

THIRD CLASS

READER

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PAPER CHASE

"One process server in town lights a paper bag at the back door and yells 'fire, fire, fire.' Another guy throws firecrackers at the door to get them out. I don't want to make my associates sound bad. They aren't. They're businessmen."

Rich Lowr

In the process server's basement office where he is charged with excitement, Steve Knox stands by the door to his office. He's wearing a suit and tie and his briefcase is tucked under his arm. He's not leaving the floor. His face is getting redder. He's sweating, gritting his teeth. He's trying not to cry.

"One guy threw his tool box at me," he splutters. "Another guy set fire to his briefcase and threw it down on them, just like a little kid. Tom Turkey, that's his name. He has some trained Dalmatians in his yard. He used to have a dog in there, too. One midnight, this stupid server stuck into my payroll compound and the banister fell off a buckshot. The deputy sheriff came out and the lone survivor attacked him with a baseball bat."

"One server, who's 65 and carries a pearl-handled revolver, got so drunk he fell down and stepped on him in the foot. The turkey's lawyer called up the server and said, 'What do you know about my client?' And the server said to the lawyer, 'Did your client tell you she was pregnant?'"

Steve Knox has quit bouncing and is pacing back and forth across his office floor. He picks up the phone and makes a call. His voice becomes smooth as honey.

"Hello," Steve says. "Steve with S-International Insurance Company. Is Mr. Smith there? No? We're trying to locate him. Can you help us? Do you know where he'll be back? He witnessed an accident out on Main Street last Friday night. He was kind enough at the time to say he'd be willing to sign a deposition and give us a statement when he moved. Could you help us locate him?" No, no, no. He's not in any kind of trouble, he just needs help to settle that situation. Yes. That would be fine. My number is 555-1212. His car for seeking is being paid for \$100,000. Steve hangs up, looking for his key.

"I just bought a 1959 Rambler. The other day a guy in a '59 truck showed up on my Fifth Avenue. Quite a ride. You know what he been there that day. These things happen; it's frustrating, crazy. I've chased turkeys clear to Roseville,

One time I was sitting out a house and I had a fit. After six hours the turkey came out and six hours he got mad. I don't want to startle or embarrass anyone, and I don't want any of my servers to get after 10 p.m. I always make up an excuse for all I know. One process server in town lights a paper bag at the back door and yells 'fire, fire, fire.' Another guy throws firecrackers at the door to get them out. I don't want to make my associates sound bad. They aren't. They're businessmen."

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Process servers are used by attorneys in the course of litigation and marriage to deliver subpoenas, summonses, and other legal documents. Private servers are used when the attorney prefers the efficiency over the expense of sheriff's or marshals. Private process servers get paid by the hour, \$10 to \$20, or \$10 and 70 cents per mile from the nearest courthouse to the location of the service. Some require payment, though, in changing the fee structure around, and some processes are not satisfied with the charges.

Services like Steve and Collins provide services to attorney because they are private and hungry; they deliver faster and take on harder cases. Steve and Collins work 40 hours a week, sometimes more. He works his own hours, but they are long. Steve gets paid weekly. Steve's ends. Most of his day is spent in the car. Most of his deliveries are round trips, and his clients even thank him for the bad news he's handed them.

To become a process server you have to be at least 18, not a party to the legal action, and the head, but it's not really meant for him. Sometimes it is, though. Steve got to be a real person, of course, running, running, and wet, while he may not have been there. Steve only does Steve make more money when you or I try to avoid receiving legal papers from

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