off of work?



### **Female 23**

It might have happened to me about, I don't know, almost 10 years ago, I would say, at Starbucks when I worked there. I was working a regular shift. At the particular store that I was at, we only had a single restroom to use. Men and women had to use the same restroom, and it was polar opposite to the entrance of the store. If you wanted to use the restroom, you had to walk all the way through the store, pass the registers and everything to get to the restroom. The restroom did have, like, a dividing wall to separate the lobby and the restroom area.

Well, this particular day, this young gentleman walks in - maybe late teens, early 20s, I don't know - he goes straight to the restroom. He came with a friend and the friend ordered. Shortly after that, an older woman, an elderly woman, also walked in, and she went to stand in line for the restroom. She was standing, leaning up against that wall that divides the lobby and the bathroom area. Well, once the friend was done ordering, he started walking towards the restroom as well. At the same time, a little boy behind him was also about to approach the restroom. The little boy's maybe, like, eight or nine.

Well, when the friend gets there, he all of a sudden starts yelling. He's like "WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA, WHOA." And he's like backing up and he's facing that little nook where that older woman was standing. I can't see from where I am, so I'm just kind of looking to see what's going on. That young man even pulls back that little boy, and he's like, "COME HERE, DON'T GO OVER THERE." He doesn't know that boy. So then, the little boy's mother gets upset, and she's like, "THAT'S MY SON! DON'T TOUCH MY SON!" And he's like, "Hey, I'm just letting you know, don't walk over there." Now, everybody in the whole store pretty much is curious as to what's going on. So right at that moment, the original guy that went into the restroom opened the door and, when he looked over to his left where that lady was standing, he also exclaimed, like, "OH, WHAT?" Like, screaming and backing up. He even starts running a bit. So we're like, "What's going on?"

When he runs out, that older woman immediately goes into the restroom, slams it, and locks the door. And so she's not answering the door, obviously. She's not coming out. So I finally approached that whole area to see what was going on. Unfortunately, I guess the older woman, maybe, her stomach was upset and she didn't make it, so she decided instead that she really had to go, so she ended up pulling her pants down and she just had, like, major diarrhea on the wall and on the floor in that little nook area. So that's what surprised everybody. That's why that other guy didn't want that boy to see that. Yeah, it was really embarrassing for her, obviously, and she was in the restroom for a long time.

I called my manager, and my manager laughed and laughed for a long time. Afterward, she advised us to call Hazmat to help us clean it. Needless to say, yes, I had to close the lobby, I had to ask everybody to leave. The woman finally came out. Unfortunately, she was mortified and she just had to walk all the way through the whole entire lobby. We ended up calling Hazmat and they cleaned everything up. We closed the store and then we opened up shortly after and that was it. I mean, I felt really bad but that was my crazy story and horrible diarrhea in the lobby.

### **Female 24**

I was an EMT for our county ambulance service in Colorado. At the time of this incident, I had only been an EMT for about 3 years. Our county is small enough that chances are, you are going to come across people that you are related to or people you know. At the time, we were

considered a paid volunteer service, meaning we were paid per ambulance run, but we volunteered our time.

February 1995, around 6.30 pm, I was at home preparing a batch of snickerdoodles when a call came over the radio for a one-vehicle rollover on a county road. They needed two ambulances, so I told dispatch that I am en route. I met my partner at the ambulance garage and we proceeded to the scene. The road is very washboard-like and hard to drive on. As we get on the scene, there are numerous first responder vehicles already there. Bright lights illuminate the chaos to my right. There are crews working on one patient who is pinned under the pickup door. She was not wearing a seatbelt and was thrown from the vehicle.

I took the other two girls and proceeded to get their names and vital signs, and started IVs. When one of them told me her name, my heart sank. Her sister was the driver and she was the one who was pinned. Her father was an investigator for our sheriff's department. We knew this family. My patients were cold from the crisp February air, and it was difficult to get an IV in either one of them. However, I eventually did. They were able to extricate the driver out from under the pickup and took her to the ambulance in front of ours.

As we were headed to the hospital, I could hear the medic in the first ambulance giving a report to the hospital, "We are coming in emergent with a 16-year-old female trauma core," meaning she is not alive. I knew her sister would know that medical term and I did not want her to hear it. I looked up at my partner, and he knew exactly what I was going to say and turned down the radio. My patient asked about her sister, and I told her that she was in the other ambulance, and they were doing everything they could to help her.

