

SEA of IDIOTS

Max Wilson turned thirty five last month. He lives with his mother. He likes alternative music; especially anything from England. Max tried college for a year, but was constantly getting into arguments with the professors, mainly about economics. Max is obsessed with money. This is quite ironic being that he's unemployed. In fact, Max refuses to even look for a job. It's all beneath him. His mother spoils him, and justifies her son's apathy. He's just special. That's what she tells herself. Max's father left when he was four. Max doesn't remember him. The Christmas cards quit coming twenty years ago. The last one had a picture of his father and a Hispanic boy.

"Mother. Can you bring my dinner?"

"Just a minute honey."

Max's room was the biggest. He did important things in there. He listened to vinyl records, chatted on the computer with economic professors, ate Chinese takeout, and wrote occasional poems when the mood struck.

"Hurry mother. I'm hungry!"

"I'm on my way dear."

Max heard his mother climbing the stairs. The chicken pot pie smelled delicious.

He hoped she remembered to bring his buttermilk. Max had a penchant for it.

“Mother. Where is my buttermilk?”

“Heavens forgive me. I’ll go back and fetch it.”

“Thank you mother.”

Max flipped the record over, and hit play. The album opened with a flurry of blistering guitars. Max bobbed his head, and sat down at the computer.

Somebody knocked on the door.

“Who is it?”

“It’s me. I got your buttermilk.”

“Is the pot pie hot?”

“I believe so.”

“Good. You know how cold food upsets my stomach.”

“Yes dear. Can we talk a minute son?”

“Not now mother. I have a chat with Professor Hensley.”

“A chat right now?”

“Yes mother. Come back later.”

Jan Wilson grew up in Lufkin. The East Texas town in the Piney Woods. She married John Wilson right out of high school. Two years later, she was pregnant with Max. Her son was the biggest baby born in Angelina County. Jan didn't know if the record still stood, but Max did a good job of maintaining his weight. John left a few years later, and Jan took to several jobs to make ends meet. She waited tables, worked in a library, and was a substitute teacher for awhile. The latter was her least favorite. The kids were awful.

Jan knew her son was different. Max was extremely bright. He started reading before nursery school, and soon began getting into arguments with his teachers. The school administrators suggested a gifted program, but Max got into a fight with his history teacher. Max was kicked out. The rest of her son's academic career was uneventful. Max rarely did anything in class, but aced his tests. It came as no surprise, when Max got a perfect score on his college entrance exam. He had scholarship offers to many prestigious universities, but opted for Angelina Junior College. Max was forced out his first year, after leading a revolt against the Economics Department.

Max put on a record. A British group called The Pink Underground. He

swayed in his chair, and snapped his fingers.

“Can you see me?” asked Professor Hensley.

“Of course. I have my webcam set. Let’s get started,” Max said.

“I want my students to see,” Hensley said.

Max laughed sarcastically.

“Good evening students and distinguished faculty. We are pleased to continue our series of debates on global monetary policy. Once again, we welcome our guest Max Wilson. A distinguished speaker and author of numerous economic articles. Good evening Max.”

“Good evening.”

“Max. I’m getting a little feedback. Do you have music on in the background?”

“The Pink Underground.”

“Excuse me?”

Max took a swig of buttermilk, and shoved pot pie in his mouth.

“I’m still hearing music,” Hensley said.

Max reached over, and turned down the volume.

“How’s that?”

“Much better. Let’s see the topic was central bank policy last time. Care to add thoughts Max?”

“What policy? You mean printing money,” Max responded.

Hensley’s students started laughing, when they saw the gigantic head of Max Wilson. The Chicago Cubs baseball cap pulled down to his eyes, and pot pie crumbs on the sides of his mouth.

“Can you explain what you mean by money printing?” asked Hensley.

“Quantitative easing,” Max belched.

“Explain what that means to our audience,” Hensley said.

“Money printing.”

“Care to elaborate?”

“No.”

“Central banks are taking the necessary steps to save the global economy by implementing quantitative easing,” Hensley said.

“They certainly are not,” Max chimed.

“What is your suggestion Max?”

“Do nothing.”

“Do nothing? You think the central banks should sit idly by and let the global economy implode?”

“Yes.”

“Please explain.”

“Central bank policy created the environment of mal investment. The easy money created the housing collapse. The banks gambled by throwing fire on the rigged casino, thanks to a central bank’s low interest rate policy. Same thing brought on the Great Depression,” Max said.

“Hold on Max. Why mention the Great Depression?”

Jan started knocking on the door.

“Not now mother. I’m in a debate.” Max stood up and knocked over the webcam. Hensley’s class erupted in laughter.

“It appears we’ve lost transmission. Let’s see if our guest can reconnect,” Hensley said.

“I said not now mother. I’ve lost them. See what you made me do.”

“Sorry dear. Can we can talk a minute?”

“No. I’ve got to fix the webcam. I think you broke it.”

“I’m sorry. Didn’t mean to startle you. I keep getting these bills in the mail from a company in England. Do you know who BANG Records are?”

“Don’t worry about it. Can you go warm up my pot pie? It’s cold.”

“These bills are expensive. The last one was almost two hundred dollars.”

“Just warm up my pot pie. I can’t finish the debate. You’re going to have to go to Radio Mart and buy me a new webcam.”

“Are you ordering records?”

She surveyed her son’s bedroom. The walls were lined with shelves of vinyl albums. Each record had a plastic sleeve on it, and there were little letter tabs for organization.

“Why would you think that mother?”

“No reason.”

“Get me a webcam. Warm up my pot pie. I need a chilled glass of buttermilk.”

“Are the packages on the porch records?”

“No mother.”

