

# a matter of **life** /2/ navy, school, record place

I **remember coming** back from the Navy and walking **across this** schoolyard in **these** second-hand clothes **I'd been given**. the Navy **was supposed to** be my **last resort**, now it was **gone**. I was **devastated**. I went back **to working crummy** jobs that I hated and I **kept quitting**. finally, I decided, **with nowhere else to go**, to go to college full time and **work part time**.

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I **actually did well in school** but **the better I did** the more pressure I **put** on myself. I **got** so nervous I couldn't study **anymore**. so I **quit school** too. **at that point** I really didn't know what to do with myself. I didn't **feel like going** back to working these **crappy** jobs and **being** a **rookie** again. I **figured** I **may as well** just die. I bought a plane ticket to Miami. **once** I got there, I **was going to** sit under a nice tree and **stop eating** until I **died**. but I **changed my mind** just before I **was about to get on** the plane. I **guess** I still wanted to live.

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so I started looking for work again and I got a job **as** a shipping clerk **at** a record place. the guy that owned the place was a **soft-hearted middle-aged** guy, a **former** high-school teacher. he **was doing real well then**, but he paid for his **cheapness**. people that worked for him, **even** some of his secretaries, **robbed him blind**. **at first** I felt **insecure** and worked **hard**. one day during a meeting the owner **made an announcement**. "you people say you can't **get ahead** but harvey here **has been working** hard and I'm giving him a **raise**. \$2.50 a week. "