

Interview with Ray Cogar

For HUM 2504: Introduction to American Studies, Prof. Emily Satterwhite, Spring 2010

Occupation: Shift Manager, Pizza Hut, Blacksburg, VA

Time and Place: March 21, 2010, 7p.m. – 7:30p.m., 8000 Hunters Mill Rd. Apt. B/D
Blacksburg, VA

Interviewer: Ben Sharpe

BS: Ben Sharpe

RC: Ray Cogar

BS: Will you please state your name, your job title and the name of the organization that you work for?

RC: Alright, my name is Ray Cogar, I'm a shift manager here at the Pizza Hut in Blacksburg.

BS: And how long have you worked at your current job?

RC: I've been with Pizza Hut for about four years now, and about nine months up here in Blacksburg as manager.

BS: Uh would you please tell me a little bit about your family background?

RC: Ok um my father was...worked for a place where they pulverized coal and shipped it out until recent health problems caused him to retire from that and my mother is an electronic builder.

BS: Did they both work outside the home?

RC: Yes

BS: Um, would you describe in detail a typical day at your job?

RC: On a typical day I usually come in, count money and make sure everything's ok with that. Um, I help my other employees, like the drivers and cooks, when they need a lot of customer interaction whether it's phone calls or one on one interaction when they come in to pick up their food or place an order. And, uh, nightly...I do inventory each night, just like a quick inventory count and also I'm in charge of all the money at the end of the night.

BS: And how'd you first come to work at Pizza Hut?

RC: It was just a high school job I picked up on the weekends right after I turned 17. Just, uh, to have some cash to go out during the...the week and just to have a little spending money.

BS: Um, do you feel like your pay is equal to like the work you put in?

RC: Um, not really. A little bit underpaid. Um, the drivers that I have make a lot more than me considering they get tips and minimum wage.

BS: Would you rather be a driver?

RC: I would, but then I also like the position I'm in.

BS: Um, what are the benefits of your job besides the salary?

RC: Um, with my position I'm able to enroll in 401K and I also have health benefits and, uh, paid vacations.

BS: Do you like your job?

RC: I do, yeah.

BS: How does your job affect your social life, like financially in terms of the hours you work?

RC: Well, I usually don't get any support from my parents; it's all on me for rent and insurance and all that. So, um, I usually have to put in about 25 hours a week in order to pay for all my bills and still have some spending money on my own.

BS: So is it tight or is it pretty flexible? I mean are you able to do pretty much whatever?

RC: Uh yeah pretty flexible.

BS: That's cool. Um, are your bosses friendly?

RC: Yeah, they sure are. I have like one guy over me and he makes sure he works around everybody's school schedule and he's an alright guy to work for.

BS: Really? Do you get that feel from most people who work at Pizza Hut?

RC: Yeah, he's really like the only one that's...well there's a few more that aren't college age, but they're still younger...like the oldest we have there is like 30, uh, except him...he's the only one that's older. But, he works with college kids all the time, like, he kind of still has that feel.

BS: That's probably good, especially in Blacksburg. Um, so where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years?

RC: Um, graduate from school...possible grad school and I plan to be in the human resources part of business management.

BS: So, is that your major?

RC: Yes

BS: Alright, um, do you ever have anything...uh, any like funny stories or anything happen at work?

RC: Um.

BS: Like, I don't know anything...or is it pretty straight-forward?

RC: Some of the people that the drivers meet when they go deliver food, some crazy stories especially on weekends, but not really anything in the store that I'm involved in.

BS: So, it's pretty straight-forward usually, everyday it's about the same?

RC: Yeah.

BS: Um, well uh, do you...is it...do you find it hard to juggle like academics and school and uh with hours working?

RC: Yeah, sometimes I do. Luckily, the majority of my hours uh come during like weekend times. I work, say, 10 hour or 12 hour shifts during weekends. So, that makes it easier so I don't have to worry about going to bed after we close late at night and trying to get up for...I have 8 am and 10 am classes. But, I mean, I don't really have a lot of free time; it's either school or work.

BS: Right.

RC: When I do have free time.

BS: So, I guess that flexible schedule is probably due to the guy you said that helps you work your schedule out like that?

RC: Yeah, he's pretty good. He has a tough job making out the schedule with all the college kids and he does a pretty good job with it.

BS: You ever have any grievances with hours?

RC: Uh, yeah there are some. Like, if somebody else can't work, being a manager, I'm gonna be the one that's trying to fill in or expected to kind of fill in for them.

BS: So, you kind of pick up what they can't?

RC: Yeah.

BS: Let's see...uh, do you have any future plans related to this job?

RC: Um...I possibly could uh I'm originally from the store back home, and I'd like to work there like when I go back during summer. Maybe like after I graduate from college until I find another more permanent job, I'd like to do something with that store.

BS: So job security is pretty good then?

RC: Yeah.

BS: So where's back home?

RC: Tazewell, VA. Like an hour and a half away.

BS: Yeah, I know of it. Um, well uh do you have any co-workers that you don't get along with or is it pretty easy going?

RC: It's pretty easy going. One of the fellow managers, he's the one who actually got me my job back home... he's been one of my best friends for about 16 years. I also work with one of my roommates and a guy that I even like played soccer against in high school...from a rival high school. So, everybody's pretty cool to work with.

BS: Well, that's pretty cool. Um, well, do you have anything else you want to share about working at Pizza Hut and living in Blacksburg?

RC: No, I think that's about it.

BS: That's about it. Alright, well thanks for your time.

RC: Thank you.