“I just can’t pay these bills. We don’t have the money.”

“Relax. Your concern will soon drift away.”

“I’m not blaming you son.”

“Don’t worry mother. I’ll look into it,” Max said.

“Thank you son.”

Jan went back downstairs. She thought her son might be lying, but it soon passed.

Max sat at his writing desk. He picked up the phone.

“BANG Records.”

“It’s me.”

“What’s shaking Max?”

“Just the usual. What you got in this week?”

“Got a few imports from Dark Sky. There’s live album from Weeder.”

“Dark Sky. Sounds good. I like Weeder too. Send them.”

“You got it Max. Get those out in the morning.”

“What did you think of Dark Sky’s last album?” asked Max.

“I liked it. It was obviously influenced by shoe gaze.”

“I agree. I hear a little dream pop in there too,” Max said.

“You’re right.”

“Sounds good. I’ll look for the records.”

Max hung up the phone. He was still fuming from talking to Hensley. The

guy called himself a professor. His views were dim-witted at best.

“All Keynesian lies,” Max said to himself.

There were a few pot pie crumbs in his beard, so he licked them into his mouth. Max had a busy day tomorrow. He was going to give a lecture.

Jan went to Radio Mart.

“Have you got any of those computer cameras?”

“Excuse me?” the clerk said.

“My son has an important meeting. He needs a camera to talk to a professor.”

“I bet your son needs a webcam.”

“That’s it.”

The clerk reached under the counter, and grabbed the most expensive one he could find.

“Here you go.” The clerk handed the camera to Jan.

“That will be two fifty three with tax,” the clerk said.

“Two hundred and fifty dollars? Lord have mercy,” Jan said.

“That’s actually a cheaper model,” the clerk said.

“Lord have mercy.” Jan thought a minute. She pictured poor Max sitting in his room.

“Do you take checks?”

“Of course.”

Jan wrote the check. It was expensive, but Max loved chatting with them professors. She wasn't sure on what topic.

Max reached into the desk drawer, and grabbed an extra webcam. He set it up, and got the professor back on chat.

“Welcome back Max. Glad to see you got your issue resolved.”

“I believe you were trying to justify the central bank policy,” Max said.

“I think you were talking about the Great Depression,” Hensley said.

“No time for that professor.”

Max took a swig of buttermilk. It was warm, and his stomach bubbled.

“I think you mentioned quantitative easing, care to explain to my students how the central banks are using this monetary tool?”

“Your professor is an idiot,” said Max.

The students erupted with laughter. Hensley could be seen blushing, but

maintained his composure.

“Let’s be professional.”

“Just good natured ribbing professor. Seriously he’s an idiot. I’d say the central bank policy is an utter failure.”

“What do you suggest then?” asked Hensley

“The banks need to restructure. Mark off their losses and default. They’re nothing but walking zombies,” Max replied.

“I disagree. The banks are sitting on record amounts of capital. The latest stress tests are positive,” chimed Hensley.

“Fool! The banks are the root of the problem. It starts with the unregulated Federal Reserve Bank. Which by the way is about as federal as Federal Express,” said Max.

“There you go again, blaming the Federal Reserve,” laughed Hensley

“It’s true professor. Their reckless monetary policy created the disaster. The central bank needs to be audited. It’s long overdue,” said Max.

“Do you want to tell my students about the Federal Reserve?”

“Do you teach your students anything? Why do I have to explain?”

“I believe we’re almost out of time,” Hensley said.

“Thank goodness. I can’t tolerate anymore.”

“Thank you Max,” the professor said.

Hensley’s class roared in the background. Max shut off the webcam. He needed to gather his thoughts for tomorrow. Max laid down. He put on headphones, and hit play on his turntable. The sounds of The Pink Underground filled his ears, and his eyelids grew heavy. Sleep was almost there, but a knock on the door woke him.

“Go away!”

“It’s me son. I got your camera and hot a pot pie. A chilled glass of buttermilk too.”

“Not hungry anymore. I’m going to the college tomorrow. Make sure and wake me up. My brunch needs to be ready. I can’t be late.”

“Let me bring in your camera. The man said it’s a nice one.”

“Alright mother. Slide it under the door.”

“I don’t think it will fit.”

“Set it by the door. I can’t be disturbed.”

“Yes son.”

Jan could be heard walking down the stairs. Max got up, and went to get the webcam.

“This is a piece of crap,” Max thought.

He walked back in his room, and tossed it in the desk drawer.

Max walked to Angelina Junior College. The school had gotten a new dean five years ago, and Max was able to smooth things out despite his torrid past. He offered to give lectures in the Advanced Economics class, although there was nothing advanced about Angelina Junior College. The college was about a mile from Max's house, but it was a chore for him to walk. The East Texas humidity beat down on him. Max could feel the sweat dripping through his Chicago Cubs hat, so he pulled it further down. His beady eyes squinted to shield the sun. By the time Max arrived on campus, it appeared he'd just gotten out of the shower.

"Max. Professor White is expecting you," the secretary said.

"I'll be there in a minute."

"You look hot," the secretary said.

"Thanks. I try to keep in shape."

"I mean you're sweating," the secretary said.

"Oh."

Max walked down the hall.

“Come in Max. We’ve been expecting you. My students always look forward to your lectures,” White said.

“I’m here.”

White’s students laughed when Max entered the class, followed by applause. The students loved Max’s lectures, in fact they’d much rather have him as their professor. Max walked to the front of the class, and stood behind the podium. He never used notes.

“You guys are talking about the history of the central bank. Is that right?”

“Yes.”

“I’m sure your distinguished professor has told you some rather uncouth tale about its conception.”

The class laughed.

