

Dreaming of Suspension

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It had become an obsession with me. Suspension was all that I dreamt of, day and night. My better half taunted me every now and then: "Look at Mr Kapoor, he manages to get suspended any time he likes. During his last suspension, he went to Kuwait and has now become a millionaire." She grumbles that I am too afraid of service rules and can't muster enough courage to accept bribes or beat anyone—the two essential requirements for suspension. I could argue no more.

My stubborn wife opened her PC regarding the history of suspended but "gifted" persons:

Case number one: Bansi. Employed in the Department of Civil Supplies. Devotes winter to hosiery work and summers to helping out his brother-in-law, who runs a hotel in Kullu-Manali. He had overstayed his leave. He badly needed to be suspended. His friends helped him.

The plot was planned shrewdly. At 5 p.m. Bansi headed out of the door with a letterpad worth Rs 65 only. His friends telephoned his senior officer

and then and there Bansi was caught red-handed and put under suspension charged with theft of official stationery. An enquiry is being conducted at a snail's pace and Bansi is still enjoying his suspension on two-thirds pay.

Case number two: Girdhari. Employed in the Industries Department. A unique case. His immediate officer was newly appointed. Girdhari took Rs 2,000 from his pocket, went to his officer's cabin and said: "Sir, only this morning I netted a fish and thought of handing over your majesty's share." A still higher officer was present in the office at the time, so both Girdhari and the new officer were suspended.

My wife narrated many more tricky and tactful cases until I was filled with jealousy, shame and remorse. I longed for the suspension at any price. Night after night I tossed in bed and brooded over numerous methods of getting suspended and earning a respectable place in society.

Bribery was the last thing I could do. It needed a lot of courage and shamelessness. After close study of

the rules I discovered that I could be suspended for violent behaviour. Couldn't I scold and beat my subordinates? Surely I could manage that!

With the plan taking shape in my mind, I headed for the quarters of my peon Ramdeen early one morning. I would need his co-operation. He heard my proposal with astonishment and at first demurred. Only when I told him that there would be "a little something" in it for him did he agree. We devoted a couple of days to rehearsal and we were ready. I made sure that the whole office was around when I hit into him, shouting abuses and flailing about wildly. I gave him a good smack right in the eye. As planned, every peon association in the city came running to Ramdeen's side.

Oh happy day! Now I would definitely be suspended and would spend a year with my son-in-law in Assam earning big bucks.

Little did I know that my own officer's union would pacify the whole lot within two days. Of all the rotten luck. I am still searching for a cent-per cent sure way of getting suspended. Any suggestions? □