

Begin here

Unpacking your enormous suitcase in a tiny dorm room you force a stuck drawer and out falls a folded page, torn from a spiral-bound notebook.

Opening it, you see it is addressed:
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN!

Figuring that's you, you wipe the dust and sweat from your brow. You sit on the edge of the bed and read:

Go home, pack up, call your mother and have her come get you.
Or better yet, ditch! Take the money your folks gave you after graduation and catch a bus for San Francisco, Kansas City, Gnome, anywhere but COLLEGE!

Why? Let's look at the facts:

Five years of college at this ninth-tier school cost a whopping \$50,000, give or take a farthing.

And for what? Sure, a college degree will up your starting pay at some drudge job by nearly \$2,000 a year. Plus you just can't get the really good drudge jobs without a college degree.

But so what? Anyone with any gumption could start a business right out of high school on \$500 borrowed from some uncle and fail within a year!

That's right, and then figure in some travel time, maybe a backpacking trip through Armenia, a stint in Mexico picking up Spanish or just kiting around in a rattletrap pickup truck, seeing America up close and personal.

When you go back to work, starting a second business on \$7,000 (borrowed from your dad, the guy your mother's dating or just anyone interested) if you're lucky, you can fail again within 18 months!

And that's an education. Congratulations, you are now qualified to run a business, manage a store or whatever, having, like everyone else who knows anything, FAILED YOUR WAY TO THE TOP!

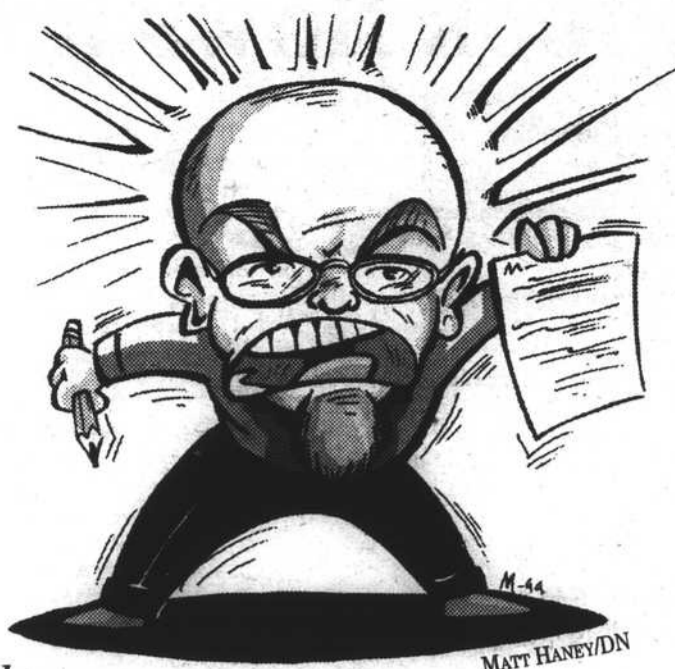
You have experience it'll take some wet-behind-the-ears college sap another half decade to acquire and without defaulting on your student loans!

In fact you are already more bold, more ready to strike out on your own than any kid who's grown soft and pallid on cafeteria food and sunblock.

You can stand up with the best of them and be proud!

Signed,

A 34-year-old in undergraduate HELL



And that's my advice. That's my That's me. ▲ You may not twisted in knots by self-loathing note where my 18-year-old self always did think he knew every-drop-out his last. ▲ That alone fering. Not to mention an news: Every year some blue everyone gives her three cheers! back to school with all your in the midst of life, struggling to lous and futile, dropping out classically illogical supposition kind of idiotic, senseless waste ▲ What kind of idiotic sense-as any Nostradamus of doom. brow, you shall eat your credit kid's childhood, of even the sim-the car payment, the house pay-will slip by, draining into each birthday, you will wake up Armenia is on the map, you've at anything but your own miser-your wallet, torn more than a illegible. ▲ And you'll say to was his name? Baldwin?" And

note, my scribbled, feverish think it, to look at my picture, and debt that I'd do anything to would be sure to find it. ▲ Not thing) but at least maybe he'd would have saved him (and me) embarrassingly large sum of haired old biddy gets her diplo-What an accomplishment! ▲ I children nestled snug in their make ends meet (and failing), again and again, only to return, that, having gone this far, you'd my life has been so far, I can less life you have before you, I ▲ Slaving for The Man all of card debt. ▲ Hating your job, ple daily pleasures, you'll be ment, the day care bill, the insur-other like ever larger sewers halfway through life and realize forgotten all your college able life. ▲ And you'll take a decade ago from a spiral bound yourself: "At least I'm not still you'll feel just the tiniest bit bet-

handwriting, barely legible. but I'm an angry, bitter man, so go back in time and stash that that he'd pay any attention (he have the savvy to make his first almost 15 years of senseless suf-money. ▲ You've seen it in the ma at age 86 or something, and tell you, that's nothing! To head graves? ▲ Try going to school finding the whole thing ridicu-like a dog to his vomit, out of the be a fool not to finish! ▲ What only hope to make you guess. think I can predict as accurately your days, by the sweat of your feeling that it robs you of your chained to it, nevertheless, by ance premium. ▲ The years until, on the eve of your 35th that you don't know where Spanish and you've never failed folded and tattered page from notebook, now completely in school like that moron - what ter, thinking of me.

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