We reached the hospital, and there were already many law enforcement people there to support the family. We handed off our patients. As we were finishing up, they told the parents that the driver did not survive. I will never forget the scream that her mom let out, saying her name and screaming, "NO." We had a stress debriefing that night at around midnight - not sure that it helped at the time. I stayed in contact with the mom and my patient.

I can honestly say that she is the first patient to thank me for helping her. As for snickerdoodles, the thought of them brings me back and I have never made them or eaten them again. I will never forget this scene of the accident. It is forever burned in my memory, including the way the road felt when we drove on it, the smell of the dirt from the road, the lights, the chaos, and her mom. My daughter was the same age at the time. It was truly heartbreaking.

### **Female 25**

I wanted to share with you an experience that I had while working for a radio station in July of 2007. It was a Monday and I remember that it was a Monday because I had been camping with my family that weekend leading up to the work week. I was a little out of sorts that Monday, kind of dragging, and I remember thinking, "I shouldn't have come to work today, and probably should have taken the day off," but I was trucking along and I was there.

Then, at about 10 a.m., I noticed some energy in the building. People and coworkers had started walking to this far side of the building and I couldn't see what was going on from my desk. So, I got up and sort of followed along to see what was happening. The energy wasn't good. You could tell something was wrong. As soon as we got to the other side of the building, we could see the emergency response vehicles and we knew that something wasn't good. We

stood there and kind of talked amongst ourselves about what could be happening and we saw them wheeled out one of our coworkers who we lovingly called Big Mike and our hearts sank.

Big Mike was one of our IT guys and he was well known and very well loved among the staff. He had many friends on the staff. He was the first person to show up if you needed a helping hand and moving, or if you needed a picture hung. He would show up to any party that he was invited to and stick around to help you clean up. So yeah, he was well-loved and we were in quite a bit of shock.

We found out, after he was whisked away in the ambulance, that he had a dental procedure earlier that week and had been complaining about not feeling very great, and he'd laid his head down on his desk, and his cubicle mates had just sort of let him do that and rest, just thinking he wasn't feeling good. Maybe he just needed a little nap or something. But after a while, they realized he should probably be stirring, he should be getting up, and he wasn't, so they gave him a shake, and he didn't respond. Immediately, as soon as they knew something was wrong, they called 911. 911 responded quickly and got him to the hospital as soon as they could, but we found out just maybe an hour later that he didn't make it. In fact, he had passed away while at his desk and that was hard on us as a staff, particularly hard on his cubicle mates who were right there with him and didn't know that this was happening.

In the end, I think it's made a lot of people, myself included, more vigilant. I think I'm a better co-worker because of it. I'm aware of what my co-workers are going through, especially if they've recently had a medical procedure. Although we can't change what happened to Big Mike, we can take the experience and make sure that we are looking out for others around us in a better way. And who knows, maybe even one day, this experience could save the life of another.

### **Female 26**

Around 2011-2012, I worked for a software company as a technical writer, and I absolutely loved my job. I'd been there for 3 or 4 years at that point, had the best boss, greatest coworkers, and had a baby and come back. I was just super happy. Unfortunately, we had to have a reorganization happen where everybody kind of got moved to different departments and different bosses. Mine was a brand new boss to the company, and I promise you, I tried, but the woman just did not like me. I tend to have issues sometimes with authority and she was kind of a militant micromanager, so I tried very hard to hide my feelings on the subject. It was pretty obvious she was not my biggest fan. That's fine. Not everybody's going to like each other. We're not there to make friends. We're there to work.

I thought things were going okay until, one day, I got pulled into a meeting room with no warning. It was HR and my new boss, and they wanted to let me know that I work with some people who felt that my cologne usage was too much and that it was being done at my desk, and just because I love the smell doesn't mean everybody else would. I was convinced that this had to be a mistake because, as a lifelong migraine sufferer, smells, scents, especially cologne, are a huge trigger for those, so I'm very cognizant of not doing that. I wouldn't do it to myself, let alone anybody else, and certainly not at my desk.

I found it really amusing because my new boss was somebody who basically marinated in her cologne. It was overwhelmingly awful. Also, when you first walked into the floor, there was a male who also wore an amazing amount of cologne and it would hit you like a brick wall every time you walked in. But you know what? Yes, it bothers me. Yes, I wish people wouldn't do that at work, but everybody isn't responsible for my quirks and needs or irritations. If it got to be such

a problem, I could always go to somebody. So I thought maybe somebody was just mistaking it for me. I can't imagine why anyone would think that. So I made it very clear I would never do that and why and I thought it was the end of it until a couple of months later.

