

Olfactory Transmission

by Nile Coy

My hygiene was sporadic at the radio station, and by the time they got around to giving me “The stinky talk” I smelled just fine. “We’ve gotten complaints from several different people,” Frank, the station manager told me. He was a short, Hispanic man with a thick mustachio and the abrupt style of speech of a newsman. I didn’t pretend not to know what he was talking about. I knew the smell of which he spoke. It was the smell of three days worth of methamphetamine sweat pooled up and left to mildew, the smell of death, coffee, and cheap menthol cigarettes. “My show is on at five in the morning. There aren’t many people around to smell me...” I offered sheepishly. “Everyone who comes in at nine smells you.” said Frank. “Look, it’s not that big a deal,” he said, shrugging. “Just hit the shower before you come in and make sure to wear a clean shirt.”

He dismissed me from his office and I walked out of the building at the nearest exit, lighting one of my cheap menthol cigarettes. I had developed the habit of walking into a convenience store and demanding the cheapest pack of menthol cigarettes they had, usually after I had been up for several days. When I was straight, I always smoked Camel filters. When I was spun out and weird with sleep depravation, I always craved menthols, and was too cheap or broke to get anything but the very cheapest. The primary thought on my mind was that several people on the nine shift had ratted had ratted me out for stinking, and by god they would pay.