

# Life at the Office

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It started when he stopped going home. The rent in San Francisco was so expensive and the commutes so painful that it just seemed easier not to leave. Nobody really noticed at first—the cleaning crew came in around 7 and just assumed he was staying late, while the other employees just assumed he was an early riser. And really, who's going to complain about an employee who puts in too much time at the office? Especially when he wasn't using it to get additional work done.

Then he started wondering if he could eliminate the trip for food too. He found a website that sold nutritionally-balanced diet bars and ordered a whole tub, which he placed under his desk. All day he'd be munching on one bar or another, no longer feeling hungry around lunch or dinner. So he just sat at his desk munching instead. Strangely, this didn't seem to make him any more productive.

Between the lack of exercise and nonstop eating, he began growing fat. Nobody really said anything to him about it. He was rail-thin when he started so many co-workers were secretly happy to see him put on a few pounds. But it quickly got out of hand, with rolls of fat oozing between the cracks in his Aeron chair. Still, nobody wants to insult a fat man, so he just continued to grow. He never really needed to leave his chair anymore, so he didn't mind it much.

Soon he began—I'm not quite sure how to describe it, I guess he was sort of *fusing* with the chair. The rolls of fat would sneak through a crack and then continue growing, like vines crawling through a gate. It quickly got to the point where he couldn't even get out of the chair if he wanted too, the fat had locked him in. He could still roll around the office on it but that movement quickly became tiring and as he grew fatter the wheels snapped off.

Nobody really seemed to mind, though. He had become an office fixture—people came to him now. He'd chat with them about their day or keep an eye on things for them. Since he was always there he knew everything that went on in the office and people could always rely on him for gossip or signing for their packages.

Soon it seemed like he was part of the office itself, like some sort of roboreceptionist you read about in Negroponte novels. Desks began subtly organizing themselves around him and employees began treating him as just another office fixture. There's the bathroom and there's the kitchen and there's, well, you know...

And then, one day, they left. Some corporate restructuring or something; they were all being moved to a different building. People packed their stuff in boxes, cleaners cleaned one more time, and then suddenly they were all gone. He was all that was left, keeper of an office without any officers.