I was leaving the office. Between the time I walked out the door and before I even got into the parking garage downstairs, I received an email from, what looked like, my job, saying some really nasty things and how I'm so insensitive and annoying at how I constantly am spraying cologne at my desk. I think this has to be a joke. These people obviously don't know me because anyone who knows me knows how I feel about it, especially since this episode with HR and my boss that happened a couple of months ago. So when I got back after talking, I sent it to HR and said, "Look, this is kind of concerning. I thought this was over and done with. It's obvious I'm not doing it. I've invited anyone and everyone to come down to my desk and smell me if they want to. We really need to figure out what's going on."

When I mentioned it to my closest coworker friend at work the next business day, she had mentioned and some others had come over to talk about the fact that, apparently, they had been conducting solo interviews with the more than 100 people who worked on my floor to find out if the smell of me and my cotton candy scent was annoying. That's right. Not just cologne, not a body odor, not some offensive smell - cotton candy. Somebody thought that I smelled like cotton candy and they felt that the best use of their time at our job, which was wildly intense and needed more focus than was given, they were conducting interviews like it was some kind of a crime show about whether or not me and my candy scented self was annoying.

I've never experienced anything like it. I had already been having such a problem with the boss. I had a toddler at home who had some special needs, and I thought, "You know what? This is the best way to go out on - with the bang." I don't think I'll ever be able to have a better exit story than the fact that a hundred people on my floor were being interviewed about whether I smelled like cotton candy and if they thought I should be hung for it. You just can't make this stuff up.

### **Female 27**

Years ago, I was working at a tiny hotel. All the rooms had fireplaces, jacuzzi tubs, and balconies with water views. It was really romantic. A lot of couples stayed yearly on their anniversaries, including this really sweet old couple. They were in their 80s and they'd been celebrating their anniversary with us for, like, 10 years or more. After they checked out on their final day, we found that they had left behind a vibrator collection on the nightstand. Usually, in hotels, we find things like phone chargers and firesticks, and we just pop them in the mail and send them back to them. No biggie. This time, however, I was not about to call this couple and ask them for the address to ship their giant bag of dildos. They didn't call us, didn't inquire about them, and they also never returned to the hotel again.

### **Male 5**

I was a young restaurant manager in the late 90s and was closing the restaurant after a shift on a Sunday night. The general manager - who was a dear friend of mine - and I were going to stay late to do some repairs around the restaurant. We had two employees still left in the building. They were teenage busboys. I was in the office completing paperwork with my back to the door when Tony rushed in and said to me, "Don't do anything silly. Just do what they say and nobody will get hurt." Then, I felt something at my neck. Because Tony was a big practical joker, I brushed it away as if he were playing a joke on me. Immediately, I was grabbed by the hair of my head and thrown onto the ground with the gun at my head again.

The gunman at that point had us all on the floor in the office and asked Tony to open the safe. Tony had always had trouble with the safe, so he said, "Lane, open the safe." When I got up and began turning the dial on the safe, I braced my arm on the desk to the side of it, and it was immediately knocked down with the butt of the gun. I got the safe open and was thrown back to the floor, at which point they had Tony get up and fill a bag with the money in the safe. After that, they ripped the phone cords out of the phones in the office and hogtied me with my hands and legs behind my back. I thought they had done the same to Tony at that point.

I thought we were at the end of the ordeal when one of my busboys started crying and the gunman said, "You think this is funny?" And pointed the gun at him. Being very protective of my staff, I yelled at him that he had gotten what he needed and he needed to leave because he was scaring my employee at that point. He put the gun to my head and then, the next thing I knew, they had walked away. We didn't know that they had left at that point because they had blocked the door with one of the busboys.

When we gave it a moment, I asked Tony if he could get loose, and he could because he had only been tied with my necktie, with his hands behind his back. We pulled the busboy into the office and then immediately tried to figure out how to call the police, which we were able to do on the fax phone. I was extremely scared and realized at that point that I probably should have just kept my mouth shut the entire time.

### **Female 28**

The funny incident that happened to me at work was when I worked in a doctor's office. The staff got to know each other pretty well as it was a small practice in the country, and the turnover was pretty low. Piper, the receptionist, was very vivacious and personable, and the patients loved her. We were having our annual flu clinic, so it was very busy seeing patients every 10 minutes, and Piper was greeting a lot of people as they arrived for their injections.

