



WORKING by Studs Turkel
(needs to look 20)

My name is Charlie, I'll be twenty in three weeks. I was recommended for this job as a copy boy on a Chicago paper. I went down to the paper and talked to the editor, told him how much I wanted to be a journalist. He liked me - I had a tie on.

Coming to work for me was a kind of missionary kind of thing. I was bringing organic walnuts and organic raisins and giving them away to everybody. See, at this stage of the game I was in a very spiritual mood. I was enjoying my job, because I was answering the phone most of the time. People could call up and complain or have a problem, and I'd say: "This is a capitalist newspaper. And as long as it's a capitalist newspaper, it's not gonna serve you, because its purpose is to make money for its owner." And it'd tell them to call up the editor, or come down and take over the paper.

A lot of people responded very well to these suggestions. But the editor calls me into his office, and he says, "Blah blah blah blah blah..." I wanted to take a baseball bat and smash his head in. I mean, he's a really nice person, I like him a lot. I had been thinking for months, what will I do when I get fired? I wanted to do something to show them, "Hey, I'm better than you mother-fuckers, I'm getting fired because I'm different." I was thinking, how could I show them? Smoke a joint in the city room? Meditate in the library? I had to think fast, so I looked at the editor, and I said, "I hope you can live with the conditions you're creating!" And then I just turned and walked out and started to cry. He hurried after me and said, "Wait a minute, I'm not creating these conditions, you are." I said "No, no, I'm not the one who has the power; you're the one who has the power!"

Now I've gotten myself on unemployment. They were nice to me the first few times. Then a woman told me to "get a number." I wanted to tell her, "Fuck you." But that's bitterness. I don't like being bitter. I'm a pacifist.