“I’m here to set the record straight. The central bank has taken various forms in the United States, which is the focus of my lecture. Instead of talking about those variations, I’d like to center on the Federal Reserve Bank that we have today. The very entity that sets monetary policy at home but also globally.”

Max could feel the sweat building up on his forehead. He pulled the cap further down his face. His eyes were barely visible, and he often stopped to dab his face with a tissue. Max spoke for about twenty minutes, often making comparing economic policy to pop music. The class seemed confused at times, but found the whole thing humorous.

“I conclude that your professor is a brainwashed Keynesian.”

The class was silent. Professor White scribbled down a few notes.

“Thank you Max. Would you like to field some questions?”

“Just a few. I am expecting a package at home.”

A female student raised her hand in the front row.

“You talked about the central bank as the root of the economic crisis; can you explain what you mean?”

“I covered this thoroughly in my lecture. If your distinguished professor taped the lecture, perhaps he can go over it in class,” Max said.

“Anybody else have a question?” asked White.

A student raised his hand in the back of the class.

“Can you explain how The Pink Underground compares to interest rates?”

Max liked this question.

“I should have gone into more detail, but basically The Pink Underground sets the bar for garage rock in the same way the Fed sets interest rates. The latter is the king of interest rates. The Pink Underground are the kings of shoe gaze.”

The class seemed even more confused.

Max spent enough time with the junior college students, so he said goodbye and left. The students could be heard clapping all the way down the hall. Max waddled past the secretary, and back into the Texas heat.

“Those mullets deserve someone like White,” Max thought.

Max’s throat was parched, so he walked to Ames Chicken. He wanted chicken tenders and a glass of buttermilk. The folding money was in his front pocket. He pilfered it from mother’s purse earlier in the day.

Jan went to her bridge club. The group met once a week, although Jan attended twice a month. The leader of the group was Alice Walker; the pastor's wife.

"How things been honey?" asked Alice

"Alright. Max got me busy."

"Where is your son?" asked Alice.

"He's down at the college. Giving a talk."

"What about?" asked Alice.

"Not sure. Max says it's important."

"Lord have mercy. Your son lives at home. Girl it's time to set him free. He needs a job," Alice said.

"Max is special. I need him. He's always been a sensitive child," Jan said.

"Special? How old is he now? You need to live your life. The Bible talks about leave and cleave."

"He turned thirty five. Max can't cleave. He only had one girlfriend. She broke his heart. Max say she don't like him talking about money."

"Money? He doesn't even have a job," Alice laughed.

"I suppose you're right," Jan said.

"You pay all the bills. Make him get a job."

“My pension ain’t enough. I’m struggling to make ends meet,” Jan said.

“Even more reason to set him free. You need to enjoy life.”

Jan began to think about it, maybe Alice was right. Max was a grown man. He needed to get a job, and live his own life. There was nothing keeping her in Lufkin. It might be nice to move. Someday.

Willie Ames opened his first chicken shack in 1972, pretty soon stores popped up all over East Texas. He recognized the giant figure that walked through his front door.

“What you say Max?”

“Get me tenders and buttermilk.”

“You got it. Where you been? Look like you take a shower.”

“At the college.”

“Working out with the track team?” Willie laughed.

“Speaking in White’s class. Teaching the dill weeds.”

“How is Professor White? He ain’t come in lately,” Willie said.

“Moronic as ever. I can’t believe he’s tenured.”

“What’s tenured?” asked Willie.

“It means idiotic. Got that three piece?”

Willie smiled and brought the chicken over. He wasn't sure what Max did at the college, but knew he liked chicken. He didn't want to pry his best customer too much, so avoiding details was important.

"What you think about the football team?" asked Willie.

"They are putrid like their educators. An abomination to collegiate athletics."

"Not sure what putrid mean, but I guess not good."

"They're better off taking a flame thrower to the campus," Max said.

"You harsh Max. Coach say they pretty salty this year."

"The imbecile barely knows English. Much less football." Max shoved chicken in his mouth, and finished the buttermilk.

"I better go Willie."

"See you next time Max."

Willie opened the door for his best customer, and waved goodbye. Max Wilson always got royal treatment, he gave good business. Willie heard Max was educated, but still lived with his mother. That was the gossip at church.

Max walked home. There were two packages on the front porch. He picked them up, and walked inside. Max climbed the stairs and immediately went

to the bathroom. He needed a long soak.

“I beat mother home,” Max thought.

He turned the water on, and slowly climbed into the tub. His skin was red, so he gently washed his back, and dabbed his face with a washcloth. Max grew tired of the lectures, but felt it a necessity. The youth today were dumb at best, and had no concept of economics or anything else for that matter. Max grabbed the first package, and slowly unwrapped it. The record cover looked good. The Pink Underground provided aesthetic value for their fans; it was an experience for the listener. Max didn't like digital music. It sounded cold and distant. Vinyl sounded better. It was warm and pleasing, and soothed his mind.

“Max. Are you in there?”

“I shut the door for no reason.”

“When you get out. I want to have a talk.”

“Not now mother. I have at least an hour. Then a chat with Hensley.”

“It's important son.”

“What is it now? Another bill you can't explain?”

“Let's talk about it in the morning,” Jan said.

“I’m busy all day. Working on my treatise.”

Max heard his mother walk down the stairs.

“That bridge club has gotten to her head. There’s no telling what kind of liberal ideology they’re filling her mind with, the culprit no doubt is the pastor’s wife. She’s a hussy and a harlot,” Max thought.

The water started to cool a bit, so Max turned the hot all the way to the left. He sank down under the water, and his massive gut protruded above the water level. “After my chat with Hensley, I’ll work on my treatise. I’ve got ideas in my brain. Need to get them down,” Max thought.

