



Knowledge is power

Al Uhart was performing his normal a.m. letter carrier office duties in the Boilerplate Falls Annex of the Crème de la Crème Post Office in Crème de la Crème, Iowa, when his delivery supervisor, Cara Cuhture, walked up to him.

Cara: Hi, Al. How yuh goin' to be today? It's a great day to be carryin' mail.

Al: Cara, I'm doing quite well, thank you. It sure is a great day, and, as far as I know, I'm going to be fine. I'm just not sure how long the route is going to be today.

Cara: Oh, come on, Al, you're always the kidder. You know your route is seven and a half hours today. In fact, I was going to ask you to take a half-hour off of Route 32.

Al: Cara, that's amazing; how did you do that? I haven't finished collating my FSS flats with my sequenced mailing and I haven't even looked at my DPS mail on the back dock, and, as you can see, I haven't got my parcel tub yet, so I don't know how much of that there is. The accountable mail hasn't even come around yet. So, as soon as I know how much DPS mail I have, how many parcels there are, and how many accountables I have, I really can't respond to your extremely important and, I must say, highly insightful observation.

Cara: OK, Al, I'll play the game. You know how big your route is and you know you're supposed to tell me if your route is over or under.

Al: Cara, *M-41* Sections 131.41 and 131.42 say, "It is your responsibility to verbally inform management when you are of the opinion that you will be unable to case all mail distributed to the route, perform other required duties, and leave on schedule or when you will be unable to complete delivery of all mail. Inform management of this well in advance of the scheduled leaving time and *not later than immediately following the final receipt of mail.*" So, like I said, I haven't received all my mail for my route, unless you want me to cut all my accountables, all my parcels, and all my DPS mail.

Cara: Al, don't be ridiculous. I can tell by this DOIS computer that your route is seven and a half hours today. If I can tell that, how come you can't?

Al: Because I don't know how much mail I have today. Cara, you do realize that there's an NALC/USPS agreement that says, "DOIS projections are not the sole determinant of a carrier's leaving or returning time or daily workload"? It might be more of a challenge trying to convince me that you can solve calculus problems with an abacus.

Cara: Look, Al, why don't you finish collating your FSS with your sequenced mail out on the street, go get your accountables and parcels, pick up your DPS on the way to your vehicle, and hit the street within 20 minutes? Also, don't forget to pick up that swing from Route 32.

Al: No problem. So can I have my Form 3996 so I can put in time to see my shop steward? I know you don't mean to, but you are about to violate a number of my contractual rights.

Cara: No one fills out Form 3996 in this office.

Al: I do. Unless you don't give me one, which would mean another grievance. Oh, and by the way, if you do give me a 3996 and I fill it out so that I can see my steward, I'll have to come back and augment it once I know how much parcels, DPS mail and accountables I have. So don't put it anywhere that you can't remember where it is. I'm depending on you.

Cara: Grievances, shrivances. What violations are you talking about?

Al: Requiring me to estimate my workload before I receive all of my mail, requiring me to collate mail on street time instead of office time, requiring me to pivot and work overtime when I'm not on the overtime desired list. Cara, I thought you liked me. I thought you had respect for the contract. I thought we had a good working relationship. Are you having a Pat Donahoe moment?

Cara: Al, give me a break. Go check your accountables, your DPS and your parcels and come back and talk to me.

Al: Cara, OK. Thanks. ☒