

It's about 2 weeks later, and I'm at a manufacturing company close to the New York border. This place makes and distributes high end creams and cosmetics for ladies. My contact onsite, let's call her Martha, is a nice woman, very matronly, though very feisty and about to retire in a few weeks. She had started with the company out of high school, and worked her way to a nice position in the organization.

I arrived onsite near 9:00 am and today's task was to move her applications to a new PC. The computer room was a fair distance from Martha's office, down some stairs, and across the warehouse. A trip I would make 4 or 5 times that day. At 12:30, Martha declares that it's lunchtime, and insists I join her. I graciously decline, however, she threatens to lock me out of her office if I do not accompany her. She tells me that during her 35 year career, her biggest regret was working through many lunch hours. Martha further lectures me about the significance of smelling the roses, and the real important things in life. I guess with age comes wisdom, so I relent and head out to lunch with her. She takes me to a Chinese restaurant, the kind of place with linen table cloths, a tableside teapot, and waiters in jackets and ties. Martha informs me that my money is no good here, so no arguments at check time. Fine by me! This place beats dogs and burgers any day. We have a wonderful lunch, and nice conversation, topped off with fruit and fortune cookies and head back to Martha's office.

I finish up around 2:00pm, have Martha sign off, and thank her again for a great lunch. As I head out the door, Martha asks me to wait. And she'll walk out with me. We walk down the stairs to the warehouse, and Martha briefly steps into a closet and emerges with 2 large, empty garbage bags. "You have to take some samples home! Do you have a girlfriend?" As we walk through the warehouse, Martha stops at almost every box, and tosses in 2 or 3 of whatever it contained into each bag. I keep telling her thank you and that it's too much, but she insists. The bags are now getting kind of heavy, so Martha hustles me to a fire exit that faces the parking lot. "I don't know what I'm going to with these 2 bags goodies, but thank you very much." "Oh no," she says, "one bag is for me!" She pulls a set of keys from her purse and unlocks the exit fire alarm and opens the door. She pokes her head outside, looks up and down the parking lot and tells me the coast is clear. "Huh, what do mean?" I ask. She presses the keys to her Buick in my hand, points to where she's parked and instructs me to deposit one bag in her trunk, then bring back the keys. I drop the bag in her trunk and walk back to Martha as instructed. She gives me the other bag, we say goodbye, and the fire exit door slams shut, leaving me holding