

From the Outside: Drinking, or how I learned to love the toilet  
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By Rick Snee

If you haven't picked up on it yet, The Inside and The Outside are like religion. If high school was the miserable earthly life of parents, homework and band camp, then The Outside is the afterlife. You pick the afterlife that you deserve, or your wicked, non-homework-doing deeds damn you to an afterlife that sucks.

College, or The Inside, is purgatory (ask a Catholic). Radford University, as a rolling admission (read: easy) school, is for most of us a last chance to make good on our high school failings and prove we deserve a better afterlife in The Outside.

So once we reach The Outside, we are, as far as those still in college are concerned, dead. If we graduated, then we're the honorable dead, like Biggs Darklighter. However, if we didn't graduate, then we're the unspeakably dead, and like a World War I fighter squadron, you don't talk about the dead for fear you could bring the same fate on yourself.

So what does this mean? Why, that I'm a *GHOOO-OOOOOO-OOSSSSST! Boogedy boogedy boogedy!*

Okay, all creepiness aside, it is important to note that drinking regularly is the unofficial privilege of RU. Of all the alumni I interviewed, not a single one said they drink as much after graduating as they did in college. I know that it's almost impossible. On the one hand, there aren't five keg parties to choose from any given weekend and the bars aren't in walking distance. On the other hand, I gotta get up early for work every weekday. In the morning. Single-digits morning!

The biggest deterrent is that if I miss work, people notice (as far as I know). When I skipped class, nobody usually noticed.

But back at RU, we were almost expected to screw up. If we graduated without a decent drunk story, it is almost implied that we did not make the most of limbo—er, college. Take, for instance, Bryan McBournie's ('05) tale:

My friends and I held a pirate party the night before QuadFest. Around 1 a.m., we got the bright idea to go board the wooden playground ship thing next to the education building. So we assembled a crew and went over. As soon as we got over there, I felt a hand on my shoulder and a voice said, "Get down on your knees and put your hands behind your back." It was a cop. Before long, all of us were on our knees in a semi-circle. Then I felt the cuffs go on my wrists. I was the only one cuffed. Then they hauled me aside for questioning. The adrenaline kicked in in a hurry and I was sober.

They took my plastic sword out of my belt like I was going to challenge them to a duel. The first question the cops asked me was if I knew why I was in handcuffs. The drunken part of my brain wanted to answer, "Because I'm wearing a tricorn hat." But I thought better of it. As I tried to explain to the cops we were just there to take a picture and leave, I heard another cop questioning the group. He asked one kid if he had an ID on him. The reply: "YAAAAAAR!" I'm still not sure how I talked the cops out of arresting us, but I did. They let us all go without a charge.

And there's the perennial party situation, which Lemon ('07) was kind enough to send in on the condition of anonymity:

I totally made out with a girl!

Just to clarify, Lemon is a routinely heterosexual woman, and I was there when it happened. (Send your electronic high-fives to rick.snee@gmail.com.)

But not everyone gets so lucky. McBournie wrote about a brush with dorm law:

[In my] freshman year, [a] bunch of us were drinking in my dorm, learning sign language. An RA busted us for a noise violation. How can you be loud learning sign language? Anyway, they poured my first handle of vodka down the drain, [and] I was charged with being in the presence of alcohol.

Also on the condition of anonymity, Rockstar ('06) wrote about a situation that ended with an arrest:

No... I was a lucky one, [but] most of my friends did get caught. My freshman year, I was a DD coming back from [Virginia] Tech. One of the kids decided it would be a good idea to drink a beer on the way up from the parking lot. A cop stopped us, [and] I tried to keep walking and avoid the whole thing, but another cop picked me up. The cop asked if the car was mine, it [and] a bunch of alcohol in the back of it. Luckily, it wasn't. The kid that had been walking and drinking got probation and fines over 1000 dollars for a bunch of random stuff.

And in June 2006, I was arrested for a DUI in Huntsville, Alabama. You ever been to jail? You ever been to jail **in Alabama**? I slept it off for most of my stay, except to carry my own bed—while handcuffed and shackled—to a general population containment area. I probably walked out unmolested because I gave away my toothbrush and fresh blanket to guys sentenced up to a year. And the icing on the cake? The jailers lost my shirt when it was time to leave. I looked like one of the chased-down white guys on *Cops*. Seriously, don't drink and drive.

Of course, there are more consequences for drinking beyond legal ones. Rockstar also had alcohol poisoning twice, which you can believe was a "scary scary experience."

And sometimes, when we really tied one on, it could get embarrassing. Emily Krapf ('06) wrote:

The worst consequence of my drinking was graduation 2006. I was 21 at the time and everyone was at a party and then went to the bar after the party. After all that, everyone went outside of a residence hall. It all started to catch up to me, so I threw up in the bushes outside of Stuart Hall in front of half of the Res Life staff. Everyone around me was either a Resident Director or a Resident Assistant. Very embarrassing.

In June 2005, I nearly broke my nose behind the Grove Methodist Church near 7-Eleven. Bryan Schools ('05) talked me into a microwaved breakfast sandwich after a very long night of drinking. As I tripped on a curb in that parking lot, I had to choose which hand to catch my fall. One hand held a cigarette, the other had the newly-discovered-to-be-delicious egg sandwich. As I was still a little drunk and unable to choose between two wonderful things, I caught my fall with my face, with a side of

knees and elbows. Fortunately, my nose wasn't broken, but the face bleeds *a lot*. Whenever we passed grossed out drunk people, Schools reassured them by saying, "It's okay; I beat him up."

Beyond that embarrassment, though, that injury almost cost me my job as an RA. Sure, I was over 21, but falling down drunk was frowned on by the Residential Life Department. As bizarre as it seems, I was able to avoid any direct questions by allowing other people to think that I was in a fight. To be fair, Schools gave me the idea.

Finally, there was the universal complaint: hangovers. As hungover as many of us were, it's a miracle we made it to class as much as we did.

So with all of these stories, you're bound to wonder whether we'd do it all over again.

Drinking [helped me succeed after college]. Not just the act of downing a few beers, but the social atmosphere that came with a fun night out with close friends. You realize that time alone is necessary, but in the end, you will always need close friends to help you. Same goes with business: without friends or connections, it is hard to succeed or be content with how your business is running.

--Jason Lutjen ('06)

Strange as it will sound, the more I drank, the better I did in school. For example: my senior year I was 21. I was at BT's four or five nights a week, and that's an understatement. Those two semesters were also the only two I made Dean's List. Coincidence? I think not.

--McBournie

[I would] not have gone to BT's so much my last semester. I spent WAY too much money there, and I lost out on some sober memories I'm sure I would've made.

--Shannon Scott ('07)

As for me, I would have taken it a little easier on my liver. I jeopardized my own career in college and in *The Outside*, and I also became a hypocrite as an RA. Unfortunately, it took a night in jail before I realized what I needed to do: finish my time at RU and move on with my life.

But that's a decision you have to make for yourself. Even those that didn't get in trouble had near misses. Some people can do it all, but the rest of us need to learn our limits. In the end, you will only have hindsight to give you the proper perspective.

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