

On-Site Disposal

Trash day was always a pain. And why wouldn't it be? You'd haul smelly, dripping bags of half-full cups and vegetables that kids refused to eat off to a giant bin full of other smelly bags, dripping full of similar (but most likely worse) crap. It's a job specifically designed to be a hassle in every way possible. So there Vincent was, resident drive-thru order taker and the poor, unlucky bastard saddled with the cart of white garbage bags dripping god-knows-what onto the asphalt, holding his breath as best he could. Finally approaching the already overflowed dumpster (Mount St. Helens as they called it), he once again sucked in some nice clean air as he heaved a bag over his shoulder and onto the ever growing mountain of waste-filled lumps. He soon realized that there was no chance that the great many bags he *still* had to get rid of were gonna fit. As he began to ponder simply cutting and running (it *was* closing time after all), a raccoon appeared from around the corner, dressed in an orange collared shirt with a loosely fit blue tie in an effort to display some modicum of professionalism, and a lopsided name tag that read:

Samuel

Unit Manager

Procyonid On-Site Disposal Services

Vince sighed, now realizing the issue. Samuel never did his job. You'd think an urban-living mammal hired by a restaurant for the sole purpose of eating excess garbage on busy days to save dumpster space would believe he'd had it made. But such was not the case with Samuel. His ideal work day consisted of eating a couple scraps, then taking his "union-mandated break" as he disappeared into the surrounding trees for the remainder of the work day to smoke his cigarettes and voice his societal grievances with his fellow employees. As he looked up at the mountain of garbage, Samuel gave a low whistle. "Goddamn, that's one helluva stack you got there! How'd it get so big...?"

Vince, now sufficiently annoyed, turned and gave him a sharp stare. "Yeah, how *did* it get this big? We hire you guys to take care of this, right?"

"Yeah, and I took care of it to the best of my ability. It's not *my* fault if you've got people ordering too much stuff. What, you gonna complain to me that your place is *too* successful?" Samuel barked as he began to tense up, realizing he needed to defend his honor.

"Best of your—', no one's seen you all day!"

"Hey, what I do on my time isn't any of your concern. If you find that my work here isn't satisfactory, you can just let the truck guys take care of the rest."

“They can’t handle *this* many bags! They’ve already complained about the amount we leave in here three times in the past month!” Vince yelled, as he punctuated each of his sentences with an attempt to cram a bag into the bin’s stack.

“I don’t see how that’s my problem”, Samuel said nonchalantly as he took a puff of his cigarette.

In an ever-growing struggle to maintain his composure, Vince tried to keep his voice down. “They said they’re gonna stop collecting here if it happens again, that’s *why* we hired you ‘on-site disposal’ guys in the first place. Now we need you to do *your* job here, and lighten the load.”

Samuel grunted dismissively, blowing more smoke into the air “Yeah well maybe start by doing *your* job, and create a more comfortable work environment for guys like me!”

Vince, at this point, was nearly beyond words, “What...the *hell* are you talking about?”

“Yeah, do you know how much harassment I deal with on a day-to-day basis here? Your manager says that I *smell!*” Samuel snapped, throwing his cigarette to the ground for dramatic effect, before then proceeding to pull out and light another one. His need for nicotine appeared to be just as great as his need to vent his anger.

Vince had to force himself to not break his matching orange BIC lighter right then and there, “You *do* smell! If you don’t like her saying that to you, then just don’t go in the building. You don’t even need to go in the building when you come here!”

Samuel was taken aback in grave shock at this suggestion, as if he’d just asked him to commit a crime or something, “Don’t go into the—?! Then how else am I supposed to get my morning coffee?!”

Samuel frequently mooched off of the restaurant coffee supply. Complaints due to lack of supply were high during his scheduled “visits.” Just another problem he caused. “Get your own damn coffee! Maybe then the managers might actually tolerate you!”

“Ugh, you’re really whiny, you know that? I’m just a humble serviceman, doing my duty to society. And *this* is how I’m repaid?” Samuel said with another of his signature grunts.

Vince reached his limit. He began to furiously toss all the bags on the cart to the side of the dumpster. “You know what? Fine. Do whatever the hell you want, just please send someone over tomorrow who actually DOES THEIR JOB.”

Samuel simply smirked. Another signature of his. “You kiddin’? You all may be annoying, but you’ve got *amazing* coffee. I ain’t giving that up”, he said before flicking his cigarette butt into a crevice of the trash bag mountain.

Vince cursed under his breath and went back inside to clock out. He could practically hear Samuel snickering with his buddies up in the trees just a few blocks past the restaurant, him telling them all about his “stressful day” *“Just another day in paradise...”* he thought to himself as he got in his beat-up grey Toyota. He needed some sleep.

Approximately seven hours and forty-two minutes later, the rhythmic beeping of his alarm brought Vincent back to reality. As he rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, he reached over for his phone and began to pull himself out of bed when he noticed a great handful of voicemails he’d received an hour prior. And all from his manager. Vince sighed, he was most likely getting called in early to deal with the trash problem. He reluctantly played the first voicemail:

“Hey Vince, this is Molly. Now..uh..before you drive all the way up to work today, I’m calling to tell ya we’re closed for the day. You’re probably gonna hear this from someone else but uh...we had a fire last night...out back in the dumpster. No one knows how yet, but apparently the whole pile just suddenly lit up after we closed down. So we’re staying closed for the day for safety reasons. So uh...enjoy your day off, I guess...I’ll be here dealing with the fire department...”

The message ended there. He began to think about just how big a fire that would've been, with all those bags. He also remembers Samuel flicking his cigarette into the dumpster, right into the epicenter of their own Mount St. Helens. Vincent quickly jumped out of bed and put on his uniform. For once, he was excited to go to work.