

LORI: I'm kidding, I've been here about 33 years. I think I'll retire when I hit 65, that's when the pension plan kicks in, you've gotta basically be on death's door or they won't pay you piss after you retire.

JEN: Wow, 33 years? That's a long time. Like, a really long time. My parents haven't even been married that long! Has the zoo changed since you started working here?

LORI: Oh yeah, yeah - you should have seen this place in its prime. Back before management cared about guest satisfaction and actually gave a damn about animal care and husbandry. The keepers were on top! Now there's all these meetings about how we can increase "engagement" with the guests, doing interviews with "marketing" and hiring hot young keepers - pfft, last week they asked me if they could film me feeding the gorillas for the zoo "YouTube" page! If they want to see it so bad, get here when it happens! I'm not taking time out of my day so some kid can hold a phone in front of my face.

The lights flicker.

JEN: Ha, that's crazy.

LORI: And when I started there weren't as many "safety

regulations” regarding keepers and how they could act around their animals. The guy before me, Gary, the old ape keeper, he'd take naps with them in the afternoon, groom them, there were even a couple times when he raised the babies that were rejected by their mothers - he'd take 'em home with him at night, y'know, feed them and sleep with them and everything. That's dedication.

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