

Interview with Jamie Kiser

for HUM 2504: Introduction to American Studies, Prof. Emily Satterwhite, Fall 2008

Occupation: Housekeeper, Lane Hall, Virginia Tech

Time and Place: October 30, 2008, 9a.m.-10a.m., Lane Hall, Blacksburg, Virginia

Interviewer: Erin Weiner, sophomore Interdisciplinary Studies major from Virginia Beach, Virginia

EW= Erin Weiner

JK= Jamie Kiser

EW: Please state your name and position here at Virginia Tech

JK: My name is Jamie Kiser and I am a housekeeper at Lane Hall.

EW: Where are you from originally?

JK: I'm from, uh, Bath County, originally.

EW: In Virginia?

JK: Yeah, in Virginia.

EW: Okay, and what did your parents do for a living?

JK: My mom, she worked at, uh, in Staunton, Virginia, at, uh, the hospital down there, for, uh, I don't know how many years. It was quite a few years. And my dad worked for State Highway Department.

EW: Okay. Where do you live now?

JK: Where do I live now? I live in Elliston, Virginia.

EW: Do you like it there?

JK: I like it...okay. [laughter]

EW: Alright! Why did you choose to work here at Tech?

JK: ...Well, I worked at the Intermit Corporation in Floyd for, um, some time, you know, probably thirty some years. I was a lifetime employee there, but the plant closed down so I come over here. For a few years, I mean, to work it out. You know, till my retirement.

EW: Okay, so how long have you worked here?

JK: Uh, it'll be four years I have worked here.

EW: Four years, on...do you know the date?

JK: On the first of November.

EW: Oh, very soon! Well congratulations! Four year anniversary....Alright...well, what would you say your schedule is? How many hours per week do you work?

JK: Here I work forty hours a week.

EW: Do you ever get any overtime in?

JK: Naw. [laughter]

EW: Alright, and can you describe a typical work day for me?

JK: Oh, what I do?

EW: Uh huh.

JK: Mmkay, well I come in, I usually open up Formoyer Hall over there for the rest of the crew you know? I usually come in 4:30, I usually get there to open it up early. And once we start up, our official hours run from 5:00 [AM] to 1:30 [PM]. And I come over here around

ten minutes after five, lock down, open this building up. Then I start my routine, going through the building, and, well I, you know, check the restrooms out, which is three in this buildin'. I gotta clean those first. That's a daily routine. But then, after that, I, uh, go through every room in the buildin', which is, we got like, 64 offices on this buildin', five different bays. And, you know, I check the rooms out to see if they're clean, you know, and pull the trash. After that, that takes usually...ehhh, I am usually right at break time when I do that. It takes close to four hours to do all that. After that, I usually try to, you know, I try to get the water fountains cleaned out, and usually clean the windows off at the entrance way, and vacuum the entire first floor. 'Cause, you know, the students comin' in, and professors and stuff like that. 'Cause you know, first impression is always important to make.

EW: Yes, of course.

JK: So, I do that. And after that, I usually try to clean some offices out, far as vacuuming and stuff like that. Before the professors get here, 'cause a lot of times they are workin'. You know, they don't like you botherin' them, so I try to work around that too, you know. And, students are comin' and goin', and you know. And, let's see, after that, that's, you know, in a week's time, I don't make it through that whole operation. I try to, but it used to be a two person job up here, and now it's, uh, you know, due to, you know, the state budget and all that, they cut it back to one person. And you know, that's okay by me 'cause, you know, I like to work by myself. Plus, you know, if somebody else workin' with ya, sometimes it slow ya down.

EW: Yeah, you start chatting it up.

JK: So, anyway, you know, with that schedule, you know, I try to work to that schedule, plus there's always other things to do...like, uh, this building has a large front porch on it that needs to be clean. I try to get that at least once or twicet a week dependin' on how clean it is. And also, I need, I try to check the perimeter of the buildin' once or twicet the week, too, for trash and stuff like that. And in the winter time, if it snows, of course we gotta get out there and shovel all the snow. But, so far, we haven't had that for the last year or two, so.

EW: I was in this building last year so I appreciate the snow shoveling. I do not like to fall.

JK: So, is there uh, anything else?

EW: What—is there anything else you have to do every day before you leave? Is there like a—

JK: Uh, everyday 'fore I leave I usually, uh, you know, go in, uh, make sure the restrooms are stalked up good. 'Cause, you know, after I leave, the building is still active for...four hours or so. So I wanna make sure everythin' is stalked up, you know, and I usually try to check the class conference rooms for student, too. If I can work it out, you know, get it in there. So, it makes for a pretty busy day. It don't get dull or bored up here....Anyways...

EW: Awesome. Alright, well, what do you like best about your job?