In walks Seth, a big, burly, sweet man. Piper glances up from her desk, and the next chart in front of her was a patient named Dick, so she mistakenly greets him with, "Hey, Dick. How's it going?" He politely corrects her and says, "My name is Seth." Without thinking, she replies, "Well, you look like a Dick." She wasn't being disrespectful. It would have been as if she accidentally called him Tim and she would have said, "Well, you look like a Tim." I ran out of the room and bolted upstairs with the medical assistant on my heels, trying to stifle our peals of laughter. We made it to the top and giggled like children. Piper apologized profusely and Seth was a good sport about it and chuckled. The poor medical assistant had a hard time giving him his injection without cracking up. It is something I tease her about when I occasionally run into her.

### **Female 29**

From 2001 to 2007, I worked as a marketing coordinator at a sales office. This was before everybody had a camera on their phone, and I was in charge of the office digital camera. In 2005, my boss got a divorce, which caused him to have a classic midlife crisis. He got a sports car, a new wardrobe, and a much younger girlfriend.

One day, he called me into his office and told me to bring the camera. I went in and he told me to close the door. He then asked me to take pictures of the back of his head, particularly his bald spot. He needed photos to send to the hair plug company before he had his treatment, and I guess he didn't want to ask his girlfriend for help. I took the photos and he had the procedure. As part of the aftercare, the hairplug recipient must wear a hat for a month to protect the plugs.

He declared that month was casual November so that he could wear a baseball cap to the office and he wouldn't stand out. I left shortly after this so I don't know how successful the hairplug procedure was or if he stayed with the new girlfriend.

### **Female 30**

My name is Ashley and I was born, raised, and still live in a region of West Virginia that's part of the Ohio Valley. But in my mid-twenties, I spent a year or so in Nashville, Tennessee. During my time there, I worked as a preschool teacher. So one late afternoon, during a thunderstorm, the power flickered a few times, which was normal. Right after that, the sky kind of just opened up and the biggest pieces of hail I'd ever seen in person came down. My particular classroom had a door that led to the outdoor play area, and it literally sounded like someone took a five-gallon bucket full of big ice cubes and threw it directly at the door - super loud and violent.

Then the real fun started. The tornado alarm started going off. Now, having lived in the Ohio Valley my whole life, I was not familiar with tornado sirens or it would be an actual real threat of tornadoes. We had fire drills in school and that's it. So, I kind of froze in fear at first, but some of the most precious little two-year-olds came right up to me and said, "Miss Ashley, it's going to be okay. We just have to sit in the hall." These poor children were so used to this event. The assistant director of the school even came directly to my classroom first to make sure I was okay because they knew I had this fear of being in a tornado situation.

So, I followed protocol after pulling it together and led the kids out into the interior hallway where we had to take crib mattresses from the nursery and prop them up over the kids who were sitting against the wall. Fortunately, nothing touched down near us. Other than some parents arriving late due to traffic because of the storm, everything was okay.

### **Female 31**

What I'd like to share is that, one day, when I was a young lawyer many years ago, I had a job with a large international law firm headquartered in Manhattan. On that day, I felt very good about myself. I had received praise for my work from a client who had praised not only me but told my boss, which is rare and I was thrilled. I had kind of dreams in my head, thinking about things that I would do with my life and how my successes would build. I was really spinning quite a daydream.

I took the train into Manhattan and I got off the train and my office building was about 10 or 12 blocks from the train station. So I got out of Grand Central and I walked up Lexington Avenue toward my office building. I was in such a great mood that even though it was drizzling rain, I was looking in shop windows. I started singing a song to myself in kind of a low voice because I had my umbrella up and I figured nobody could hear me.

So, I walked on toward my office. As I approached my office building, which is a huge glass building-- well, it's not all glass, but the bottom floors have huge plate glass windows and doors. I looked up to see myself walking toward the building. Around my ankles was my slip. My half-slip had fallen down to the ground and I must have been slopping through it all the way down Lexington Avenue. What to do? I simply stepped out of my slip, picked it up and put it in my briefcase and proceeded up to the 33rd floor to start my day.

### **Female 32**

About 20 years ago, I worked as a housekeeper in a hotel. The stories I could tell you about the people and the things that they left behind - some cool stuff and some really gross stuff--

Needless to say, I didn't work there long and this is one of the reasons why - I found a dead guy in one of the rooms.

