

Varsity Printing Team  
A Young Adult Book  
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## CHAPTER 1

I am a student of Allen High School. Our school colors are blue and yellow and our mascot is a canary. Can you imagine? Who the has a canary as a mascot? Our rivals are the Dieruff Huskies, and at every sporting event, our opponents just make posters of a dog with a canary in its mouth getting mauled.

In the Stone Ages, our rivals were the Liberty Hurricanes, and the only thing that can fly through a hurricane is a canary. The canary was a fine mascot from 1910-1958, but why not change the mascot in 1959 when our rivals became the “Huskies?” Our mascot should be the Bears or Lions or T-Rexes or Fleas or even the Heart Worms.

My given name is James, but my friends call me Jim. When my relatives call me James, it makes me feel like I am a chauffer - I do not like the idea of being a limousine driver. I don't mean to diminish chauffer drivers should you have one in your family, but James is not my preference.

My classes are English, Math, Biology, Phys-Ed, History, German,

and my Printing Class. Of all my classes, I enjoy English and History, but I LOVE my Printing Class. I enjoy the process of creation: from idea, concept, doodling, creating and editing until the final product. The creation is only real when I see it come out of the printer in black and white or in color.

It reminds me of Helen in English Class. She is Filipina, always smiling, friendly, and loves taking pictures. She takes selfies of her fashion, food, places traveled and then posts them on Facebook. It is almost as if the event did not happen until she posts them on the social media. That is how I feel about my Printing Shop projects.

Truth be told, all the great revolutions, movements and inventions come from ideas. Thanks to the Gutenberg Press, and the modern printers of today, ideas have been able to be spread around the world. Ideas created books, and books have changed the world via the printing press. For me, working the presses gives me a sense of purpose and power.

## **CHAPTER 2**

Entering Print Shop, the slight burning smell of toner, plastic, Styrofoam, and the floor wax soothes me. It only smells better when Mr.

Press is stewing a pot of coffee in his back office. The room is full of posters, banners, school colors, computers, drafting desks in the back of class are the 3-D printers, the Laminating Machine and an Industrial Printer.

Printing Class is 5<sup>th</sup> period, and my “Zoo Period” is period 6. My buddy Richie and I always sit together during lunch period, or as we call it, Zoo Period. Just as the Zoo is broken up by different categories of animals from the Congo, African Plains, World of Reptiles, World of Birds, House of Big Cats, so is the cafeteria table groupings made by differing cliques.

Our Canary High School cafeteria is divided into the following sections: Athletes (Jocks) and Cheerleaders, Red Necks, the Heavy Metal Crew, Emo/Goths, the Fashionistas, Band Kids, Video Gamers, Drama Club and the Vo-Tech students. People watching is the best part of the lunch period. Richie and I are part of the Basic Kid Crew which would be the equivalent of the Mouse House at the Philadelphia Zoo.

Richie grew up in Paterson before moving to Allentown. He grew up in a rough neighborhood, and he is tough. I am usually able to talk myself out of fights, but if I need a body guard, Richie has my back. I am a decent communicator, and I am able to talk myself out of conflicts most

of the time. Fellow students know Richie is my buddy, and think twice before throwing punches at me for fear of Richie beat down.

In a way, school is just like the television reality survival show, “Naked and Afraid,” but without the naked part. Richie is part of a rock band. He plays bass. The band is trying to think of a name of a band. He asks me to think of some names and I tell him I will get back to him.

I have several chores around the house, such as taking out the trash, cleaning the dinner dishes, mowing the lawn, taking our English Setter dog, Mandy, for walks, and cleaning up the dog poo in the back yard.

My sister Jody, four years younger than me, comes out and starts making fun of me, “Jim cleans the dog doo! Jim cleans the dog doo!” I warn my sister, “If you say that one more time, I will fling the dog doo at you!” Of course my bratty sister says it again, and I fling the doggie doo way, not really wanting to hit her with the scat, but close enough to scare her. The ca-ca hits her on the left cheek! She runs in the house screaming bloody murder. It is a glorious day!

