The Unbearable Lightness of Being Done With College

Fiction By David Ogmore

The first thing I remember about my high school graduation day was the humidity that made my black gown stick to my legs. My mortarboard half a doze that bound into my scalp and I took it off the second I sat down in the 5th row back from the graduation stage.

A prairie of white chairs spread out from the stage across the green faculty lawn. The ocean and waves were off in the distance and the sky was gray with the cloudy marine layers. I rubbed the sore spot on the top of my head and my fingers became slippery with sweat. Part of it was the summer heat, but part of it was that I was actually leaving college.

We were filing in by name and rank and I looked back toward the lines of my peers and the sea of white chairs. Everyone was walking too slowly, not in step with the classic graduating music. It looked like some batman death march — the smiles looked forced, the eyes were shifty.

Behind the graduates, on the rion of grass, I spotted my parents and they saw me seeing them. They freaked out, all crazy frantic waving, I waved and sat down. It felt like high school graduation, except I was one of the doomed kids that couldn’t look forward to college.

Since we were all separated by name, my group of friends was scattered throughout the sea of black gowns. I had never seen or parted with the girl sitting to the right of me. Though we were all dressed in cap and gown, certain status symbols shined through. The hair had little flowers in it, the makeup was done in a salon and went too heavy on the purple eye shadow, the jewelry was real. The con spiracy of impressions said she was definitely sorority. Maybe it was my own prejudice. I thought of myself — dork, T-shirt, sandals, shaved head — I was graduating in the same outfit I had lived in for the last four years. The dolled-up sorority girl didn’t seem to like me, but I was in a better mood due to proper clothing. To my right sat a guy whose face was vaguely familiar. He could’ve lived in my dorm freshman year. During the death march he introduced himself with a firm handshake saying, “My name’s Todd, Todd Potts. It’s better than a motherfucker out here.”

Todd was dressed in a suit under his gown, and I could see his shoes were black and shiny. I looked at my beat-up skater shoes that had lasted two school years. I remembered buying the shoes and how I was two years ago. Jesus. God, I can’t believe this is happening. They always tell you it sneaks up on you, I tried to love every moment and prepare myself but — fuck.

“Tell me about it.” Todd said.

“I blinked. I had been mumbling aloud.

“At least you’re dressed for the occasion,” Todd went on, “I wore this hot-ass suit. I feel like I’m already in hell.”

I laughed, “Yeah, my parents bitched, but I told them, I paid for this wretched education and I intend to graduate naked if I feel like it.”

“They went for that?”

“It’s true. I loosed up the ass, and in lieu to the government for over $40,000.”

“Shit.”

“I still have to put on a suit for pictures and stuff, but that’s fair.”

See Diploma, p.24
**The Daily Nexus**

**Friday, June 1, 2001**

**The Daily Friday is: advertisement-free and focusing for next year. This is our last one for the academic year and we soak it up. If you like what you see, or if you see potential, contact us. Too many good writers with talent and drive, and not enough serendipitously. They never got around to doing that, so that might set them off.**

**The Daily Friday is: advertisement-free and focusing for next year. This is our last one for the academic year and we soak it up. If you like what you see, or if you see potential, contact us. Too many good writers with talent and drive, and not enough serendipitously. They never got around to doing that, so that might set them off.**

---

**Diploma**

continued fiction from p.8

Todd told me how his Dad demanded a suit and tie then caused a half years of paying tuition at UCSB. His freckled white face was a light-blue eyes looked sharp, but he was reddened and puffy. He didn’t have first-boy beer for days.

“What were you doing here for this and a half years I posed.”

“A little of this, a little of that,” Todd smiled.

“Well, are you graduating with —”

“B.S. in studies major and business economics minor.”

“It’s a unique combo.”

“The icon is my Dad’s requirement,” Todd said.

“Are your parents here?” I asked him.

“I wanted to see what Dad looked like,” Todd said. He pulled a polo shirt with a business-man’s name, a caffeine button, and a recording hairaid. A silver watch and thick framed glasses.

“They aren’t here yet.”

“Todd, I expect my next call.”

The cell phone of the probable sorority girl on my right started singing. The tune was “Gimme Divine,” and it got halfway through the chorus before she picked up and said, “Hello! Hi! Terry! How are you doing? I didn’t know you liked, like, a walking sauna smoke.”

