

I Mean, There's Nothing Else To Do

It was a simple task. It was one that I had done at least hundreds of times. Well, probably not hundreds of times like me masturbating but I'm pretty sure I have gotten a lot of haircuts. There was nothing else to do and besides, I really needed one. It had been about three weeks since my last cut and my sideburns have gotten to a length that my friend Rachel described them to make me look like a cop in a blaxploitation film. This needs to be changed. Don't get me wrong, I love the idea of being a total boss: kicking ass, taking names, running around with funk/soul music playing in the background all the while I say clever one-liners like: "Time's up, honky!" or "You outta time, honky!" and in less serious scenes: "Lovely weather we're having....honky!" It's just the fact that my scrawny five feet and one inch frame and slightly large head cannot pull off the magic that is 70's sideburns. What can you do? You win some you lose some.

So there I am, outside faced with the elements. Well not really the elements like woods and trees and dirt and shit but the elements of Chicago like piss covered hand-railings, gum-stained sidewalk and the constant aroma of pizza (don't get me wrong, I love it. It's one of the many reasons that I love this place) but more importantly the people of Chicago. It always seems to be very calm, not that many, just a couple people out to run some errands such as picking up some milk or taking their purebred canine companions out for walks but as soon as I turn the corner to Michigan Ave pure chaos breaks out. Hordes and hordes of people stroll down the streets, all of them with a sense of urgency on their faces. Each and every one of them having a place to be. I turn it into a game in guessing where they're going. My favorite person to see on

my walks down Michigan is upper-middle class guy on vacation with family. Usually in his late thirties, early forties he is accompanied by his thirteen year old daughter who is off texting her friends about how boring it is to be in Chicago and how lame visiting the Sears Tower (Willis if you want to be “that guy”) was yesterday on the brand new iPhone that she got for her birthday last week or whatever the hell it is thirteen years old think about. You know what? Who cares? They’re thirteen they’re angry about any and everything. Beside them is mom who’s talking to the bellhop outside the hotel in an attempt to find a place to have lunch and by lunch she means the place with the bets Bloody Mary during lunchtime. What a happy family.

A little ahead of them is another person that is always interesting to see during my jaunts on Michigan Ave and that’s hipster musician. You know the one I’m talking about; always wears a sweater that he bought from a thrift store in Wicker Park, he only wear low-cut canvas sneakers, even in the Winter and he loves to Instagram pictures of the ironic things that he see and post them on Twitter and Facebook so that his equally hip sweater wearing friends can then have a pseduo-competition to see who leaves the most witty comment about drinking Pepsi out of a Coke glass. He was meeting up with his bandmates, you can tell that’s what he’s up to because he has his guitar case. Trust me, he will always just be going to or coming from practice with his band. You will go to his shows and even download his band’s new album because he will spam your Facebook newsfeed with links to the band’s Soundcloud account and out of curiosity you will play the first song on the album and you will realize they sound exactly like Arcade Fire and you don’t even like Arcade Fire in the first place so you will delete them from your iTunes and lie saying that you loved it when he ask you “How do you like it?” , Hipster musician, everyone!

This would be the part where I would go back and start to think about my life as a blackspoitation film again and imitate that weird sound the bass makes in those films. Wah-wah-wah! Getting a haircut, right! I walk into the hotel, yes, I get my hair cut inside of a hotel. Which I didn't think was thing but apparently it is. I don't know the name of the hotel though. I believe it's The Congress Hotel though. Yep. Congress Hotel! There's usually a bellhop outside that always tries to give me his acting reel, hoping that I can get him work. I guess this what happens when people find out you're a TV Writing Major student at an art school. He never has it though "I got you next time, kid. Next time!" I will return a nod and continue walking inside the hotel, but this time he told me that he had his reel. I told him that I will get it when I'm done getting my haircut and walked inside the hotel. I like to imagine that his reel is the greatest thing ever. You know he's in other student films where he plays the supportive black father, or even a security guard with little to no lines. You know? Stereotypical roles for black people in media. It's pretty fucked up. But hey, that's America for ya!

