The Project

Friday, 8pm
At this hour, most normal people are eating, drinking, dancing, seeing a movie, breaking the law, or otherwise enjoying themselves. Most MIT students are thinking.

I am staring at a black screen filled with green letters, hopefully for the majority of the night. Expect you being familiar with the fact that would have to abandon the project.

No such luck. As the night wears on, the words on the screen miraculously arrange themselves into comprehensible sentences and paragraphs. People in various states of intoxication wander by and chat about how the 24-Hour Coffeehouse proves its usefulness several times.

Saturday, Sun
The first batch of editing is finished, and the sun has risen. Massive amounts of work remain to be completed, but the effort required extensive reading and I will fall asleep if I have to deal with black words on white paper. The time has come to take a nap.

Sundry, 1pm
Four hours of sleep and one shower later, I am back in my prison. After rushing to avoid delaying the two people who are to join in the work today, I am more than mildly upset to find the office empty. The two show up early in the afternoon, just as I am leaving to get lunch. Research always takes longer than I thought. After two hours of work in the morning and four in the afternoon, the investigation is less than half complete. No one in their right mind would spend two evenings drudging along on any project.

At this time I can recognize each of the three that live in the house, I am less sure of the of the three that live in the office. Eight hours later the work due at 10am is far from complete. An hour later, my proven uselessness and my motivation have completely evaporated. The mice will have to live without me for a few hours.

Sunday, 1pm
After my attempts to crack down—this project must be finished by seven o'clock Tuesday morning and I have big plans to get some sleep and perhaps go to class before then. By midnight I have reluctantly concluded that both activities will have to wait until later in the week.

Monday, Sun
Rising in three hours of sleep required skipping a shower. I might have had a cold. I was surprisingly well; I knew that the nucleus would be Wednesday morning.

With the day worn out, the pace of work slowed, our minds and bodies protesting the abusive treatment we have been giving them. People come and went, the sun set and rose, junk food appeared and disappeared, and now the investigation is less than half complete. The optimism in the group concedes that the deadline has been missed.

Tuesday, 11am
Half of the work that was due five hours earlier has just completed and we break for lunch: The large cup of Andy's chili is the first thing resembling real food I have eaten since Saturday night. My stomach does not appreciate the suffering.

Five hours more and the entire project is finished. Four days in isolation have ruined my appearance, destroyed my stomach, and worn me out entirely. The sign's ending, however, is happy: the celebration includes five shots of Jack Daniels and twelve hours of sleep.

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