“uh-huh ... totally! ... oh my god.”

“I turned to Todd and he was smirking.”

“It’s funny when they nail the stereotype,” I said.

Sorority girl didn’t hear. She was engrossed with her cell call.

Todd watched her with a smile. He blinked weirdly, like the man with the big whale of the mission air, looking up at the gray.

---

**The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more dreadful than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.**

---

**But you can make it better than college if you bust your ass**

I smelled the salty air and tried to burn it into my memory. Everything had always been so perfect in this town. Everything was slipping away.

Once all were seated, the chancellor began his address. He had a clear Excellence and Diversity. Then it was the dem’s turn for platitudes. It got hotter. Students and parents fidgeted in their plastic seats and the heat made everyone’s butt sweat. The guest speaker was also full of platitudes. It was depressing. There was something unspeakable that underlined every word, every smile. This is all ending.

The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more air than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.

“I’m gonna fucking miss this place so much, Todd sighed.

In our little mini-memorial, “Yeah, man, I know you think it’s not fair that we let us live here for four years, on the edge of the most glorious con­vent, in the most interesting time in the history of the world. We let us live and love, and then it’s gone.”

“Get a job,” Todd said.

Todd looked bummed. He watched the people getting their names called °walking up to the podium, and getting their degree. His eyes were somehow else. Each student shook the chancellor’s hand and smiled for the photo. ’

“Every person I talked to here,” Todd continued, “was acting all wrong and I was running cold. Should have me to go work at his company, Todd told me how his Dad demanded a suit and tie then caused a half years of paying tuition at UCSB. His freckled white face was a light-blue eyes looked sharp, but he was reddened and puffy. He didn’t have first-boy beer for days.

“What were you doing here for this and a half years I posed.”

“A little of this, a little of that,” Todd smiled.

“Well, are you graduating with —”

“B.S. in studies major and business economics minor.”

“It’s a unique combo.”

“The icon is my Dad’s requirement,” Todd said.

“Are your parents here?” I asked him.

“I wanted to see what Dad looked like,” Todd said. He pulled a polo shirt with a business-man’s name, a caffeine button, and a recording hairaid. A silver watch and thick framed glasses.

“They aren’t here yet.”

“Todd, I expect my next call.”

The cell phone of the probable sorority girl on my right started singing. The tune was “Gimme Divine,” and it got halfway through the chorus before she picked up and said, “Hello! Hi! Terry! How are you doing? I didn’t know you liked, like, a walking sauna smoke.”

“uh-huh ... totally! ... oh my god.”

“I turned to Todd and he was smirking.”

“It’s funny when they nail the stereotype,” I said.

Sorority girl didn’t hear. She was engrossed with her cell call.

Todd watched her with a smile. He blinked weirdly, like the man with the big whale of the mission air, looking up at the gray.

---

**The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more dreadful than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.**

---

**But you can make it better than college if you bust your ass**

I smelled the salty air and tried to burn it into my memory. Everything had always been so perfect in this town. Everything was slipping away.

Once all were seated, the chancellor began his address. He had a clear Excellence and Diversity. Then it was the dem’s turn for platitudes. It got hotter. Students and parents fidgeted in their plastic seats and the heat made everyone’s butt sweat. The guest speaker was also full of platitudes. It was depressing. There was something unspeakable that underlined every word, every smile. This is all ending.

The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more air than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.

“I’m gonna fucking miss this place so much, Todd sighed.

In our little mini-memorial, “Yeah, man, I know you think it’s not fair that we let us live here for four years, on the edge of the most glorious con­vent, in the most interesting time in the history of the world. We let us live and love, and then it’s gone.”

“Get a job,” Todd said.

Todd looked bummed. He watched the people getting their names called °walking up to the podium, and getting their degree. His eyes were somehow else. Each student shook the chancellor’s hand and smiled for the photo. ’

“Every person I talked to here,” Todd continued, “was acting all wrong and I was running cold. Should have me to go work at his company, Todd told me how his Dad demanded a suit and tie then caused a half years of paying tuition at UCSB. His freckled white face was a light-blue eyes looked sharp, but he was reddened and puffy. He didn’t have first-boy beer for days.

“What were you doing here for this and a half years I posed.”

“A little of this, a little of that,” Todd smiled.

“Well, are you graduating with —”

“B.S. in studies major and business economics minor.”

“It’s a unique combo.”