The chat with Hensley was uneventful. Max got so disgusted with the professor’s definition of inflation, that he shut off the webcam, and told Hensley to personally write an apology letter. Hensley’s students erupted in a frenzied laughter, which made Max even angrier. All was not lost however; as Max got much work done on his treatise. He penned five pages just for Hensley, and another five for White. This was done to the jangle pop sounds of Weeder. The music reminded Max that he needed to call BANG Records. The new releases

were coming out tomorrow.

Jan saw her son stumble down the stairs. There was that ever present Chicago Cubs hat, and the gray athletic shorts snug on his massive posterior. She had little hope for Max; he was destined to be a bachelor, and had no motivation for self betterment. All her son cared about were those damn albums, and talking about whatever on the computer.

“Good morning son. Did you sleep well?”

“Is my brunch ready?”

“No. Today you make your own. There’s oatmeal in the pantry. Waffle mix in ice box.”

“Stop the abomination. Surely you jest.”

“Jest?”

“It means joke mother. I would like French toast. Side of boiled eggs.”

“You make it. I mean it,” Jan said.

“What’s wrong with you mother? You been conversing with the harlot?”

“Harlot?”

“The pastor’s wife. She’s a bad influence. That club has done nothing but ruin your life.”

“Alice Walker is a good lady. She got lots of advice. I know she means well.”

“She’s nothing but a harlot. I’m sure she’s familiar with the book of Revelation.

God talks about the great harlot. That’s her.”

“Son. I want to talk.”

“Make my brunch. My stomach is upset. I need a proper meal.”

“I will not. I’m trying to tell you that I’m moving out.”

“Moving out? You’ve gone insane,” Max said.

“It’s true. I am meeting with the realtor today. She said the house will sell for double.”

“You need your head examined. I will not tolerate such imprudent talk.”

“I’m moving to Florida. I called Marge this morning. She said I can live with her until I get on my feet,” Jan said.

“Your sister is crazier than you. You need to calm down. You’re not thinking properly.”

“I love you son. I’ve given up my life so that you can have things. I pay your bills. I do your laundry. I need a break.”

“Foolish talk. You’ll change your mind. You won’t make it one day in Florida. The mosquitoes and alligators,” Max said.

“I’ll be just fine. That’s no way to speak to your mama,” Jan said.

“What am I supposed to do? What about my brunch?”

“I suggest you find a job. It’s time you entered the real world. I’m doing this for your own good. I should have told you long ago.”

Jan left to meet with the realtor. Max stared blankly at the oatmeal, and decided he wasn’t hungry. He walked upstairs and picked up the desk phone.

“Hello.”

“Aunt Marge. It’s your nephew.”

“Hello Max. It’s been a long time.”

“I know. Mother changed her mind. She decided to stay. As you can imagine, she’s having a difficult time letting go.”

“Are you sure? I spoke with her. She sounded excited about moving to Florida.”

“I’m afraid she’s upset. Not to mention her fear of gators. It was a major factor.”

“Is she there? Can I speak to her?” asked Marge.

“She’s at the church. Talking to the pastor.”

“Is she alright?” asked Marge.

“I don’t think so.”

“I find it hard to believe,” said Marge.

“I think it came down to mosquitoes,” Max said.

“Mosquitoes?”

“Yes. They’re quite horrific in Florida.”

“They’re just as bad in Lufkin,” said Marge.

“I hate to be the bearer of bad news. Mother couldn’t bring herself to call.”

“I’m going to phone her later,” said Marge.

“It won’t do any good. She’s set in her ways,” Max said.

“Goodbye Max. Tell her I’ll be in touch.”

Max hung up and went to the kitchen. He immediately unplugged the phone. He kept the one in his room on, but turned down the ringer. This was vital to order records, and chat with Hensley. The first order of business was finding the harlot. She was the perpetrator responsible for the brainwashing.

Patty Harris worked at Panther Realty for twenty five years, not to mention she played bridge. She was more than pleased to assist Jan Wilson.

“Everything looks good. I think we can sell it in a few weeks,” Patty said.

“That’s good. I’ve already made plans for the move,” Jan said.

“What about your son?” Patty asked.

“He’ll be fine.”

“That’s good to hear,” Patty said.

“I’m gonna live with my sister.”

“She’s in Boca Raton?” asked Patty.

“That’s right. It’s a beautiful area,” Jan said.

“I’ll run the ad next week. Let’s hope for the best,” Patty said

“Thank you. Let’s cross our fingers.”

Max sat down, and worked on his treatise.

To whom it may concern: (Professor White, Economics Department Angelina Junior College and Professor Hensley, Economics Department Texas College)

I detest your ludicrous methods of teaching and your asinine philosophy of economics. I call for your immediate resignations due to false instructional methods based upon utopian fairy tales, and blatant lies directed at your students under the guise of pseudo economic theory. I detest the Keynesian lies your culvert mouth spews. I’ve been personally offended while conversing with you, and your unfortunate pupils. This stems from a blatant misunderstanding of economics, which as we know gets its roots from the devil himself; John Maynard Keynes. I don’t feel obligated to explain the CORRECT economic theory, which we know is the Austrian school. However, I will provide a correct definition of inflation. You have incorrectly brainwashed your students and other toe heads by

stating inflation is an increase in prices. We both know that the accurate definition is an increase in the monetary supply. I look forward to seeing you quit or resign. I would be embarrassed to even call yourself a tenured professor.

Sincerely,

Max Wilson

Max printed out two copies, and got them ready to mail. Then he wrote a letter to Pastor Walker.

