

Cartier 9

SPECIAL INTERVIEWS

11 pp.

1930

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April 19, 1930.
Operating Branch-M.

Z29-Special-OK3-3A1D.

1434-2112-241?.

Employee introduced by Mr. Dash.

I: "Come with me, Mr. X. I will see that you get your pay right away and then we can take a walk to the restaurant building and have a little talk."

E: "All right, you lead the way. Do you know Mr. Y?"

I: "Yes, I know who he is but I do not know him personally."

E: "Through his recommendation I got this job."

Conversation stopped here as we were entering the Pay Roll.

E: "Of all the days, today I had to forget my entrance pass so now I have to pay twenty-five cents for it."

I: "That is the way it always seems to be. When you need a thing the most, you haven't it with you."

E: (Laughing) "That is the way it is."

I: "Now that you are all fixed up with your money, we will go to the restaurant and have our little talk."

E: "This is the smallest pay I have ever got since I worked here."

I: "Is that so?"

E: "Must be my average pay or something. Do they have any brick layers here?"

I: "Yes, they have. Why do you ask?"

E: "I have a card to lay bricks."

I: "Is that so. How much experience have you got?"

E: "I have had seven years experience. Since I was small I always wanted to work on the outside so after I graduated from grammar school, I went to work as an apprentice."

LEM

I: "You must have left school quite young. You are quite a young looking fellow for seven years brick laying experience."

E: "I was sixteen when I finished school. Now I am twenty-three years old."

I: "The brick laying trade is a very good paying trade. Isn't it?"

E: "When you work a full day you make \$13.60, but there isn't many days that you make that amount. Sometimes the material isn't there and when you wait for it to come, you don't get paid for waiting. Even if you wait only fifteen minutes. Then there are days when it rains you don't work. During the winter months they have a brick laying school. You go for three months a year and you go for four years to finish the course. I finished that course and then I went to Karl Shurz High School for a while. I also went to the 'Y' school down town for a while to learn cross estimating. When I was told by the Foreman that I was going to be layed off today, I asked him if I could get a transfer to the brick layer's division. He said that he could not transfer me because the Personnel sent up my name to be layed off."

I: "So you asked to be transferred to the brick layer's division."

E: "Yes, but it is no use. I suppose I have to go. I don't think that Mr. Y knows that I am being layed off."

I: "Do you know Mr. Y personally?"

E: "I didn't when I started to work here but I do now. He and my father are good friends. Last December when my father met him he asked Mr. Y if he could give me a job. I was out of work for a couple of months then. He told my father to tell me to come down here the next day. I did and I got a job in this department."

I: "So your father and Mr. Y are great friends?"

E: "They were raised up in the same neighborhood. They know each other since they were kids. They used to be playmates. I expected to be layed off before this time. They have been laying off in our department for some weeks already. I am only working here five months. They are laying off fellows with service up to two years so I guess they couldn't keep me any longer. I would not like to stay on that job all my life though."

I: "Why not?"

LEM

E: "You would not get anyplace working in there."

I: "I thought maybe there were others."

E: "For not liking it?"

I: "Yes."

E: "No, I got fine treatment in there. They treated me all right. I sure would like to come back to this Company and work. You don't know how long it will be like this?"

I: "I do not. Let's hope it isn't for long."

E: "Let's hope not. I haven't the slightest idea what I am going to do."

I: "Couldn't you get a job laying brick?"

E: "I looked in the newspaper this last week and I haven't seen an ad in there. There always used to be some, though."

I: "Aren't there any buildings going up now? I always thought your trade got busy at this time of the year."

E: "When every thing else is slack, the building trade is also slack but there is one thing that I am glad of and that is that I am still single."

I: "So you are single. Are you living with your parents?"

E: "Yes, I am helping my dad out. I have a brother but he is married. He has his own place."

I: "So you are helping your dad out. Is he working?"

E: "Yes, he is working in a print shop. What time is it getting to be?"

I: "It is 11:15. Why do you ask? Must you go back to your department?"