“The icon is my Dad’s requirement,” Todd said.

“Are your parents here?” I asked him.

“I wanted to see what Dad looked like,” Todd said. He pulled a polo shirt with a business-man’s name, a caffeine button, and a recording hairaid. A silver watch and thick framed glasses.

“They aren’t here yet.”

“Todd, I expect my next call.”

The cell phone of the probable sorority girl on my right started singing. The tune was “Gimme Divine,” and it got halfway through the chorus before she picked up and said, “Hello! Hi! Terry! How are you doing? I didn’t know you liked, like, a walking sauna smoke.”

“uh-huh ... totally! ... oh my god.”

“I turned to Todd and he was smirking.”

“It’s funny when they nail the stereotype,” I said.

Sorority girl didn’t hear. She was engrossed with her cell call.

Todd watched her with a smile. He blinked weirdly, like the man with the big whale of the mission air, looking up at the gray.

---

**The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more dreadful than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.**

---

**But you can make it better than college if you bust your ass**

I smelled the salty air and tried to burn it into my memory. Everything had always been so perfect in this town. Everything was slipping away.

Once all were seated, the chancellor began his address. He had a clear Excellence and Diversity. Then it was the dem’s turn for platitudes. It got hotter. Students and parents fidgeted in their plastic seats and the heat made everyone’s butt sweat. The guest speaker was also full of platitudes. It was depressing. There was something unspeakable that underlined every word, every smile. This is all ending.

The chancellor got back up behind the podium, and I took a deep breath that fluttered with something more air than nervousness. He said it was time to hand out the degrees.

“I’m gonna fucking miss this place so much, Todd sighed.

In our little mini-memorial, “Yeah, man, I know you think it’s not fair that we let us live here for four years, on the edge of the most glorious con­vent, in the most interesting time in the history of the world. We let us live and love, and then it’s gone.”

“Get a job,” Todd said.

Todd looked bummed. He watched the people getting their names called °walking up to the podium, and getting their degree. His eyes were somehow else. Each student shook the chancellor’s hand and smiled for the photo. ’

“Every person I talked to here,” Todd continued, “was acting all wrong and I was running cold. Should have me to go work at his company, Todd told me how his Dad demanded a suit and tie then caused a half years of paying tuition at UCSB. His freckled white face was a light-blue eyes looked sharp, but he was reddened and puffy. He didn’t have first-boy beer for days.

“What were you doing here for this and a half years I posed.”

“A little of this, a little of that,” Todd smiled.

“Well, are you graduating with —”

“B.S. in studies major and business economics minor.”

“It’s a unique combo.”

“The icon is my Dad’s requirement,” Todd said.

“Are your parents here?” I asked him.

“I wanted to see what Dad looked like,” Todd said. He pulled a polo shirt with a business-man’s name, a caffeine button, and a recording hairaid. A silver watch and thick framed glasses.

“They aren’t here yet.”

“Todd, I expect my next call.”

The cell phone of the probable sorority girl on my right started singing. The tune was “Gimme Divine,” and it got halfway through the chorus before she picked up and said, “Hello! Hi! Terry! How are you doing? I didn’t know you liked, like, a walking sauna smoke.”

“uh-huh ... totally! ... oh my god.”

“I turned to Todd and he was smirking.”

“It’s funny when they nail the stereotype,” I said.

Sorority girl didn’t hear. She was engrossed with her cell call.

Todd watched her with a smile. He blinked weirdly, like the man with the big whale of the mission air, looking up at the gray.
Six Kids Protect Idaho Oil Strike With Rifles, Wild Dogs

WASHINGTON D.C. — Democrats prepared to take control of the U.S. Senate this week after Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) defeated Frank Jeffords (R-Wyo.) to become Senate majority leader. Senate insiders said, “J.J. just stands in right field, and he’s not much of a hitter,” Bush said. “Besides, he throws like a total girl.”

Key Republican senators also made Jeffords feel unwelcome. Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) would frequently shove Jeffords into the washroom during Senate recesses, hold Jeffords by the ankles and dunk his head in a toilet while flushing it, Senate insiders said. According to an aide, Lott denied the “wetlet” allegations.

More hurtful, Jeffords’ aides said, were the taunts from Jesse Helms (R-N.C.). After Jeffords’ home state of Vermont signed a law recognizing both civil unions, Helms reportedly mocked Jeffords in Senate chambers, calling Vermont “faggot and gry” and saying that made Jeffords’ way queer.