I hate going to new barbers I always get so antsy about them, how do I know they won't mess up my hair and I will have to go three weeks with a crooked hairline and that is not something I can socially handle. Luckily, this wasn't the case anymore and I walked in. Immediately, I am hit with the smell of hairspray and the humming of clippers. Sitting in one of chairs that was place against the window with the name of the shop "Headrest" in gold paint was some old man. He's the kind of character that I love adore. Late 50's or so but he tries to stay young with the help of technology. He had an iPhone. He had Siri, it sometimes didn't work when he needed it to like the time he asked her what his schedule was going to be like this month, like you know in the commercial but instead it called his granddaughter who let the

phone ring three times before she decided to press “decline”. Which then reminds me to call my grandparents. I haven’t talked to them in about four months. But there’s a reason why I don’t call and it’s a good one. I still have to call them from the last time four months passed without me calling them. It’s a never-ending cycle. Nothing can be done to fix it, might as well not even try to fix it.

It was 1:03 and it was my turn to get my hair cut. That’s right, I made an appointment for this. I had that much time on my hand today, but not really. In actuality I had an incredible amount of homework that needed to be done, I could have cleaned my room, my kitchen, my bathroom and even did my laundry and there is always something that a Resident Assistant hasn’t done, but instead all of the things sounded completely boring and the lesser of all those evils was making an appointment to get a haircut. I’ll take my chances with someone else doing work while I sit and reap all the glory. Lawrence was my guy. I started going to him to cut my hair a couple months back after I stopped going to another barbershop that was also on Michigan but more down south and was \$5 more expensive. What can I say? I’m a college student. I was apprehensive at first about him cutting my hair, mainly because he was Italian and let’s just say that I have never had an Italian guy cut my hair and I wasn’t sure if he was up for the challenge that is a black guy with a messed up haircut. But fortunately he did know what he was doing. One of the best cuts I have received. Hairline, completely even. My mustache was trimmed and shaped in a manner that did not make me look like some kind of arrogant douchebag. I was happy. I was content with this one. After my cut that is when he told me his name, he asked for mine as well. With a smile I told him “Aaron” from that day on with each visit, he will always ask me my name. This will probably be my eleventh visit to him now, and this visit was nothing

different. I took my sit in his chair and the magic started. He started brushing my hair and then asked me my plans for this weekend. It was Saturday and I had to go to a show. My friend Dane band was headlining it and I couldn't miss that, he would be pissed and besides I already RSVP'd on Facebook. There's not turning back now. He went on and clicked on a pair of hair clippers. They hummed as he ran them across my head, slowly I started to see little piles of hair falling to the checkered floors, he started talking about his plans for after work. He was going out with some of friends. They're club promoters he said so they're always up to crazy shenanigans, like the guys on Entourage. He went on and said that he doesn't really like going out that much so this was a big deal in his circle. I understand what he means, there are many nights where I just stay in and just watch Restaurant: Impossible in awe as chef Robert Irvin take a failing restaurant in some small town in the Midwest and flip it into a restaurant that is nothing short then five-star dining. It's quite inspiring. Kind of like Extreme Makeover or that other show that's exactly like it with a edgier and more British chef.

He goes on and starts to cut down my sideburns. So long, Dolemite, see you in another three weeks. After he finishes with that he starts to line my hairline and rounding the hair on back of my head. The clippers barely biting the nip of my neck. The vibrations causing an odd chill and discomfort down my spine. We talk about school. What you studying? TV Writing and Producing. He goes on and says that his mother used to work on the Jerry Springer show. Impressive. We get to the end of the tradition he hands me a mirror. I look at myself in the reflection and turn from side to side to see if side of my face are equal in length and in look, they are. With a nod of approval he takes the mirror away from me and unwraps the white paper from around my neck and begins to drench the wadded up paper with alcohol. He starts to rub the

alcohol-drenched paper against my forehead on my newly exposed skin on the sides of my face and on the back of my neck. Here it comes. The searing pain that comes afterwards. Painful enough to make you want to punch a baby but that is a need that is quite temporary. The pain only last for thirty seconds but they're thirty seconds full of punching babies in the face.

I get out of his chair and pay him his \$20 he then shakes my hand and asks me my name. I tell him once again that it is Aaron and leave the shop. Until next time. I leave the hotel, the reel guy is nowhere to be seen so I continue my walk down Michigan Ave to get back to my apartment. There was nothing else that I needed to do. There was no reason that I was outside now, I might as well go. And so I start my trek back to my apartment to continue my day of boredom and answering resident's questions about how to get their roommates in trouble. What can I say? Tis life.