E: "Yes, I have a pair of pliers in my pocket that belong to a fellow and I wanted to get straightened up in there and also get my clothes."

I: "Oh, so you have some things to attend to yet. Is there something you would like to say before you leave?"

E: "I don't think I have anything to say. I have been treated all right."

LEM

I: "Well, Mr. X, you had better go back to your department so you can straighten out whatever you have to do before the whistle blows, and let's hope I will see you back with us very soon."

E: "Thanks. Goodbye."

I: "Goodbye, Mr. X."

LEM

DON'T DISCLOSE IDENTITIES

From the beginning of these studies, the identities of the persons under study have been kept confidential. We look to you to carry on this trust. Please guard the privacy of the persons involved by substituting fictitious names, or code symbols for real names.

May 10, 1930.

217-14133.

1424, 221?, ??1?

LAI D OFF.

I: "I'll go over to the payroll department with you and help you get cleared out of there in a hurry."

E: "Well, that will be fine. I'm quite anxious to get away."

I: "I guess Mr. X explained to you that I was an interviewer."

E: "Yes."

I: "Do you suppose you'll have time after you're paid off to have a little talk with me?"

E: "Well I could, but I'm awfully anxious to catch a train."

I: "Well, maybe we can talk a little while we're getting things fixed up over here."

E: "Yes, that's better. I've only got one real complaint I want to make. I heard people were around interviewing, and I often thought I'd like to get a chance to talk to them."

I: "Well, what complaint was it you wanted to make?"

E: "Well, I think that the piece rates over there in our shop are terrible. You know, there's a lot of fellows down there that can't make a living. I feel pretty sorry for them. I don't feel so bad about it myself, because I've been treated pretty fair. There's some of our jobs that weren't so good, but as soon as we told our gang boss, why he fixed it right up for us. He's a real chap. He does everything he can to take care of the employees that work for him. Some of the other fellows aren't as lucky as that though. He was a good boss; he always got our rates fixed up for us. He was nice to get along with too. You know, I used to work over in the electrical shop there."

I: "Oh yes, I see. Well, how are the other things?"

E: "Everything else is fine. I haven't got a single thing to complain about. I only worked here for a year, and I liked it a lot all the time I was here. I don't know of any place I'd rather work for, than the Western Electric. I was pretty lucky to get to stay as long as I did. You know, they've laid off a lot of men with long-

AW

*Payment E
1-2*

*Placement H
Steady work
Vacation
2*

er service than I have and kept me on as long as they could. Well, they said they were going to call me back as soon as things pick up a little. I guess I'll wait for them. I'd like to get back here. You know, there's a lot of good men that got laid off. You know, this Company is pretty good. They're taking care of everything for me. I'm getting my vacation pay, and they gave me my stock money yesterday, and oh, everything like that. It's all fixed up. Really, I don't mind getting a vacation anyway.

"I've saved up around fifteen hundred dollars in the three years that I've been away from home. It seems mighty fine to be going home again. I haven't been home in three years. I want to catch that twelve o'clock train. The boss let me off a little early this morning so I can get cleared out of here and make that train. I've got to hurry. I live up in La Crosse, Wisconsin, you know. There's a train out at noon that gets me right up there. I 'phoned to mother last night and told her that I was coming. Boy, she was excited! I don't think she'll ever recognize me. I was only five foot one when I left home three years ago, and now I'm six foot. I used to be quite fat, and I've grown more slender now, but I'm stronger than I was. If a fellow has changed nine inches in three years, his own mother wouldn't know him."

I: "No, I guess not."

E: "I've been sending her pictures, but that isn't the same as seeing a person. I can't believe it myself, until I stand alongside of some of the kids that came up here with me at the same time. I used to be the same size as they were, and now I'm lots bigger than they are. You know, it took forty-five minutes to get that telephone call through last night. That Bell System is pretty slow in the rural districts. I suppose I shouldn't be knocking my own company like that, should I? (Laughter)"

"Boy, mother is sure going to be glad to see me come home. I talked to her for quite a little while, and it cost me \$3.45. I said to her: 'What if I haven't got the money to pay for it?' She said: 'Well, you just tell them to reverse the charges.' I couldn't do that very well, because it was one of these pay station phones, and you have to put the money in first. Oh, I had the money all right. It kind of tickled me though, to see her so anxious to have me talk to her. I bet they'll be down to the station to meet me."