Jeffords expressed his displeasure to Democratic colleagues in the Senate’s audio and visual club. Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) reportedly told Jeffords that the Democratic Party was a “hoogie-free party” and welcomed more sensitive senators.

Daschle refused to confirm or deny that he promised Jeffords the chairmanship of the environmental committee and a Captain Kirk lunchbox. Bush daughters Take Off on Desert Crime Spree in ’72 Drop- top Thunderbird

AUSTIN, Texas — Authorities have launched a manhunt for President Bush’s twin teenage daughters who fled town May 26 in a stolen convertible and are believed to be armed.

Barbara and Jenna Bush first fled law enforcement after the Austin police radared a car and attempted to cite the two women for underage drinking. A scurvy Secret Service agent, Tom Pitman, intervened, holding police at bay with a pistol. The president’s daughters fled out the back door, hot-wired a 1972 Ford Thunderbird, brought the dusty red car around front, hooked up and sped off into the night with Pitman. These gals are real confused and dangerous,” Austin Sheriff Joel Pikeman said. “Jenna’s boyfriend Clyde says she gets real strange when he’s not around.”

Witnesses roughly a mile outside the city reported seeing Jenna Bush and Pitman engaging in sexual activity in the backseat of the Thunderbird. Barbara was driving erratically and waving a bottle of some kind, witnesses said.

Pitman, however, was apprehended the next day. The trio apparently stopped at a gas station in the Texas panhandle when Pitman tried to hold up the station and shoot the clerk. Pitman refused to comment, except to say that the Bush twins squaled out of the parking lot when they heard gunshots.

“Fucking bitches,” Pitman said.

Pikeman said the twins had robbed three other gas stations and appeared to be headed to Arizona. Late last night, a convertible matching the Thunderbird’s description drove around a roadblock outside Bartow, Ariz., and off-roaded into the desert, blasting Sheryl Crow on the stereo.

Salmone and Stagflation: A Drop-Outs Tale

I’m writing into a diary right now, anything you have an issue with is basically a violation of my privacy.

In an effort to kill time, I went to visit a friend of mine who moved to Alaska. He was suddenly 6/2, and sporting a full beard. His town stayed light from 4 o’clock in the morning until 2 a.m. He and his friends raced snowmobiles across melting sleet into lakes on purpose, and then fished them out and purged the engines on the spot. They watched “Deliveryance” drunk and “Two Days Earlier and we’d seen some bears.” By the time my friend spoke, I was so deeply in the stream. Some irrational impulse had me after the fish. If I didn’t catch one, and keep it in a bowl or something, then maybe it would stop rotting. We were so deep in the stream. It was a ghastly shadow.

“I’m killing time until I die.” Either that or you’re lying.

I kept thinking, “If a fish can rot while it’s still alive, why can’t a salmon do it?”

In an effort to kill time, I went to visit a friend of mine who moved to Alaska. He was suddenly 6/2, and sporting a full beard. His town stayed light from 4 o’clock in the morning until 2 a.m. He and his friends raced snowmobiles across melting sleet into lakes on purpose, and then fished them out and purged the engines on the spot. They watched “Deliveryance” drunk and “Two Days Earlier and we’d seen some bears.” By the time my friend spoke, I was so deeply in the stream. Some irrational impulse had me after the fish. If I didn’t catch one, and keep it in a bowl or something, then maybe it would stop rotting. We were so deep in the stream. It was a ghastly shadow.

“I’m killing time until I die.” Either that or you’re lying.

I kept thinking, “If a fish can rot while it’s still alive, why can’t a salmon do it?”

In an effort to kill time, I went to visit a friend of mine who moved to Alaska. He was suddenly 6/2, and sporting a full beard. His town stayed light from 4 o’clock in the morning until 2 a.m. He and his friends raced snowmobiles across melting sleet into lakes on purpose, and then fished them out and purged the engines on the spot. They watched “Deliveryance” drunk and “Two Days Earlier and we’d seen some bears.” By the time my friend spoke, I was so deeply in the stream. Some irrational impulse had me after the fish. If I didn’t catch one, and keep it in a bowl or something, then maybe it would stop rotting. We were so deep in the stream. It was a ghastly shadow.

“I’m killing time until I die.” Either that or you’re lying.