I had just started my shift and was talking to the receptionist and a gentleman came down the hall to get some coffee. I remember remarking to her, "Man, he looks like crap." About an hour later, I stared at my room, typical housekeeper stuff, knocked on the door, said "Housekeeping," and entered the room. I was about halfway down the hall and knocked on the door. No answer. I knocked again and said "Housekeeping." No response, so I entered the room.

The man was sitting up on the couch like he was napping and scared the crap out of me. I said, "Oh, I'm sorry." Then, I realized that he did not look right. I went over to wake him up and realized that he was not breathing. I calmly screamed like a banshee down the hall for the receptionist to call 911. The head housekeeper came running in.

Long story short, we had to get him on the floor - which was no easy task - and tried CPR until the paramedics came in. I did not do the CPR. He was pronounced dead at the time. Needless to say, I left for the day after that and soon quit. I never actually really found out what happened to him or why he died, but that was the scariest moment of my life.

### **Male 6**

My work story is from when I worked at a TV station about 15 years ago. We aired Wheel of Jeopardy at the time, and the shows would come down two days beforehand off the satellite. We would record them onto a tape and play it back two days later on the air date. I'm not sure why they did it that way, but that's how they did it. Typical shows came down the same day. So, we recorded it two days beforehand. Somehow either the backup tape got lost or there just wasn't one recorded when it came off the satellite. But anyway, we didn't have a backup tape for that night's Wheel of Fortune, and we needed one because we always played back two in case one of the tapes went bad or the tape player went bad. We'd be able to just switch over to the one that's already running and have very little interruption to error.

So my boss came to me and said, "Hey, can you make a backup copy of this Wheel of Fortune for tonight? I was like, "Yeah, sure." I take a tape off the wall to record the backup onto and go over to the machine that erases the tapes. The erasing machine, you just throw a tape on and rub it back and forth after turning the machine on and it just takes anything off of that tape that was on it and you can't play it back or there's nothing good on it. I go over and I do that, and then I go and look for the original tape with the show on it, and I can't find it anywhere.

I'm just looking around and looking around, can't find it. I looked at my hand, and it was the tape that I just erased. So I had erased the Wheel of Fortune that was going to air in, like, 4 hours. So I go to my boss, tail between my legs, and just say, "Hey, I erased Wheel of Fortune." He sighs and talks to his manager. They work out something. What they had worked out was that they were going to air the show for the next night. They were going to air that show that night, but they flipped them and then aired the show that was supposed to air that night, have that overnighted on tape back to us so that we could have another copy, and then air that the next night.

I don't know if there were any repercussions from Wheel of Fortune for us reversing the air order or if the commercials got messed up or anything like that. All I know is what happened and how they fixed it and I never heard anything else about it. It was a good thing that it wasn't Jeopardy that I had done that to because these shows are sequential. So whoever wins one night is on

the next night. So had that happened with Jeopardy, it would have been out of order and people at home would have been able to tell, but with Wheel of Fortune, they wouldn't have been able to know.

### **Female 33**

When I was in high school, I worked a retail job at Winners - which is the Canadian equivalent to Marshall's for my friends in the United States. I remember, one afternoon, very close to Christmas, my line was especially long. Of course, I was doing my best to be friendly despite having sore feet. The cardinal rule when you work in retail is don't look at the clock because it just makes the time feel like it's going by slower.

Anyways, then came Hank. I'm not sure this is his real name, but I feel like if I call him that, you'll have a good idea of what he looked like. He approached my register holding a tiny teddy bear, which already had me cracking up on the inside because it looked hilarious. He said, "I'd like you to give me a discount on this bear." I asked why, and he pointed out that the bear was holding a red heart in his paws, and there was a teeny tiny white string that was meant to fasten the heart closer to the bear's chest. But since it was loose, the heart was just a little farther away from its body. So let's put it this way, if I'd pulled the little string out before he even saw the bear, he would have never known that it was there.

Anyways, I kind of thought he was kidding. It was really a minuscule thing to give a discount for. So I said, "I'm not sure I can give you a discount for that, sir." He said, "All right, then call the manager." Now the people behind me heard him say those words and they all rolled their eyes in unison because the line was already super long. Now, they all have to wait for my manager to get there.