### **CHAPTER 3**

Sitting in the corner is the Homecoming Committee discussing the theme as it being the Roaring 20’s, the Rock-n-Roll 50’s, the Flower

Power of the 1960's or Disco and the 1970's. My preference is the "I Don't Really Care" theme, because I am not going to the Homecoming Dance. I love the ladies, but I act clusty around them.

The upper classmen have the pick of the best girls. They seem to get the hottest girls. My Uncle tells me, many of these girls who marry the "upper classman," find out later in life she has made a mistake, and would have done better marrying a loser who often is a late bloomer and becomes a doctor, attorney or C.E.O. Many high school princesses often end up wearing shiny tiaras in their future trailer park kingdoms. Why does this give me a sense of satisfaction?

I did attempt to date a young woman I crushed on name Elisabeth. The conversations went something like this.

*"Are you free tonight?"*

"No."

*"Go out this Saturday?"*

"Not possible."

*"Dinner Wednesday?"*

"I'm slammed."

*"Coffee on Friday?"*

"I'm really booked."

*“Concert?”*

“I’d like to, but I know I will regret it.

*“Fishing?”*

“Unfortunately not.”

*“Beach?”*

I’m afraid I can’t.”

*“Nature Hike?”*

“I am allergic to mosquitoes.”

*“Amusement Park?”*

“Pass.”

*“Do you not like me?”*

“No, I happen to be lesbian.”

## **CHAPTER 4**

While I am not a letterman athlete in high school, I am athletic. I have grown up playing little league baseball, basketball and football. I am tall and skinny, and not bulky as one needs to be for playing on the football field.

I love Hamilton Park, my local park. Allentown sponsors a summer playground program that includes instructors. Our instructors are Greg and Pam. They organize games, arts, crafts and prepare us for the annual Romper Day held in August at the Fairgrounds. The day begins at 9:00

a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. I enjoy the softball, basketball, kickball and flag football games.

In the evenings, the local guys meet up to play full court basketball games. I do not own a car, so I walk or ride my bike everywhere. The point is, I am athletic enough.

Growing up near Philadelphia, I root for all the Philly sports teams such as the Eagles, Flyers, Phillies and 76ers. It can be painful being a Philly fan. The last time the Flyers won a Stanley Cup in hockey was 1975. The last time the 76ers won a basketball championship was in 1983. The last time the Phillies won a World Series was in 2008. It was not until 2017, a fifty-one year drought, the Philadelphia Eagles football team finally won a Super Bowl! Total Championships from 1970-2020 is six, total losses of championships is fifteen. I guess winning a championship every 8.33 years over 50 years is not the worst.

Next to Printing Class, Phys-Ed is my second favorite class. I love playing floor hockey, volleyball, and soccer. One day we shoot arrows at targets and I am a pretty good shot. What I do not like about gym class is the shower time. Don't get me wrong, I love long hot showers, in my

own personal bathroom at home.

After gym class, we have to shower in a tiled room with lockers and benches that smells like sweat and feet. Sometimes I catch someone taking a peek at my package. I am not the smallest, but I not the largest either. The trick is to take the shower quickly, and to stand next to someone who has a smaller willy than you. That is enough talk about school gym shower time. I blush every time I think about it. One day in the showers, I feel something warm on my leg. Miguel, who has had a mustache since 5<sup>th</sup> grade, is laughing as he pees on my leg.

## **CHAPTER 5**

Dad hates his job. Dad works on an assembly line making trucks. Bethlehem Steel use to employ 30,000 workers during World War II, and today employs 1,000 workers. Dad's auto factory use to employ 10,000 workers, and today, employs 1,000. He often tells me, "Pick a job you enjoy doing for the rest of your life." Mom works as a nurse and seems satisfied helping people.

Darwin said, "It is not the strongest who survive, but those most willing to adapt that survive." In history class, Ms. Magillicutty teaches us that in 2020, we are living in the 4<sup>th</sup> Revolution. Revolution 1:



Agricultural; Revolution 2: Industrial; Revolution 3: Computers and Fourth Revolution being the Robotic or Artificial Intelligence Revolution.