Pastor Walker,

I've discovered a great brainwashing amongst your beloved flock. The root of this evil stems from a brood of vipers known as the Ladies Bridge Club. It is with much wretchedness, that I state your wife is behind it all. The power of Satan has transformed her into the Great Harlot as prophesized in the Revelation of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, my own mother has been a victim of this false prophecy. She is possessed. This demon threatens to devastate our family. With much prayer and fasting, I call for your immediate resignation and exorcism of your harlot wife. I will bring this matter before the church board.

In Christ,

Max Wilson

P.S. Pray for my mother Jan Wilson

Max put all the envelopes in the mailbox. He went back inside and took a nap.

Willie Ames. His business was on the decline. His best customer hadn't shown his face in weeks, and the opening of a chain restaurant brought unwanted competition. The truth being, Willie should have filed for bankruptcy years ago. His pride wouldn't allow it, not after the years of hard work. He needed capital to get above water; a loan that could be reinvested in the chicken shack. Willie fought back the tears, when he pondered his dire situation. He needed a spark to reignite commerce.

Jan was so preoccupied with the house on the market, she barely noticed a few missing dollars from her purse. In fact, Jan wondered why she hadn't heard

from Patty. It was like somebody unplugged the phone. In the meantime, she'd start packing a few things. Jan knew Max wouldn't help; he was too busy listening to records or talking on the computer. The door to his room was always shut, and sometimes she'd hear Max yell "Derivatives Stupid!" Jan felt good about her decision. She wanted her own life in Florida.

"Hey Max!" Willie Ames smiled when his best customer walked through the door. He knew Max was always good for a few dark meat thighs, chicken tenders, livers, or a three piece meal. If anything, Max provided entertainment from the monotonous work day; with business being slow it brightened his day.

"What you have?"

"Three thighs. Glass of buttermilk."

"You got it. How's things?" asked Willie.

"Putrid."

"Is that bad?"

"It means stench," Max belched.

"You over at the college?"

"Not until next month. I'm not inclined to speak," said Max.

Willie brought the chicken over, and Max shoved a thigh into his mouth. He took a gulp of buttermilk, and burped.

“How’s your mama?”

“She’s lost her sanity. Putting our beloved home on the market, and concocting a ludicrous notion of relocating to Florida.”

“Florida? Ain’t nothing good there,” said Willie

“I know. Full of degenerate beasts and an infestation of disease ridden Culicidae.”

“What?”

“Mosquitoes.”

“I know ain’t they awful. The heat brings them out.”

“She won’t go through with it. Her little fantasy will come to a dreaded finale.”

Willie thought Max sure was educated. He used big words from the junior college. Willie thought it might be a good time to mention the lack of business to Max. If anybody knew about business, it would be Max. After all, he was giving them talks to the college kids.

“Things ain’t good round here,” Willie said.

“The mashed potatoes are a bit dry,” said Max.

“I shut down the places in Tyler and Crockett. My place here is losing money.

The kids don’t eat chicken like they use to,” said Willie

“Branch out your business. Try adding Greek yogurt,” said Max.

“Nobody like that fancy stuff here.”

“Just take out a loan. Give you some capital to renovate,” said Max

“The man at the bank say no. I got no credit,” said Willie.

“Thompson? His peon brain hasn’t the first inclination of running a bank or any other endeavor,” said Max.

“I just need a little money. Something to get back on my feet.”

“You cook a fine chicken. Your product deserves to be proliferated among the masses,” said Max.

Max said goodbye to Willie. He started walking home, but something caught his eye. A sign in the window of First Angelina Bank.

Now Hiring.

Jan woke up early, and started packing away a few things in the kitchen. A knock on the door. It was quite unusual for anybody to knock on the door, especially on Saturday. Jan put on a pot of coffee, and went to the door.

“Patty. Good to see you. I was getting a little worried.”

“I’ve called a few times,” said Patty.

“You have? Seems like the phone never rings. Maybe I missed you.”

“Could be. Good news. We have a few interested buyers,” said Patty.

“That’s great. What can I do?”

“I set up a viewing for next Wednesday. It’s a real nice couple, “said Patty.

“Fabulous. Do you want me here?”

“That’s fine.”

“Max will probably be here.”

“Max? He’s still living with you?” asked Patty.

“For the last fifteen years. That’s part of why I’m selling. I need to branch out.

Never mind Max. He just stays in his room.”

“Sounds good,” Patty said.

Jan needed to clean the house. She didn’t want the prospective buyers getting a bad impression. Things were going to be hectic between the house and the move, but she’d manage to pull it off. Her main concern was dealing with Max.

“Max. Turn down that music!”

Jan banged on her son’s door, but to no avail. She gave up and barged in, nearly knocking the door off its hinges.

“Turn off that racket!”

Max stared at the computer and ignored his mother. He was busy chatting with Hensley.

“Have you heard of Operation Twist? You imbecile!” Max yelled at the computer screen.

Jan walked over and unplugged the record player.

“Mother! What on earth are you doing?”

“I’m trying to tell you the realtor has buyers coming next week.”

“Can’t you see I’ve got the professor in a conundrum? I’ve got no time for nonsense.”

“I want you out of the house. It’s next Wednesday.”

“Mother. Just leave.”

Max leaned back in his chair, and flipped over. Hensley’s class burst into laughter. The chat was over. Max picked himself up, and put his Cubs hat back on. He’d make plans for next Wednesday.

The church board meeting.

Pastor Ray Walker led his flock at Harmony Baptist. He was one of the few

pastors in town with a seminary education. The good folk of Lufkin didn't question much, and he liked it that way. His secretary brought a rather entertaining letter to his attention; it was a scathing rant against his wife. The pastor thought it quite humorous, but even more unusual it was signed by Max Wilson.

