

THE MYSTERY OF JILL HAMMOND

Don't ask me why I'm picking now to come out with this story, but I just had to. Maybe it's because I've been gone from GKLS for a full decade that I feel that can fully confess to this bizarre episode in my life. As many of you know, the entire time I was an employee at Xerox, I was also very busy with Navy work. From 1998-2000, I was Commanding Officer of an Assault Boat unit based in Buffalo, and from 2000-2003 I was Executive Officer and Chief Staff Officer at US Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Virginia. That second job was so time consuming that there was hardly ever a single hour during the day that I could work straight through without at least one interruption. Whether it was a phone call from one of the Directorate Heads or an email from a sailor that needed answering, I had a tough time getting through everything and still accomplishing my full Xerox workload. To make up for this, I often came back into Building 845 at night and sometimes worked until 1-2 AM.

It was during one of those late nights when I, with blurry eyes and an even less-focused mind, turned my attention to the empty cubicle next to mine, where someone had recently been the victim of an IRIF or involuntary retirement. It was still empty...too empty for my likens. So I decided to make sure that the cube was occupied, whether by a real or a not-so-real person. I quickly made up my mind, and produced a very professional-looking name plate, which read "Jill Hammond." It sounded like a very common and acceptable name, and one which would not attract a lot of attention. Jill's name went up on the cube that night.

The next night, I brought in a couple of very weary-looking houseplants and put them on the empty file cabinet that sat in the cube. I found a nice pink sweater for \$1.00 at K-Mart, which was draped over the desk chair. And from the huge garbage bin near the back loading dock of 845, I found a few trashed PWBs (printed wire boards), and massive printout from a pin-dot matrix printer, which went on Jill's desk. By now, people were starting to look into her cube and ask questions. Who was this woman? No one knew anyone named Jill, and no one had seen her anywhere. Glenn Emerson, whose cube was directly across from mine, stopped in one day and asked "Who is this person? I know there is work going on over there because I see it on her desk, but I've never met her."

By now, with more and more people looking for Jill, I decided I had to dress up her cube even more. I used a bunch of Xerox recognition certificates, but with Jill's name superimposed over the real recipient's name, to post on the back wall of her cube. I also went into some of my old rolls of film, (remember when we used to take pictures with film?), and found some shots from some old picnics that showed no one that I knew. These I pinned to the space above her desk, including a few that I enlarged. A candy dish placed on top of her file cabinet held a tasteful array of hard candies that I liked. (I knew she wouldn't mind if I borrowed some of them!) I got in the habit every night of moving the books and files around on her desk, sometimes adding new props to Jill's collection.

Within two weeks of Jill's arrival, half our aisle was looking for her. Glenn Emerson was as curious as anyone, so I played a little trick on him. I don't know if any of you ever remember Olga, the night cleaning woman in 845. (She and her husband both cleaned our building for a while.) She had very flowery handwriting, so I asked her to write a note to Glenn asking for assistance on RoboHelp, on which he was an authority. I believe he responded and set up a meeting.

Things were getting a little out of hand already by the time John Papietro (who tracked resource and cubicle use, etc.) stopped by and gave Jill's cube the evil eye. Thank God I hadn't

brought my old desktop PC in like I was planning on doing...I think John would have started an investigation.

Finally, at the end of the month, I asked Olga to draft up a letter, which I posted on a placard on the entrance to Jill's cube. It said that Jill had "finished my work here, and am moving back into Building 801 in Henrietta. But thanks for all the friendship and help that everyone had provided over the past month." That night I also packed up Jill's files and her belongings and moved them back home.

The entire month, only one person, Jared VanValkenberg, stopped into my cube and asked me, in a hushed tone, about his suspicions. He told me that he had "seen me eating way too many of Jill's candies...was I really Jill?" I confessed to him that I was, but I don't believe that anyone else knew, and he did a pretty good job of preserving the secret.

Anyway, if any of you are looking at our website, and you see a picture of someone that you don't know, just think; it could be Jill Hammond. If you do happen to see her, please say hi for me.

Regards,
Larry Weill