To think my parents have lived through the death of the Industrial Revolution through the Computer and A.I. Revolution must give them “Adaptation Fatigue.” Stephen Hawking, Bill Gates and Elon Musk say “unemployment could be 47% in the U.S. by 2033 with Robots taking human jobs. This dampens my hope in my generation’s future.

I have a paper route. I deliver to 75 homes, and make approximately \$100 every two weeks depending on my tips. I once had a yard sale, and made \$75. After some Spring Cleaning, Dad donated some old tools and board games. Mom donated jewelry, purses and books. She also donated some Avon stuff since she was Avon Lady. There also is a pile of clothing to sell as well.

My neighbor, Steven Snotter came into the yard, and stuck his hand into the money till and began to run away. Steven is fast, but I was so upset when I saw him stealing the money, my adrenaline kicked in and I chased him into the front yard, tackled him and punched him several times in the face and grabbed his arm and pounded his fist into the ground until he let go of the dollar bills and coins in his hand. He ran away crying, and I walked into my back yard triumphantly with money in tow. I am

generally a lover and not a fighter, but when the neighborhood thief stole my money, I saw red!

All the stuff left over after the yard sale was donated to Goodwill, a charity thrift store.

Besides my paper route and yard sale, I spent two summers at Muhlenberg College as a summer student painter. Painting seems fun to me for about two weeks, and then the scraping, priming, first and second coating gets old pretty quick.

I am an excellent painter, and enjoy “the zen” of the painting project, but often get quite a bit of paint on my painting pants, tee-shirts and work boots. Lou, the painting crew supervisor likes to say to me at the end of the work day, “Did you get any paint on the wall?”

You would think oil paint is tougher to get off the skin than latex paint, but with mineral spirits, it comes off quickly. Latex or water based paint, had to be rubbed over and over with a face cloth and soap.

This earning a living is not easy. Manual labor must be called work because IT IS WORK!

## CHAPTER 6

What is a wage? It is time given in work to be paid a certain amount of money. Anything purchased where money is exchanged, is really the amount of time you worked at “x” wage to purchase said item. In the northeastern part of the United States, it is often heard, “Time is money!” The Northeast is also where the most heart attacks take place.

I don’t really see myself working an office job in the future. I also don’t want to choose a job that will be stolen from me in the future by a robot or artificial intelligence either. In addition to going to school, working the paper route, and spending the evening at home with the family, there are things I want to purchase!

I want to upgrade my smart phone (\$750), get a Fjallraven Rugged Backpack (\$80) to carry my books and laptop to and from school on the Carrot Bus. I want a ukulele (\$65) so I can learn how to play the song “Somewhere over the Rainbow.” I want a Waterproof Portable Bluetooth Speaker (\$80) with 12 hours of playtime per battery charge.

I want a Homall Gaming Office Chair (\$140) with a headrest and lumbar support and Bluetooth Headphones (\$42). I also want the Flybold Slackline Kit (\$60) and the Anker Nebula Capsule mini-projector

(\$300) and the Elago 3 in 1 Charging Station (\$30) from Amazon. I also need to be saving money so I can get an Associates Degree from a community college that offers Printing Management Degrees.

There has to be an easier way of making money!

## **CHAPTER 7**

I am told High School is the best time of your life. Being a high school student also brings anxiety with all this talk of climate change, pandemics, depression, body dissatisfaction, drugs, suicide and so forth and so on.

Today in History Class, Ms. Magillicutty teaches us about Social Pyramids in History. European Feudalism had its King, Nobles, Knights, Merchants and Farmers with the Peasants at the bottom. Japanese Feudalism, had its Emperor, Shoguns, Daimyo, Samurai and Peasants. In the New World the Spanish had the Penninulares, Creoles, Mestizos and Mulattoes with African Slaves and Native Americans on the bottom.

