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American Studies
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AN: Would you please state your name, occupation, and the organization you work for?

LF: My name is Lindsey Foster, I am a certified tanning specialist, and I work for Tan N' Tone

AN: Where are you originally from and what did your parents do for a living?

LF: I am originally from Norfolk, Virginia, but I spent a few years in Charlottesville, Virginia and Nelson County, Virginia. Now I am in Blacksburg and my parents are in Roanoke. My dad is retired Navy and is a postal worker now, my mom works for Bank of America.

AN: How long have you worked at your current job?

LF: Umm it was about February 2008, so I guess about 8 months

AN: What are your day to day responsibilities?

LF: Generally I check people in when they come in, I tan them, I estimate the time they should tan based on how long they tanned the previous time and if they got any pink or red or anything, upgrade their beds, upgrade their account, take them to their room and show them how the bed works if they don't know. Umm the other usual stuff like clean the bed when they get out if the other people aren't here that do that. And also we have daily and weekly duties. I also do a count of the money at the end of the night and stuff like that

AN: How do your customers usually treat you?

LF: Usually pretty nice. Every now and then you get someone in who is angry because they are tanning here for the first time in five or six months and we won't let them go in the bed for its full time, so there are those people, but most people are happy that we monitor the time that they need, and require them to wear eye wear so they don't damage their eyes with the UV rays and everything, they are generally pretty nice.

AN: How did you get this job? Why did you apply?

LF: Umm actually I used to tan here as a freshman and I walked in one day and there was a sign up in a window and, I didn't even know what I was applying for but I knew I needed a job of some sort. Umm so I came in and did the interview and a few days latter they called me and said I could start.

AN: How has your job changed since you started working? Have you gotten a promotion?

LF: I was actually promoted after a few months from assistant to associate which means that I have to do less cleaning and less running around doing stuff all the time, and more time with the customer and dealing with the money, more responsibilities and also I got a little but of a pay increase which was nice. The wages didn't increase too much but I started getting commission on any types of sales like lotion and stuff, and if someone comes in and buys a package or upgrades to a higher level bed I get that commission

AN: What's the job turnover like?

LF: We actually just had a few girls that just graduated and left that had been working here since they were freshman so they were here a pretty long time, as long as they were in Blacksburg, but there are also a few people who just come for a few months during the

busy season. Which turns out to just be a pay as you go job because we have a few months during the winter which are pretty busy where we need extra staff

AN: What level of education does this job require?

LF: Middle school education (laughs). Ummm it's pretty simple. People have to go through some weeks of training for the basic assistant job but really you probably need a high school degree, but we have girls here who are still in high school.

AN: Did you need any special certification or training for this job?

LF: When I first got the job I really didn't need any kind of training I had people who went through the daily tasks with me, most of its written out what I needed to do. Then umm when I became an associate I probably had three weeks of training and they had me working by myself without them looking over my shoulders. Then I had to take a 100 question exam on tanning and everything that comes along with that. So it was a little intense but not too bad and now I have a plaque on the wall.

AN: What is your relationship with the management like?

LF: Ummm it's pretty much the same as it is with any other coworkers. I usually try not to cross that line between business and private so I tend to keep to myself, but I am sociable. I see it as your friends are different from your co workers.

AN: What is the oddest request you have ever had either by a customer or management?

LF: The strangest question was from a customer. The thing that made it so much more odd is that he came in a tanned and left, and called me from his cell phone, so it's like one of those things if you are ashamed to say it you probably shouldn't say it at all. But he umm called and asked first of all what did I tan in. And asked what kind of tan lines I had or if I covered up my chest. And some other kinds of stuff. I kinda felt like he had been watching me. And he also asked if we had lip balm AKA nip balm to put on your nipples (laugh) so your nipples don't get crusty while you're tanning, so that was pretty strange.

AN: Who is your typical customer?

LF: Umm here in the Blacksburg location we usually get students, mostly girls, I would say about 15 percent of the students who come in are male. Usually its girls from Virginia tech here. In Christiansburg they have more of the local people, more older people who have been living in Christiansburg for a while

AN: How does Virginia Tech affect your business?

LF: like I said most of our customers in Blacksburg are students so it really helps a lot. I think probably without them the Blacksburg location would not survive very well. We would have to get rid of this location and stay strictly in Christiansburg

AN: What are some of the grossest things that have happened to you at work?

LF: Ummm most of them have to do with bowel movements of some kind. But this girl actually went into clean the bed and I don't know how this woman wasn't embarrassed, the bathroom is not far, but she took a crap on the tanning bed, the bottom layer of the acyclic, it was so weird. I don't know how you can do that. Another thing is that this girl lifted up the rug, well actually she wasn't a girl she was like a 40 year old woman so she could hold her pee by now hopefully, but she peed on the floor, threw down some towels and threw the rug over top of the towels like we wouldn't notice it, it was pretty nasty. And another girl, we went in there and we usually check behind the tanning bed because stuff can slide off behind there, and we looked back there and there was this little anonymous towel back there and one of the workers pulled it out and it was actually

covered in period blood that some girl had just wiped and threw the towel behind the tanning bed so we all had a little experience with that.

AN: What would you say you like least about your job?

LF: Probably stuff we have to clean. You would be surprised by how nasty people are. The smell when you go into a tanning bed when someone has just gotten out of it is gross. I have kinda learned to wait a while to go in unless we are really busy. But sometimes you don't have an option and you go in and it kinda just smells like burnt flesh especially if they don't use any type of tanning products. Its horrible, its nasty.

AN: What would you say you like best about your job?

LF: Probably tanning for free and dealing with the people, I like the whole customer service aspect of my job.

AN: Do you get any discounts on the products that you sell?

LF: Yea we actually get any products that we buy here at cost so whatever discount that is from the original price. Umm and we also tan for free so that with high level beds is pretty expensive so it's nice not to have to pay the hundreds of dollars that I would pay on tanning a year

AN: Would you recommend this job to others?

LF: Yea I definitely would especially if it was going to be a temporary job while you're going though school. Just something in the meantime before you get a real job. I am fortunate enough that I am a student right now, I go to Virginia Tech, so I plan to not be here for too much longer before I graduate which is hopefully in 2010, so I will get a real job after that, but this is good for now.

AN: Do you have anything else you would like to share?

LF: Well like I just said, I am not going to be here much longer; I wouldn't recommend this job as a career choice or long time job. You don't really get any benefits you would need especially if you had a family. So yea there is no health care or dental insurance so I wouldn't recommend it.