"I baptized Max many years ago. Is he still living at home? Must be like forty by now," Pastor Ray thought.

What the pastor really was looking forward to was his three month sabbatical. He took Alice to their cabin in Colorado, and loved catching trout from the Rio Grande River. With both girls now out of college, the pastor looked forward to an early retirement. In fact, the board was due to vote on a salary increase at the next meeting.

After his lecture at the junior college, Max stopped by Winn Dixie. He bought some red fish, farm fresh eggs, and buttermilk. The latter was for his personal consumption. There were plans for the fish and eggs. If the prospective buyers wanted a tour, they should have a pleasant aroma to encourage their purchase. Max arrived home and placed the eggs in the air conditioner vent, then

put the fish in the hallway closet underneath some towels. In a few days, the stench would permeate the entire house. In the meantime, he'd pay the bank a visit. If mother wanted him employed, he'd put his extensive knowledge of money to work.

"Patty. My phone's been unplugged. I may have knocked the cord out while mopping," said Jan.

"The buyers will be there first thing in the morning. I think they're really interested," Patty said.

"Reason I called is there's a problem. The house really stinks to high heaven. I think a coon got up in the air conditioner and died. I'm concerned. Can't get rid of it. Went through three cans of Lysol."

"That's a problem. Just keep trying. I can get a cleaning crew if that don't work," said Patty.

"Thanks. The stench is something awful," Jan said.

Jan hung up the phone, and walked upstairs.

"Max. Open the door!"

"If you're inquiring about the appalling odor, I don't know. I believe a rat may have died inside the wall. You better call Animal Control," Max said.

“Can you climb up in the attic and check?” asked Jan.

“Don’t be foolish. I have a very important chat with Hensley in five minutes. I can’t be snooping around in a musty rat den.”

Jan shut the door and walked downstairs. She wanted to leave more than ever. Max was getting on her nerves, and Florida couldn’t get here soon enough.

“I saw the sign in the window,” Max said.

John Thompson shook the giant mass of a man’s hand.

“You’re interested in our teller position?”

“I’d like to run your investment banking department,” Max said.

“Investment banking? I’m afraid we don’t have one. If you’d like to interview for our teller position, that will be fine. Did you bring your resume?”

Thompson looked at Max; there was that enormous gut hanging below gray stretch pants, a sweat stained shirt, a blue cap pulled down to his eyes, and what appeared to be fried chicken crumbs in a scraggly beard.

“He doesn’t look like First Angelina material,” Thompson thought.

“Come in my office. We can have a little interview today.”

“I want to talk salary. Nothing less than fifty thousand,” Max said.

“The position doesn’t pay that much. We can discuss salary later. Let’s see, your resume looks like it has a bunch of web links. Do you have a list of education and previous work experience?”

“I went to Angelina Junior one semester. I currently work in consulting.”

“Consulting?”

“Mainly Austrian Economics and fiscal responsibility,” Max said.

“Austrian?”

“You’re familiar with the two major schools of economic thought? Aren’t you?”

Max asked.

“This position is for customer service. You’ll be working the front counter. Giving change. Making deposits. Computer work,” Thompson said.

“Not much on people but I’m an expert at computers,” Max said.

“That’s good. What are you familiar with?”

“Mainly web cams and online conference,” Max said.

“I see. Are you familiar with spread sheet?”

“I feel that it’s a useless program,” Max said.

“Do you mind if I look up one of your links?”

“Go ahead.”

Thompson typed the first link in a search engine, and was led directly to the

University of Texas Economics Department web page.

“Impressive. So you write articles? This one is entitled ‘Operation Twist and QE Infinity’ that sounds interesting. What’s it about?”

Max leaned back in his chair, and cleared his throat.

“The reckless monetary policy of the Federal Reserve is directly responsible for the financial crisis, which in reality was no crisis at all, but rather the largest transfer of wealth in history. The central bank has become the sole buyer of US treasuries, at least eighty percent according to my calculations. The current climate of mal investment is directly related to an interest rate policy which creates an environment to gamble, since the zombie banks are insolvent, they are receiving free money with no risk. The analogy that I think well describes the current environment of monetary policy, is a heroin junkie receiving more heroin. Witness the corrupt mega banks that own the politicians, and fix the election continue to extort the duped public. The bailouts and TAARP funds have all disappeared, thanks to crony capitalism, and Operation Twist. The latter was a failed attempt to stabilize the European Central Bank, in exchange for the Fed’s trillions, the Euro Bank promised to purchase US treasuries. This program has been exposed as an utter fraud and complete failure. Their goal is to stay in power and keep the

system afloat. This means endless QE by the central banks on a global scale, the printing presses are working overtime, and the result is a quadrillion dollar derivative black hole. There is no escape. Witness the continued manipulation of the paper versus physical gold market, the naked shorting from the Wall Street banksters, the insolvency of all zombie banks, and the eventual default of the PIIGS, House of London, and finally the US. A shift of power to the East, as a new global gold backed currency emerges, and the slow gradual decline of the dollar. This is the current climate of the global economy and monetary policy set to infinity.”

Thompson couldn't believe his ears; this Max was some sort of freak.

“Thank you Max. I'm very impressed.”

“If you're interested, I have hundreds of articles online. Professor White at the college has all my lectures taped as well.”

“We'll get back with you,” Thompson said.

Max walked out of the bank, and felt confident about the job. He had big plans for First Angelina Bank.

“I'd like you to meet Bill and Melinda Garney.”

Patty Harris led the young couple through the front door of the house.

“As you can see there’s plenty of room in the entry way. A nice sized kitchen on the left, complete with a built in stainless steel oven.”