I raise my hand and say “So the American Education Pyramid would be the Superintendent, the Principal, Assistant Principals, Teachers and then Students?” Ms. Magillicutty nods her head at me approvingly for my witty comment on social pyramids.

After class, there is a ruckus in the hallway. A 9<sup>th</sup> grade boy says to a 9<sup>th</sup> grade girl, “You are ugly!” A crowd surrounds them and begins to grow. The young lady breaks into a boxer pose. The young man pushes her and like boxer Sugar Ray Leonard, she throws a left jab to his stomach buckling the male bully. She then throws a right to his chin and he drops to the ground at the crowd goes into a frenzy.

Little did the bully know was that this young lady went to the gym everyday to practice her boxing. This guy is going to be made fun of for a long time for getting beat up by a girl. There is justice in the world sometimes.

I meet up with Richie during lunch, and the other Basic Kids at the Basic Kid table. Frank says, “Hey Jim, why do you always seem to get more food on your tray than the rest of us?” I said, “Well, the lunch ladies must think I am cute.

Don’t be hating on me just because I may get and an extra scoop of potatoes, or extra fries, extra meatballs, or the biggest piece of Salisbury steak.” The truth is, I am “favored” because my Aunt Arlene and Aunt Lucille work as lunch ladies at our school. When my buddies learn the truth, they whisper to my Aunts, “I am best friends with Jim,” hoping to get some extra food.

I ask Richie if I can meet with him after school at his place. I tell him I have an idea, a plan I want to pass by him. Richie says “Of course!” I like Richie’s place because he has a huge television, a billiards table and a pinball machine in the basement.

## CHAPTER 8

I am sitting on the sofa, as Richie is sitting in his bean bag chair in his basement as I get ready to share my plan.

“Before we get started Richie, I have a list of suggested names for your rock band.” I hand him a sheet of paper with suggested band names. “Whatever name you like it is yours. If you don’t like any of the suggested band names, that is no *skin off my nose.*”

### Suggested Band Names for Richie

Aye-Ayes	Mange
Derringers	Oversexed
Egg Shells	Quarantined
Fishmongers	Rank-n-File
Grapples	Schlock
Hookahs	Tedious
Incurables	Vagabonds
Joggles	Weeds
Knots	Ying Yangs

*“Richie, this is my plan, and you can agree to it or not. No hard feelings either way. My plan is to print some money in the Printing Classroom. I can make template and print it, but I will need a look out. You are the only one I can trust as a look out.. What about it?”*

“Jim, you have been my best friend since I moved from Paterson to Allentown. I trust you and want to be part of this money-making scheme. I’m in!”

*“This is the plan. In two days, there is a basketball game at the school Gymnasium. I will be hiding in the Printing Room, and I will start the printing presses from 4:15 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. The hallways should be clear at this time - any commotion or hallway activity will be happening around the gym at the other end of the school.”*

*“Richie, I need you to wear a ski mask, and spray paint the security camera in the hall by the Printing Shop. There are no cameras in the stairwell closest to the Printing Shop, so your identity will remain safe, and when I clear out of the Printing Room, it will not be able to identify me as well. All you have to do, is knock on the Printing Room door between 4:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. to signal me, the camera has been covered in spray paint.”*

“Dude, let’s do it!”

I have to use the bathroom before I leave. As I am abiding on the commode, I notice a moist wipes container on the floor. I have never used a moist wipe before, and decide to enjoy the miracle of the moist wipe experience. I use the wipe only to feel my bum catch fire. The tall plastic container are not moist wipes, but Clorox Wipes full of bleach and chemicals. I scream like a bobcat in the middle of a moon lit night, which is a loud eerie and makes the hair on the back of your neck stand up.

## **CHAPTER 9**

My legs are cramping as I hide behind the Printing Shop Laminating Machine waiting for my Shop Teacher, Mr. Press, to exit the premises. He is usually out of the room by 3:00 p.m., but today he is there until 3:30 p.m.. I have chosen this day because there is a basketball game at 4:00 p.m., and the janitor is less likely to hear the printing machine running after school hours.

