



Unemployment blues

Tips and insight on living a new life on the government dole

I'm not unemployed. I have a job, two jobs in fact, which together bring in something like \$71 a week, before taxes — enough to keep me in burritos and beer if I give up burritos.

The technical term is "under-employed."

So how do I keep my address and phone service? Well, I had to let my option on the ol' phone number lapse I'm afraid: From now on it's "don't call me, I'll call you."

Probably from the pay phone at the Dip and Strip were I'll stand in line with my 35¢ waiting for a fella to finish callin' his girlfriend a ho.

(We under-employed schmucks all talk like that, too lazy even to end our words properly.)

But, unless I want end up where that guy seems headed, sleeping on some burned out buddy's cat-pissed sofa, I've got to keep the roof pulled over my head.

For that I got my weekly unemployment check.

That's right, I've got two jobs, a paid-volunteer gig as the patsy of medical science (see episode one of these summer chronicles) AND unemploy-

ment. And the best part is, I don't have to kill anyone.

I'm not even committing a crime; the nice bureaucrats at the unemployment office (1010 N St.) know all about my various earnings or, rather, my failures to earn. And they are still willing to send me money through the mail until I get back on my feet or my unemployment runs out a few weeks from now.

In fact I'm expecting a check today. One hundred and forty someodd dollars, my weekly taste of welfare treat.

Though, of course, it's not welfare, not exactly.

Here's how it

“*That's right, I've got two jobs, a paid-volunteer gig as the patsy of medical science AND unemployment. And the best part is, I don't have to kill anyone.*”

works:

You lose your job, I don't care how: fired, quit or just showed up for work one day to find the locks had been changed and the boss imprisoned.

Don't be ashamed. It's happened to a lot of people you'd never suspect. Gillian Anderson got picked for "The X-Files" the same week she received her last unemployment check. Rush Limbaugh spent some time on the dole himself, back when he was just a big, fat nobody.

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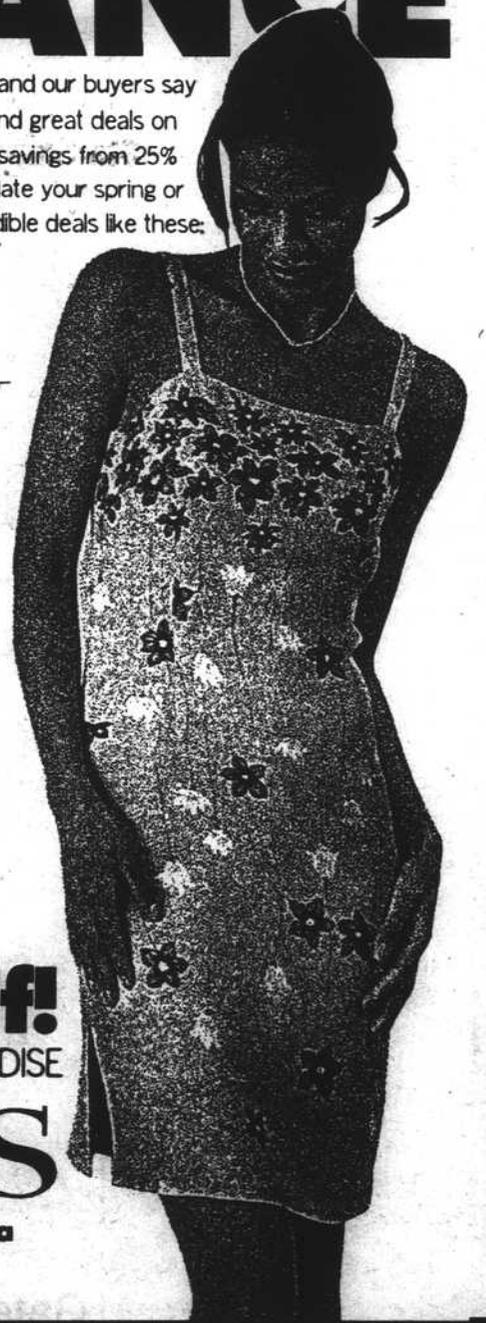
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ment is no scam. It's your rights we're talking about, not some kind of hat-in-hand routine.

And no one gets rich on it. You can work, and they encourage you to do so, but if you make too much money (and believe me, it's not "too much") they'll cut your benefits faster than you can say "Thank you, Sir, may I have another!"

We all know your ship is coming in, it's only a matter of time. Unemployment is just there to save you from having to bum on the beach till then.