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Danny's job log: 5

Written by Danny Smith, January 2011

Danny Smith is a Fine Art graduate. He has a job as a teaching assistant, an unquenchable thirst and a fledgling freelance career.

New Year, the country is deafened by the sounds of promises being shattered and the smooth, freshly laid tarmac of the Road to Hell rapidly cooling. I am skint, broke, without the proverbial pot.

Being a teaching assistant for an agency around any of the major holidays is always a bit lean, but Christmas is the worst. You see the last week before schools break up is always a bit of a doss, videos are watched, parties thrown and the timetable basically falls apart while everybody makes their Christmas card lists and waits to break up.

This means that even if a member of staff does call in sick then other staff can cover and expensive agency staff like myself go without work. Similar to the start of a new term, everybody will battle in just to show they are willing. Anyway, no-one ever has the first day back from a break off because it messes up their sick pay.

This just highlights the predicament I'm in. I don't want to be a teaching assistant, that's why I quit being a teaching assistant back in October. Actually that's not totally the reason I quit, it was partly over how a senior member of staff treated those under them, I didn't agree with it and realised that its the nature of the job.

Those above teachers are under so much pressure that they have little time to form relationships with the staff, especially ones they may have to let go because the current government are as predictable as a drunk toddler with a handgun, and after four or five years most teachers become so institutionalised they revert back to school ground law where gossip and back-biting rule.

Of course looking for work is impossible over Christmas because no one is hiring. I hate starting things in the New Year - resolutions made over an arbitrary date change are doomed to fail - but I've had to wait for people to get back to work to look for staff.

And who am I kidding? the job I want is not going to be advertised. To be a freelance journalist I'm just going to have put aside the self-doubt and start being a bloody journalist.

I'm going to have to approach editors with ideas and get paid to write them. I don't know what I was hoping for before this, maybe some editor (who looks like J Jameson from spider-man because in my head all editors look like JJ) to happen upon my blog and say: 'Who is this kid? He's got moxy, hire him and do it yesterday!' while banging on the desk? I don't know. I'm just going to have to start doing it, fail, get better, fail harder, and just earn my chops.

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