JK: Uh, I guess, the best thing I like 'bout this job would be it's interesting to work up here in this building 'cause you around the people a lot, and too me, being around students and the professors and stuff, it's always interesting, you know, to chat with them. And I get a thrill out of that, and I think, you know, if you speak to people and polite to them, it makes the job go better, and I like that.

EW: And, on the other hand, what would you say is the thing you like least about this job?

JK: The least...I don't know...getting up so early in the morning! I've got a routine of doing that, so, you know, it's no so bad, but that would probably be the worst. I guess the best thing would be getting off early, too!

EW: Getting off early. Yes, that's right! Pros and cons there with coming in early.

JK: Yeah.

EW: Um, how would you say your supervisors are; are they fair, unfair?

JK: Well, up here, you know, I don't miss no time, and, uh, I try to do the job, you know, the best way I know how, and I have no problem with them, my supervisors. You know, I really have no problem whatsoever.

EW: Well that's great. That's not always the case.

JK: You know, if you abide by the rules and stuff like that, usually it's no problem. That's kinda the way I try to do. I got employee of the month here a year or two ago.

EW: Oh! Well, congratulations! Did you get a plaque?

JK: Haha..yeah, well, yeah.

EW: What is the craziest thing you have seen, or the craziest experience you have had here?

JK: In this building? Well, let's see... I guess there's always been the, you know, thought that there is a ghost in Lane Hall! But, I've never seen nothin'.

EW: There's a ghost?

JK: [laughter] You know, there's always, there's the tale...

EW: Aw, tell me the tale.

JK: The ghost of Lane Hall. You know, doors openin' and stuff like that...[laughter] See, I've heard the doors open a time or two, but I haven't seen nothin'. You know, and it's always some of these professors that come in, these ladies, and I tell um there's somethin' in the closet or somethin', that morning. You know, kinda gets their attention, wakes 'em up in the morning, you know what I mean? So...

EW: I can't believe I have never heard the story of Lane Hall before.

JK: Well, it's the story. I've never seen nothin', but...

EW: Well, that is too cool.

EW: Okay. What is something that most people do not know about your job?

JK: Do not know about this job... I don't know. Comin' in early like that, a lot of people are not aware of that, us comin' in so early in the morning. But, I guess it's an opportunity to get more things done when there is no one here, early in the morning. And most folks don't realize that, but we do, we come in early. And I guess that's an advantage to that of working in this building, or any building. It's probably the reason they have it set up like that.

EW: Okay. Are you happy doing what you are doing?

JK: I'm happy, you know. I'm—you know, to me it's a lot different from what I used to do. You know, I used to be in the high production work, and comin' into a job like this is totally different. And, you know, yeah; I'm happy with it. It's as far as what I expected when I come here, you know.

EW: Alright. If you could make one change to your job or daily routine, what would it be?

JK: Lord...[laughter] What would I do? I'd like to put a couple more hours in the day, but we don't do that here but I got eight hours to get things done, and a lot of times I don't have enough time to get things done. And, I don't know that, you know, putting some more people, more help, would help the situation or not, but right now we can't do that, and I understand that. But, you know, that would probably be one of the things I would do if I could do that. Put some more help in this building, and there is other buildings similar to this. You know, I think that would probably help.

EW: Alright, creative question. What, regardless of any talents, you know, any restrictions you have, if you could have any job in the world, what would it be and why?

JK: ANY JOB IN THE WORLD!!! Lord! Any job in the world? I would like a job where I could travel, I guess. I like to travel. I used to travel quite a lot, but I don't know about that... that's a job I would like to do. [laughter] I don't know about that.

EW: Professional traveler?

JK: I love the outdoors. I'd like a job where I was outside., you know, in the wildlife. Like outdoor hunter, or somethin' like that. Hey, I lovEW:-

EW: That's a dream job!

JK: Yeah, I would like to do that. 'Cause that's one of my hobbies, huntin' and fishin' and stuff like that. I love outdoors. To be able to work a job outdoors like that, would be ideal for me.

EW: Favorite place you've ever traveled to?

JK: Farthest place...I guess would be Germany, France.

EW: Is there anything else you would like to share? Any final thoughts?

JK: Uh, I don't know. I just appreciate your comin' down here and talk to me. I don't know what I done to deserve this, but hey uh I don't mind talkin' to you concentering this job.

I appreciate your time, I really do.

EW: I appreciate your time. Everyone...the general consensus of this building is that they love you; they look forward to seeing you during the day.

JK: Well, I enjoy the people here, I really do. It's what makes this job interesting. Students come in here and they talk and I listen. There's a lot of interesting this going on here. You can come up with a lot of conversations with different people. It's definitely a variety of people, and you know, I like to be around people a lot.

EW: Alright, well, thank you so much, that's it! That wasn't painful, was it?

JK: No, I mean, I thought it was ok. I hope that you got any information that you may need.