Funny how time can go by quickly or slowly. As I am waiting, so many thoughts cross my mind. My brain is the dancing flea. I am thinking about girls, sports, school projects, more girls, items I want to purchase, automobiles, other girls, and my back molar that is hurting. I



hope it is just a cavity and not a root canal. I hear the root canals are painful.

To make the templates for copy in the Printing Room, I have taken out \$2,200 of money from the bank out of my savings account. I ask for twenty \$100 dollar bills, and for twenty \$10 bills. With my scanning machine, I make copies of the front and back of the 20 bills on the scanning machine. I put the four scans, of the front and back of the \$10 bills, and the front and back of the \$100 bills, into my flash drive to make the copies in the Printing Room.

Equipped only with my home computer, and \$99 scanner, I make copies of the bogus bills. The most counterfeited currency in America is the \$20 bill, but I have chosen to make copies of the \$10 and \$100 bills. The \$10 bills will be used at area businesses, but the \$100 bills, I will use to make a deposit. As long as my deposit is under \$10,000, I will not have to worry about Homeland Security snooping into my bank account.

The goal is to put \$9,500 into my new account, using the \$100 bills, and then print \$5,000 in \$10 denominations that will be split between Richie and me. This means I will have to print 500 template sheets to create the \$10 bills, and 95 sheets to create the \$100

bills.

I have also opened up a bank account with another bank, where in ten days, when I have received my A.T.M. Card, I can deposit the money into an A.T.M. machine to launder the dirty money.

At 4:15 p.m. I hear “all is clear knock,” and operation “Operation Varsity Printing Team” begins. I turn on the printer, and put in the flash drive. It takes five minutes to print out the \$100 bills. It takes 20 minutes to print out the \$10 bills. I pack all the counterfeit money stacks into a duffle bag, and walk to the stairwell, and exit on the first floor. It is getting dark outside, and I calmly walk to Richie’s 2009 Hunter green Jeep Wrangler he calls “the screamer,” and we drive out the parking lot as cool as a cucumbers. Tomorrow, I will cut the money carefully with a utility knife to create the individual bills.

I will be \$12,000 richer, and Richie will have \$2,500 in his pocket for being the look-out. If I worked at the local burger joint netting \$10 an hour, it would come to 1,200 hours of labor, or 30 weeks of 40 hour shifts. Making \$12,000 for less than a week’s worth is pretty good for a high school kid.

## CHAPTER 10

Richie and I head to the Mall Saturday night to spend some money.

As we approach the Mall, there is a homeless man sitting by the entryway, and he is in ragged clothing, sweating profusely, and standing there with his hand out.

“Can you spare some change?”

*“What do you need the money for?”*

“I am hungry!”

*“Okay - I will buy you a pizza slice.”*

“No, no, no. I don’t really want pizza.”

*“Are you spending the money on booze or drugs?”*

“Kid, I need the money for a haircut.”

*“Come on buddy, you hair is already short!”*

“You got me - I needs some booze.”

I appreciated the bum’s honesty and give him a \$100 bill. His eyes grow as big as silver dollars, and he wants to give me a hug, but I give him a stiff-arm, just as I had been taught in little league football, and said, “Buddy, we all need a break sometime.”

Richie says, “That was generous of you.” I say, “I am

feeling generous!” We walk to the pizza shop and get some slices.

“You know what Richie, my Uncle told me there are two things a poor man can enjoy - good food and sex.”

*“Sounds like good advice Jim. Did you Uncle offer any other advice for a poor man?”*

As a matter of fact he did. My Uncle also said when it comes to dating, you want to date a poor girl over a rich one. A poor girl you can keep happy. If you marry a rich girl, she can make your life miserable if you do not provide her the “rich life” she is used to.

Richie and I go to the Sports Store and buy some posters of the Eagles, Phillies, Flyers and 76ers. At the Barnes and Noble Store and I buy a music CD, Dark Side of the Moon by Pink Floyd and the book A Simple Plan by Scott Smith. Lastly, we enter the Video Arcade Store and use our newly printed \$10 bills to get \$50 of game tokens, and spent four hours playing all the video games we could handle until we get blisters on our fingers

As we walked back to Richie’s car, we passed two women, one of them looking pregnant.

