



# You're Fired: From the Bizarre to Just Plain Cruel

**From the Misplaced Tomato to a Frightening Foot Chase: Readers Share Their Worst Job Loss Stories**

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It could be a plotline for a [TV medical drama](#): a hospital manager abruptly pulls a [nurse](#) out of surgery to tell her she's been laid off.

Unfortunately, for one Wisconsin nurse, the drama was real: the Wisconsin State Journal reported recently that a hospital manager at Dean Health System in Madison, Wis., violated medical protocol by pulling a nurse out of a minor surgical procedure to tell her she'd lost her job.

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"Clearly there was an error in judgment on the part of the manager conducting the layoff," said Dean Health spokesman Paul Pitas in a statement to ABCNews.com.

Such errors in judgment may be occurring more frequently as the [recession continues to force companies to slash jobs](#).

"You hear these stories and you think, 'What terrible people are doing this firing?'" said Jenny Schade, the president of JRS Consulting, a management and marketing consulting firm in Chicago. "I think what it comes down to is everyone feels so uncomfortable in this situation. No one wants to fire anybody -- they feel uncomfortable so they goof up."

But experts also say that sometimes, the bosses doing the firing aren't uncomfortable -- they're just plain mean. Some ABCNews.com readers, it seems, agree with that, wholeheartedly. We asked readers to send us their worst firing stories. Find some of their outrageous submissions below. ([See tips on what to do after a dramatic layoff experience.](#))

## **Fired, Threatened and Chased**

**Jake Marino**  
**Park City, Utah**

I was teaching English in Korea on a one-year contract. My schedule was set on the contract (Monday through Friday), but with less than a week's notice, my boss told me I had to come in that Saturday.

I had already booked an expensive, non-refundable trip to North Korea for my days off, so I told him I wouldn't be coming in on my day off. He came over to my apartment Friday night as I was getting ready to leave. He owned the apartment, as housing was provided by the school.

He had a key, and opened my door. He kept yelling and cursing at me, saying I owed him money, and tried to physically take my wallet from my pants. He wouldn't let go of my shirt, until I finally pushed him off me and made a run for it. He chased me for 2-3 blocks in sweltering summer humidity ... I got away and made it to the bus terminal, and went on my trip, but of course, he locked me out of the apartment and took all my stuff. I was left jobless and homeless in Korea, with nothing but two (sets) of clothes and a little money to survive on. I used my credit card and bought a flight home and made it out OK.

## **Layoff Triggers: From Small Mistakes to Health Problems**

### **Shawn Felix Ephrata, Pa.**

I was fired two days after returning from having surgery on my hip. I was on crutches and the place that I was working only had steps (no ramp) to get into the front of the building. I was running late because I had difficulty getting in and out of the shower. They fired me because I was eight minutes late to work.

### **Holly Midland, Texas**

The one and only time I was fired was when I was working for a woman who made plaster animal earrings wholesale. She'd mold little plaster animals, paint them, spray a gloss on them to make them appear "fired" (ha ha), and then hang them on hooks.

Her whole operation was fake, in that she sold these things as "fired porcelain" and they weren't.

I was hired to paint the earrings.

Once I did a whole batch of penguins. My boss walked in and looked at them and shrieked. Grabbing a penguin, she gasped out, "Oh, my GOD, what an UNPLEASANT expression on this poor penguin! He looks PERVERTED! Oh, my GOD! Oh, my GOD! What a wicked, wicked person you are! Get out of here!" She was throwing penguins everywhere and they were just greenware so they were breaking and crumbling all over the place.

### **Linda West Chester, Ohio**

I worked for a national company for four months when my mother-in-law was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer, and was asked to come home (approximately 525 miles.)

We went home and informed employer of the situation and was told it was OK. Got home on a Monday, mother went in hospice on Tuesday and on Friday afternoon died. Funeral was set for the following Tuesday and on the following Friday, I received a call informing me that I had been replaced and did not have to hurry back to Cincinnati.

### **Patrick Robbins Cape Coral, Fla.**

I was working in a fast food place ... When making an order of 6 sandwiches, trying to be time efficient as they train you to be, I placed the tomato directly on the meat instead of the bun for the last sandwich, when I received a very abusive tongue lashing and subsequent dismissal -- I had worked there for nearly 3 years!

### **Donald Lau Melbourne, Fla.**

After a traditional face to face layoff session, my company tried a new kinder gentler approach. They called a big

meeting and announced that every employee had e-mail back on their computer that would tell them if they still had a job. I didn't!

## **Aftermath of a Nightmare Layoff**

Being laid off in dramatic fashion can make you feel helpless, but you don't have to be, experts say.

Schade recommends taking the high road: bid your boss and employees goodbye as nicely as possible and, later on, send a note or an e-mail to the co-workers you'd like to stay in touch with -- you never know who could help you find a job later on.

Resist bad-mouthing your boss to co-workers, she said.

"If you conduct yourself with integrity," Schade said, "that's going to make you stand out in the crowd."

Roy Lubit, a psychiatrist and organizational consultant, said that if the person who fired you was truly offensive, it might make sense to alert the company's human resources department.

"You could contact HR at the company and say this is the way the boss did this to me. I don't think this is a good thing for your company to be doing to people," he said. "Hopefully, HR would go and speak to the person who did that."

In the future, Lubit said, that could stop the boss from treating others the way he treated you.

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