I: "Who do you mean by they?"

E: "Oh, my mother and father."

I: "Oh, I see. I didn't know your dad was up there too."

AW

E: Oh yeh. They've been living up there for some little time. They used to live here in the city. This is really dad's home. We've got lots of relatives here. That's how I happened to come down here to go to work. You know, he worked for a company that make tools and dies, and they changed him around from one territory to another until he got them built up. He used to have the Chicago territory and he got that in good shape, and now they sent him up there... Well, at last we're fixed up. Thanks a lot for helping me. I'll talk to you for a little while if you want me to?"

I: "No, never mind. I suppose you've got a lot of things you want to do."

E: "Yeh, you bet I have. Say, I'll be glad to see you again when I come back."

I: "All right, that will be fine. So long. Good luck."

E: "Same to you."

AW

May 17, 1930.
Operating Branch-M.

Z27-Special-8K2-2D4?

1445-221?-?511.

The interviewer was introduced to the employee. After the introduction we walked over to the Payroll and after helping the man get straightened out with his pay and other personal affairs, we started to walkeover to the restaurant building. After we walked out of the Payroll the interviewer said:

I: "Rather strange weather we are having lately."

E: "Yes, it is. It would not be so bad if it was not for the strong wind that is blowing."

I: "I think there is rather a strong wind up. Maybe if it was not blowing so hard, it wouldn't be so cold as it is."

E: "Gee, I'll have a lot of money next week after they send me my A. T. & T. stock check and my percentage. I got two checks today. I will be sitting pretty for at least a while."

I: "Is that so?"

E: "You know it is pretty tough to get laid off of a job after you have taken a liking to it. I sort of hate to leave this place because I felt as though I was going along pretty good. Of course, I have only been here about nineteen months and I suppose it is the service that counts but I certainly hope I will be able to get back here again."

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After entering the restaurant building we went over and sat down and the employee said:

E: "Well, I can't sit here very long with you because I have some business to take care of. Monday I am leaving town and I'll have to take care of it today."

I: "Oh, you are leaving town, are you?"

E: "Yes."

I: "Why?"

E: "I am leaving for Brookfield, Missouri. My mother happened to get me a job down there so I am leaving Monday to take it up. It happens to be electrical work. I don't think there is a possible

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Thrift A
2.
Placement B
2.

chance to find a job around the city of Chicago. I have several friends that have been out of work for a good long time and they said they have tried all over and that it is impossible to get a job anywhere. I wrote my mother about a week ago after they told me here that I was going to be laid off. My mother went to see a certain party there who happens to be in the electrical business and he promised her that he would give me a job as soon as I came back there so I kind of made up my mind it would be the best thing for me to do. I don't think it would be any use of going out there and attempt to look for work here but wherever I am at, if the Western Electric will send for me I will always come back Placement A

"There is one thing I would like to tell you about before I go. Maybe after I tell you it will help you out by the time I get back.

What I was going to say was a few things about the straw boss that I had. I don't think that there is anybody in the gang that has any use for this straw boss of ours. I think for a slave driver that he has got about everyone of the bosses in the Western Electric beat. He has got no respect for anybody who works for him. The way he treats us he must think that we are a bunch of niggers. S.

"A short time ago, one of the fellows in the gang was being laid off and this fellow went up to the personnel to see if there wasn't a possible chance for him to get a transfer into some other department that might happen to be busy. I guess he was up there for about an hour and a half or two hours and after he came down, this straw boss of ours came up and told him that for the time he spent up in the personnel department, he would have to try and find some way to make up the time that he lost. He went up to the personnel and told him that it was not necessary for him to make up the time he spent up there that there must be some kind of an order number that took care of a man's time that he spent away from his job. Well, he told this fellow he was crazy that he didn't know what he was talking about. He also asked him who was the boss on the job and who was the one that was running it. He said to him, 'If you don't make up that time that you spent up there in the personnel I will do all I can to get you fired so you won't be able to get no vacation pay.' Now that is the kind of a fellow that guy is. He is one of these good for nothings. All of the other bosses up there are very good.

