



## Lunch Bag Bob and the Weather Ghouls

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### [Jack Israel](#)

Bob "Lunch Bag" Black was sitting on a bench on the fringes of Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. It was a bright spring day. Lunch hour. Lunch Bag looked like Joe Friday needing a bath. Stained dark suit, rumped white shirt, tie limp as a snake that had just been forcibly milked of its venom. He had the kind of face you can't remember, the way you can't visualize your last mound of mashed potatoes. I sat beside him, the only seat in the shade. He just started talking.

"I had it all, almost. House on the main line, almost paid off. Almost making six figures. Saab and a Taurus, almost paid for. Wife. A kid, almost paid for, I mean summer camps, karate lessons, braces. . . I'm a victim of sexual harassment."

"You mean a woman was harassing you?"

"No, the other way around. I'm the perpetrator."

He laughed ironically.

"I was the closest thing to faithful. Everybody was doing everybody else. That's how it is in public accounting. All these Type A obsessive-compulsives working long hours, taking business trips together, suffering tension that has to be relieved, living by the mantra 'In at 8, out at 8, charge 8' . . ."

"So what happened?" I asked.

"I'm unemployable, that's what."

"I mean, the sexual harassment?"

"It had to do with computers," he muttered. "My laptop went down. I had to print out a spreadsheet. Fast. I went over to a woman in taxes and pleaded, 'Can I put my floppy into your hard-drive?' Busted! Now I'm in the park and she's a partner."

"You're kidding! Any job prospects?"

"Are you kidding?"

"What are you gonna do?"

Lunch Bag shrugged.

"What really gets me is the Weather Channel. I have as much stress from it as I do from being jobless. Every time I watch, we're in the red zone."

"You mean, threat of storms."

"And damaging winds, hail, flash floods, and dangerous air-to-ground lightning. Not to mention the fact that any thunderstorm can and probably will produce a tornado at any time."

"I know what you mean," I replied soothingly.

"Have you noticed how many tornadoes there are now? This month alone, there were warnings all over Pennsylvania--in Lancaster County, Bucks County, Montgomery County, and Delaware County. We even have tornado alleys in Limerick, home of PECO's nuclear reactor, and in Chester County's mushroom patch. For last week's twister, they listed the towns in the path of destruction. Lima, Media, Yeadon, South Philly. All still standing by the way. When we were kids, whoever heard of tornadoes? It's ratings. They want to scare the shit out of you. And you have to take them seriously because if you don't you could wind up wandering around like a zombie wondering whose back yard your *Penthouse* collection blew into."

"Sure, sure," I could see Lunch Bag becoming very agitated.

"And the ghouls!" he ranted. "They turn everything into a crisis. They send their intrepid meteorologists on location to some mall in St. Louis to do live coverage of a drizzle. Meanwhile, in the background, seniors on crutches and walkers and double amputees in wheelchairs are inching their way into a 7-Eleven. Not even carrying umbrellas. The Weather Channel should lose a meteorologist or two, just to be credible. Like real war correspondents. We need Weather Martyrs. Let's have Heather Tesch's head bashed in by hail the size of grapefruit, or Jim Cantore drown in a storm surge."

"Well, Heather's the cutest meteorologist on the weather channel."

"The worst is Dave Schwartz. He turns a morning mist into the Angel of Death. He uses the first person. Like 'We're having a rough time of it tonight in Berwyn, PA.' Not you, Dave. You're safe like Hitler in a concrete bunker three hundred feet below Atlanta. I'm the one cowering in my crawl space wearing a bicycle helmet. . . I want my weathermen on thorazine. Like Ben Stein."

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