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Spraying Windows

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Myself
Logan, Utah
November 15th, 2017

Spraying Windows Occupational Folklore

Informant: I was born in Lewiston Utah and spent most of my childhood in Cache Valley until I moved with my family to Monticello Utah before my junior year of high school. During my teenage years I worked several farm and landscaping jobs. After graduating high school, I served a two-year LDS mission in the Philippines and then attended a single semester of school at BYU-Idaho before marrying a Logan girl and moving to Logan to continue school at USU.

Context: For two years starting when I was 21, I worked for a local small pest control business that employed about 15 people during the time that I worked there. Most of the work that we did was pesticide and fertilizer application on lawns and insecticide applications directly on the exterior of customers' homes. To do the spray applications, we used trucks with large pesticide tanks and electric pumps that pumped the mixtures through a long hose that had a gun attached to the end. We would walk around the property, apply the pesticide in an efficient manner and then wind of the hose, then fill out the paperwork to leave with the customer. On one of the papers that we would give the customer, we would fill out a checklist to verify to them all of the locations where we applied the pesticide on their home. For instance, there would be a checkbox for the foundation, one for doorways, one for around windows, one for open exterior vents, one for the eaves, etc.

Text: During my training for my pest control job I was instructed ensure that I apply the pesticide to all of the spots listed on the sheet that we left with each customer. That way we could honestly check every box and satisfy the customer's expectations. Over time I realized that this was no issue for me except for when it came to spraying around the perimeter of each window on the homes. Although I tried hard to avoid it, I found that a decent amount of pesticide would drift directly onto the window panes as I sprayed around their frames. I troubled myself greatly trying to find a strategy that would avoid the issue, but even after becoming quite experienced in all aspects of the job, I just couldn't prevent the windows from being sprayed. As one would expect, this caused many customers to get upset and they would sometimes call the front desk of the company to complain about me. I became increasingly agitated at the fact that in order to honestly check the box that said "sprayed around perimeter of all windows," I often

had to sacrifice the cleanliness of the windows. However, after some conversation with many of my coworkers, I learned that none of them consistently sprayed around the windows because of the risk of getting them dirty, but they still always checked that box that said they did. This was a surprising element of company culture that I wish I had known much earlier.

Texture: The unspoken rule about spraying around all of the windows was to simply not do it and lie to the customer about it as well as to the supervisor and owner of the company. This lying behavior was adopted by everyone as they each went through the same frustrating experience that I did and decided on their to stop spraying the windows but check the box saying that they did. This action was concluded by everyone to be the best and only way to please both the customer and the boss.

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