"They are a bunch of fellows that would come up to you and talk to you or you could go up to them and ask them a question and they would answer you in the proper way but this guy, I really think he is ~~actually crazy~~. If I came back to Western I would not take a job under him. I wouldn't take a job under him if it was the last job in the world. In one way I am glad I am being laid off because now I know I don't have to put up with what I had to put up with him."

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You will find that all the other fellows in the gang feel the same way as I do. I am not telling you this just because I like to but everything I am telling you is the true facts about this fellow. A man like this has got no business to be a Gang Boss over a bunch of men. I don't know whether you know this fellow or not but his name is [REDACTED]. It is up there on movietone work wiring. That is what I have been doing since I came here at Western. I like this work very much and if I was ever called back here by Western I would be very glad to go back and do the same kind of work again, but they would have to take this fellow out of the department before I would ever come back to work here again. This fellow here he gives the men working under him the rottenest deals of anybody I have ever seen.

Placement B

"We are all human and working and trying to make a living. The funniest part about it is that every fellow up there is trying to do his best he can and turn out the best kind of a job he possibly knows how and still that is the kind of a treatment we get from a fellow like that. There is somebody asleep on the job somewhere. I might be young in my age but believe me I know what I'm talking about when I tell you all about this. If you only went up there and worked under this fellow about a week or less than that you would soon know what kind of a guy he is. I am leaving the Company now and I feel it is a good time to tell you all about him. The reason why I am telling you about it is for the benefit of the other fellows that have to put up with him. Nobody in our gang has any confidence at all but still they try and go along and do the best they possibly can. I have different friends of mine tell me here that it is like going to a picnic every morning to come in here and go to work. They tell me this because their bosses are so good to them but in our gang there is a different thing.

"There is another thing I would like to tell you about and that is the money that they pay the fellows in that department. The best we can make there is about thirty-four cents an hour which gives me about twenty-three dollars a week and about six dollars I make in piece work. The most I can average up there is about twenty-nine dollars a week and that is at the busiest time, too. Now, I know there are a lot of other department that pay a lot better money than that. I think the rates could be a little bit better than what they are. I imagine a fellow ought to have a better chance to make a little more money than that. Twenty-nine dollars a week isn't so very much money now-a-days. There isn't much left for me when I pay my room and board and pay some of the other things that I really need. There isn't really much left for me to go out and enjoy myself on."

Payment E
1-2

"I like to put a few dollars a week away in the bank, too, which I do but it makes it very hard for me. I feel I'd like to put a lot more in the bank than what I'm really doing now but I can't do it because

HL

I am only making twenty-nine dollars a week."

I: "What kind of work were you doing, Mr. X?"

E: "I was wiring on this movietone work. It is very nice work and I liked it, too. One thing, it was more or less clean work and that is what I liked.

"Well, I haven't got much more time now and all I can say is that if the Western sends for me I will be glad to come back but I hope when I do I will not see this fellow on the job that I have been telling you about. I told you this with the hopes that it might help these other fellows out because I certainly feel sorry for them. What that gang really needs now is some kind of a boss that will cooperate with them and give them a lot of compliments, but the way it is now they are all dissatisfied."

The employee attempts to get up and leave but the interviewer got up and said

I: "You don't think you can stay a little longer, do you?"

E: "No, I really can't. I would like to but as I have told you before I have a lot of business to take care of and you know I am going away Monday. I would like to be here more but if I come back I hope I will see you around here again."

We shook hands and the employee put his cap on and the interviewer said

I: "Well, I certainly wish you all the luck in the world and I certainly do hope I will see you around here again."

E: (Smiling) "Thank you very much. I hope I will see you again. Goodbye."

I: "Goodbye."

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