“What’s that smell?” asked Bill.

“We believe a coon got up in the air vent,” Jan said.

“It’s not something that happens often,” Patty said.

“I hope not,” said Melinda.

“Let me show you the upstairs bedrooms,” said Patty.

The couple followed the realtor upstairs, while Jan trailed behind pondering if she should have mentioned the coon.

“This door appears to be locked.” Bill pulled on Max’s bedroom door, but couldn’t open it.

“Jan. Is your son home? I’d like to show the bedrooms,” Patty said.

“I don’t believe so. He’s interviewing down at the bank.”

“His bedroom door is locked. Does it open from the outside?” asked Patty.

The door suddenly swung open. Max stood in the doorway. He rubbed his belly, and let out a belch.

“You must be the buyers. I guess you heard about the rats,” Max said.

“Rats?” asked Bill.

“Yes. I killed three last night. One got stuck in the air vent two days ago. That is the foul stench you smell.”

“I thought you had an interview.” Patty nervously smiled, and directed the couple over to another bedroom.

Jan stood at the top of the stairs in disbelief.

“That’s not all. The other night, a rattler crawled underneath my bed. I was able to subdue it after twenty minutes. There’s a giant den in the backyard.”

“I think we should get going,” Melinda said.

“You’re right,” Bill said.

“Don’t you want to see the living room?” asked Patty.

“We have another viewing. Thank you,” Bill said.

The young couple walked down the stairs, and out the door.

“I’m sorry,” Patty said. She went over to Jan, and tried to console her.

Jan didn’t say anything. She just stared at her only son, and broke out in tears.

“You didn’t want those kids buying the house. They’re barely out of diapers. If anything, I did everybody an enormous favor,” Max said.

Patty put her arms around Jan, and then quietly walked downstairs. It was

the worst showing of her career. Jan went to her bedroom and shut the door. She knew what needed to be done. It was time to leave Lufkin behind, no matter if the house sold or not.

John Thompson wasn't initially impressed with Max Wilson, but he did see potential. With Max's expertise, he might be able to pull in some bigger fish. The bank needed more capital, and perhaps Max could build up a solid financial planning department. It wouldn't be smart to let him work the front desk, however Max might be good at managing a few accounts. Since the financial crisis, Thompson saw his bank slip into the red. The federal government was bailing out the big banks, but leaving the little guys like First Angelina behind.

"Max?"

"Yes."

"It's John Thompson over at First Angelina. I'd like to offer you the job."

"Salary?"

"You'll make twenty five thousand base, but with commissions you can make more."

"Twenty five thousand? That's a paltry sum. Commissions?"

"You're not working the front desk. I'd like you to be sort of a financial advisor. We'll give it a try, and see how it goes."

“That sounds intriguing. When do I start?”

“Come in on Monday. I’ll get you trained.”

“Sounds good.”

“Just one more thing Max. Wear something nice. A tie and slacks would be great.

We like to maintain an image of professionalism at First Angelina.”

“Of course.”

Max hung up the phone. A financial advisor sounded distinguished. If Thompson wanted advice, then he’d get it.

“Mother. I got a job at the bank.”

Jan was in the kitchen packing dishes into cardboard boxes.

“A job? Good for you son. You’ll need one when I move.”

“You can’t seriously be carrying out your little fantasy,” Max said.

“The movers will be here next Friday.”

“What about the house?”

“It’s still on the market. Patty is going to be handling it. You’re going to have to move out. I’m cutting off all the utilities.”

“Move out? Nonsense. I’ll live here,” Max said.

“Patty is getting some tenants, until the house sells.”

“What blasphemy! The harlot put this idea into your head. None of this would have come to fruition without her meddling.”

“I suggest you start looking for an apartment. I love you son.”

“Love? Throwing your only son to the wolves. You won’t make it one week in that dreaded swap. You and your sister will be eaten by gators.”

Jan laughed, and continued packing. Max went upstairs and wrote down a list of necessary evils. An agenda for the next week.

1. Church Board Meeting (The Prophecy of the Great Harlot)
2. Operation Twist Two (Transfer of funds to Ames Fried Chicken)
3. Death of Medusa (Removal of Patty Harris)
4. The Credit Default Swap (Kicking the can to Florida)

Max felt good about the list. He didn’t necessarily feel compelled to complete each task in chronological order, but would methodically dominate each one at a time.

“BANG Records.”

“It’s me.”

“What’s shaking Max?”

“Send whatever your new releases are. I need you write down a new billing

address.”

“You got it.”

“It’s 7654 Palm Street Boca Raton, Florida 33427. Care of Marge Wilson.”

“Done.”

“Ship the records to the same address as usual. Look forward to hearing what you got.”

“I think you’ll enjoy them. A new shoe gaze band called Happy Tuesday.”

“Excellent.”

Max called each utility company, giving each the new billing address. Since he anticipated this day, he kept old bills from each company. He explained that tenants would occupy the house, but being a good landlady the utilities would still be covered. He impersonated his mother quite well.

Harmony Baptist held their board meeting on the last Sunday of the month. Max sat in the last row. He listened to the mundane agenda, even winching when a pay raise was approved for Pastor Ray. The last part of the meeting was open to the congregation. Although Max hadn’t attended church in twenty years, his full fledged membership was still on the books.

“Now we open up the floor to our members. You’re welcome to come up and speak or bring a concern to the body.” The deacon sat down, and left the podium empty.

Max stood up, and began his slow walk up front. The few members in attendance turned their eyes to him. Some laughed under their breath, while others sat up straight with anticipation. Max got behind the podium, and gave a quick glance in Pastor Ray’s direction.

