

Water Assassins

We were at the annual computer lab student assistant (SA) picnic held at the end of the spring semester. This was probably in the spring of 1999. I was responsible for the picnic, the labs, and managing the SAs. There were about 50 people at the picnic in a park in Hempstead, Long Island, near Hofstra University, where I worked.

Most SAs worked about 12 hours a week and some of them had work hours helping me with administrative tasks or as first level supervisors. I knew all of the SAs and knew these helpers fairly well. They were Hofstra students, college age, and I was in my late 50's.

The picnic started around 4PM and I and others spent the earlier part of the day buying supplies for the picnic.

I and two of my SA supervisors, my trusted lieutenants, were out picnic shopping. We went to "Toys are Us" to buy frisbees and other toys for the picnic. In recent years some of the SAs had brought pump-up water guns (AKA Super Soakers) to the annual picnic and the SAs with me talked me into buying one. I got the one with the longest range.

The picnic was going well when an SA asked me to come look at something. We walked to the center of a clearing and another SA walked up to me and handed me my new water gun and told me it was fully loaded and pumped. I was going to ask why when the SAs walked away from me and I realized I was at the center of a circle of 12 or more SAs, each about 20 feet from me. Each of them had a water gun.

There was no question as to what was going to happen next. There was a long pause while I considered my very limited options.

After about 20 seconds I pointed my gun at one of the SAs who had been shopping with me when I bought the gun and soaked him. I had a minor advantage at the start because I had the gun with longest range. I was able to get a few people before the SAs moved toward me. I soon ran out of water. I got drenched.

I think this was the highlight of the picnic.

Harry Baya Oct 31, 2023