*“Congratulations! When are you due?”*

“Oh, that is just my beer belly.”

There is no recovering from a blunder like that.

## CHAPTER 11

Richie and I stop by a diner on the way home to celebrate a plan well executed. Two high school ladies, one with pink hair and the other with purple hair, were escorted to their table by the Diner Hostess. The girls sat down, looked at their menus and took out their cell phones before and after placing their order with the waitress. They looked at their phones as they consumed their meals.

They looked at their cell phones while they waited for their check, and only stopped looking when they donned their jackets and left a tip on the table. As the lady hipsters exited the diner, the pink haired lady said to the purple haired lady, “Good talk!” Richie and I look at each other like, “Whhhhaatt?”

I say to Richie, “You know, I read some workers waste 6 day a year by taking smoke breaks. Research also shows workers waste 10 days a year by playing on their cell phones. You know what that means? I should get an extra 16 days of vacation per year wherever I work, because, I do not smoke, nor own a cell phone.”

Richie says, “What kind of person does not own a cell phone?”

## CHAPTER 12

Life is good. Nothing has really changed except for the fact I am \$12,500 dollars richer in counterfeit money. The school week goes by fairly normally.

**MONDAY:** I wear my “Black Lives Matter” shirt, and a kid in gym class gives me some grief by calling me a “Virtue Signaler.” I responded, “I don’t know, Tom. Are you an Anti-Virtue Signaler? Are you in favor of police brutality?”

**TUESDAY:** We have a Lockdown. Since the Columbine School Shooting in 1999, part of the monthly school schedule is to practice “Lock Downs.” When a lock down is announced, all class room doors are locked, and no one is allowed to in or out of the classroom until the “all clear” has been announced. The practice drill usually take 3-4 minutes. If it is longer than that, you just pray you do not have an active shooter.

**WEDNESDAY:** I get detention because I arrive to my German class late for the third time. I go to the Detention Room. I sit down with the other dozen or so students when Frank is brought in by the

Dean of Students.

Frank was an angry kid! To his teachers he said, “I don’t care!” To the Guidance Counselors he said, “I don’t care!” To the Assistant Principal he said, “I don’t care!” To the Social Worker he said, “I don’t care!” to the Child Study Team worker he said, “I don’t care!” To the School Psychologist he said, “I don’t care!”

Frank was nice to me. I guess Frank had the power to not care, because he was going to be buried by cancer in three years.

**THURSDAY:** We have group work on Thursday in History Class. I am paired up with Cristal. Cristal loves animals! She is upset, and I ask her what’s up.

She found a mouse in a glue trap in her kitchen two weeks ago. She hid the mouse under her bed before her father could throw the mouse out in the trash. Each night, she would feed it a few bird seeds, and use a cocktail straw to water it. She named the mouse Chucky Cheese and could hear it squeaking in the dark hours of the eve.

On Wednesday night, she went home to find her father sitting next to the reading lamp with newspaper in hand. As the door closed he said, “Cristal, the rodent IS DEAD!” It was obvious this morning, Cristal was

still grieving the loss of Chucky Cheese.

**FRIDAY:** It was quite an ordinary day and during Printing Class, the phone rang, and Mr. Press said to me, “James, you are to report to the Principal’s office!”

As I walked into the office, there was my Father, Mother and Pastor Mike sitting in chairs next to the secretary’s desk.

I sat across from them, and Pastor Mike said, “Son, greed can poison your soul. Being content with what you have is a virtue. If you do not learn contentment, you will never be satisfied.”

Principal Brown opens the door and says to my parents and me, “Please come in.” Sitting across from us were Government Men. They looked like the “Men in Black,” the secret government organization monitoring extraterrestrial life on earth, but it was really the Secret Service.

I put my head on the table.

“Have I risked all, by being too greedy?”