“Beloved church family and distinguished board. It is my great concern that there is a great blasphemy amongst us; it is the spirit of Satan himself. A great harlot has been carrying out his agenda specifically among the Ladies Bridge Club. This harlot not only leads the den of iniquity, but has subjected my own mother to a brainwashing program. The harlot has caused great strife to me personally, and an upheaval in the God ordained family unit. I know for a fact that the harlot as prophesied in the Revelation of Jesus Christ is none other than our beloved pastor’s wife. Alice Walker. It is with much regret, that I bring this urgent matter to the board. I recommend that Pastor Ray’s salary raise be reneged, and call for his immediate resignation, and take his harlot with him.”

Max walked off the stage, and towards the back door. There were a few

moments of silence, but then voices could be heard. Max heard one as he walked outside.

“What is this? Is this true pastor? Shall we take a revote?”

The first day of work was boring. Thompson showed Max where his desk was, and how to turn on the computer. This was followed by a pep talk about First Angelina. How the bank prided itself on customer service, and did things with integrity. Thompson introduced Max to the other employees, followed by a small staff luncheon. Max felt he was surrounded by imbeciles. The job was going to be easier than expected. The bank’s level of competence was just a step above of the mullets at Angelina Junior College. Thompson mentioned he would be out of the office the next day, and that Max could just get more acquainted with the bank.

The next day Max put his plan into action.

“Hello.”

“Willie. It’s Max Wilson.”

“Max. Good to hear from you. You need a take out order?”

“Not today. I’ve got great news. I’m now vice president of First Angelina Bank.”

“You’re joshing me.”

“Not at all. You can walk across the street and see for yourself. The real reason I called, is to tell you that you’re approved for a loan.”

“Really? That’s great!”

“It’s true. I ran the numbers with Thompson today. Told him about your unfortunate situation.”

“You don’t know how much I thank you.”

“You’re welcome. If you have an account number, I’ll transfer the money today.”

“Sure do. How much the loan for?”

“A million dollars.”

Silence.

Max was able to crack the bank software quite easily; he got the money to Willie in about an hour. Max told the other staff he was taking the rest of the day off. He managed to transfer about ten thousand to his own meager savings account at Panther Credit Union. Mother opened it for him in the fifth grade. He figured Thompson wouldn’t even know the money was missing for awhile.

The president of First Angelina went work the next day.

“Where’s Max?”

“He said there was a family emergency in Florida,” the secretary said.

“Did he say when he was coming back?”

“Didn’t mention it,” the secretary said.

Thompson went into his office. He opened his favorite calendar, and checked the dates for his vacation. There was a nice picture of a trout at the top of the calendar. He glanced out his office window, and noticed a bull dozer and giant crane at Ames Chicken.

“Must be getting ready to remodel,” Thompson thought.

Max got the package of records on the front porch, and walked upstairs to his room. He put one on the turntable, the wall of guitar feedback hissed through the stereo speakers. He set up the webcam.

“Hensley. Can you hear me?”

“Not good. Is that music in the background?”

The movers came and loaded everything up. Jan called Max outside once everything was packed.

“You know Marge’s address and phone number. I’m going now.”

“You’re really doing it. If that’s what you want, I wish you luck. Those gators have sharp teeth.”

“I love you son. This is the best thing for both of us.”

“I told Patty that you have two weeks to move out. Should be fairly easy with your new job. She’s got tenants lined up after that.”

“Sounds good mother.”

Jan hugged her son, and got in her car. The moving van took the lead, and was soon gone. Max waved, and went back inside. He took a nap, and woke up feeling refreshed. Max walked over to the desk phone, and picked it up.

“Panther Realty.”

“I need to speak with the president of your company,” Max said.

“Just a minute.”

“This is Mark Smith.”

“Mr. Smith. This is Jan Wilson. I’m working with your agent Patty Harris. I’m extremely disappointed in her service. She embarrassed me at my house viewing, and is dragging her feet on selling my property.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. I can reassign Patty to another customer.”

“I want this done. I’m taking my house off the market. Please inform her immediately.”

“I’ll take care of that Mrs. Wilson.”

“It’s Ms. Wilson, and take down all listings of my house on your website and adverts.”

“I’m sorry for this problem. We hope you’ll consider Panther Realty should you change your mind,” Mark said.

“Not a chance in hell.”

Max hung up the phone, and went to make a sandwich.

A month later, the air was blowing cold and all the lights were on. Max sat in his room and worked on his treatise. In the morning, he’d mail a copy to Ben Bernast. The head of the Federal Reserve Bank. He walked downstairs to see if the phone was still unplugged. Max was a bit obsessive compulsive.

“The gators must be licking their chops,” Max thought.

He poured a glass of buttermilk, and burped.

The End

Did you enjoying reading this? What are you waiting for? Go buy my other books.

Thom Young is a writer from Texas. His work has been in 3am magazine, Word Riot, The Legendary, and many other places. A 2008 Million Writers Award nominee for his story Perico. His debut novella Laredo Down has been shocking readers since 2004. His next Sarah had success as well. His novella Gene reached #2 in the Men's Adventure Fiction Free category. His novel The Neighborhood reached #1 in Action Adventure Free Amazon Spain. ZOMBIE, TX followed in 2012. NOMAD hit #4 in Mens Adventure Free, #2 in the UK, #1 in Germany, #1 Action Adventure Free Spain. His short story collection Closing Time hit #1 in Germany Mens Adventure Free. SUCK hit #2 in Mens Adventure Free, #2 Germany, and #4 UK. CHAMP followed in 2012. SEA of IDIOTS is his new book. Thom has become an important voice in underground literature and his Kindle books are growing in popularity.