Well, anyways, Josie came over and asked, "What's the problem here?" In my cheeky kind of way, I said this gentleman would like a discount because this teeny tiny string has come detached." Well, Josie looked into my eyes and I could tell she was really trying to say, "Are you serious right now?" I raised my eyebrows to say back, "Yep, I sure am." She could tell he was determined and my line was super long and growing. So instead of making a fuss and arguing back and forth with him, she simply said, "Okay. I can take the teddy bear from 12.99 to 12." It was our store policy back then to always mark prices down to the even number. He considered it for a split second and then went, "No, I want a full dollar off." Both of our jaws dropped. Josie said, "I did take a dollar off, sir." And he said, "No, you didn't. You gave me 99 cents."

Now, I know her well. She wasn't good at hiding her feelings - they always showed on her face. She scowled at him and it set him off. He started yelling about how we didn't have the spirit of Christmas and he's just trying to buy a gift, and we work for a big corporation worried about pennies. For some reason, he kept saying, "This is the spirit of Christmas." Well, the people behind him were all listening to this insanity and disbelief. Finally, a guy in the back yelled, "Hey buddy, I'll give you 25 cents to shut the hell up." Those words have lived rent-free in my head ever since. If only I could tell you how many times I've wanted to say, "Here's 25 cents to shut the hell up. Newsflash, people working minimum wage don't get paid enough to deal with your shit. There, I said it."

### **Female 34**

I once worked at a dog kennel and I was the staff member that was in charge of giving tours at the time when a client came in a very expensive Ferrari. They wanted to have us pet sit and have their dogs overnight at the dog kennel or the pet kennel. When I was giving them the tours,



this gentleman was on his phone the whole time - like, just phone to the face - not paying attention, not listening, not looking around. However, his partner was, and she kept telling him, "You need to get off the phone. You need to be present. You need to pay attention."

Well, I was giving him a tour. We made it through the whole kennel. He really was not actively participating in this tour and wasn't really interested. He was just very busy on his phone. His partner was like, "Well, we want to see a luxury wing." We had a luxury wing available for dogs. In this area, there is a step up to get into the luxury wing and we made it down the corridor. We showed them the suites. They have TVs, beds, and literally all the luxury items that an animal could want - toys and bedding and everything.

At the end, we were walking back down the corridor out of the luxury wing. Now, this step that they stepped up onto, they have stepped down. He had his phone in his hand and he was still on that phone, and he said, "Watch your step." I was standing on the very bottom of the step, kind of waiting for them to come past me, and I don't know what he tripped on, whether with himself or just tripped on the floor. Mind you, I'm a very small individual. I'm, like, 5'1", 100 pounds. This gentleman was very large, very tall, very broad, probably a football player or a linebacker, and he fell directly on top of me. When they say timber and a tree is falling, that was my experience. This gentleman fell on top of me.

His wife or partner is laughing hysterically, and she's like, "I can't believe this. You just fell!" I'm underneath him. I'm trying to get to my radio to radio my partner at the time that I was working with - my coworker was named Pat - and I said, "Pat, I need your help. I need your help right now. Come get me, please." I'm stuck under this gentleman, trying to squirm my way out from underneath him, and he's just stunned. He's not moving. He's not responding. He's in shock. I don't know what is happening. I finally got off from underneath this guy.

Pat busts through the door. I'm squirming out from underneath this gentleman that I just gave a tour to. His wife is hysterically laughing and cannot hold her composure. It had to have been the most momentous event that ever happened to me in my young career, working at this kennel for pets, and it is certainly a memory I will not soon forget.

Luckily, we scooped the guy off the floor. We peeled him up off the floor. He was fine. His ego was bruised, understandably. His wife left and they never came back. They never had us board their animals. They never came back for doggy daycare, and I certainly do not blame them.

### **Scott**

Well, I hope you enjoyed that. It was fun putting that together, and I have to say a big thanks to everyone who sent in their story. And it's a good reminder, next time you get up and go to work, you really can't know for sure what's going to happen!

If you'd like a full transcript of this episode, you can get that at [WhatWasThatLike.com/158](http://WhatWasThatLike.com/158). That transcript was created by my professional transcriptionist, James Lai. And of course the graphics for this episode were created by my professional digital graphic designer, Bob Bretz. They both do amazing work.

No Listener Story this time, since you've essentially just heard more than 90 minutes of listener stories. But I've got a bunch of good ones lined up. And I'm still waiting on YOU to send yours in.

Stay safe, and I'll see you back here in one week, with a brand new episode.