

**I** know some of you are sitting there reading this thinking that the April 15th A Dog's Lunch is really late. Not at all! I got an extension. Yeah, I got the idea when I got the extension for my taxes. Getting an extension on your taxes is easy. You just fill out a form. Getting the extension on the A Dog's Lunch was even easier. I just asked the guy in charge-me-if I could write it a little late and he agreed. Try it sometime when you have something important to do that you'd rather put off. I think you'll find yourself surprisingly agreeable.

I was planning on writing about taxes anyway so the extension adds a certain gritty authenticity to my writing. You may be wondering, as my parents did, why I, a man who only worked for six months last year, needed an extension on his taxes? Was I on the road, caught in an endless run of gigs at places like Ha Ha's, Yuk Yuk's, Giggles and Chuckles? Was I traveling with Operation Smile (for which, upon audit, I will be able to produce documentation for my whopping \$20 donation) providing reconstructive facial surgery for needy kids around the world? No, I really needed the extension. I have a 23 year-old girlfriend!

I don't like tax season for the same reason I don't like the week before and after my birthday. Itemizing your taxes gives you a true look at what you didn't accomplish in the past year. I'm not down and nobody needs to call me with a Knute Rockne story. I know I'm rich in other ways. If you got taxed on a loving family, close friendships, or telling a good story-I'd be voting Republican now. Here on earth, this isn't the case and April 15th does smack you in the face with the reality that you've earned just slightly less than a Nike factory worker. And without the perks. Who cares if you have Dysentery when you can buy Air Jordans at cost?

I report every penny I earn to the government. I'm honest and I play by the rules but I also do it for my own self-esteem. Sometimes I even consider adding a few bucks to my bottom line, just so I can feel a little more successful. I can't wait until I can write an A Dog's Lunch on my week in the Cayman Islands looking for the best places to hide money. I saw where Dick Cheney paid millions in taxes last year, even with all the tricky tax loopholes he helped pass. As pissed as he was at shelling out the cash, a little part of him had to say, "yeah baby, I paid \$7 million in taxes last year. I am the man." OK, I don't think that Dick Cheney has ever once said, "yeah baby" except outside an abortion clinic, but I think you guys know what I mean.

Let's look at the positive side. I only spent \$38.40 on buses last year. Good for me, Mr. Big Time! It's really hard to tell yourself you're doing something in the comedy world when you're carrying a pillow and big bag of Doritos onto the Greyhound to make the ride to the next gig a little more pleasant. FYI, if you need to take a bus to New England from New York, I recommend the Peter Pan bus line. They show movies on the ride up I-95 and that is traveling in style.

In 2000, I wrote off \$1620.00 for meals. The IRS allows you \$27 a day to eat while you're on the road. It amazes me when I hear people say, "I was so busy I forgot to eat lunch today." I've skipped meals because I was busy, but I've never actually forgotten to eat a meal. I don't even forget to snack.

Last year I wrote off expenses for video editing, T-shirt printing, and a Canadian Work Permit. I think I've finally learned that just because something is an allowable expense doesn't make the money you spend on it a good value. That massage parlor in Grand Rapids was definitely a bad idea and a tenuous business expense at best.

I tried to be a lot more niggardly last year with the money I spent entertaining people like comedy bookers and club managers. It's funny how not being reimbursed for your expenses changes things from a write off to a waste of money. I did spend \$163.28 on entertainment last year, the cost of a good meal when I had a real job with a real expense account. Most of the \$163.28 was spent following the phrase, "two Buds please." True, I would have bought the beer anyway, but an IRS allowable expense is an IRS allowable expense and, as you know, I play by the rules.