

For Honor, For Excellence, For Pizza

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Hacker News member [citizenlow](#) recalls the time [I went over after hours to help out the Money team debug a nasty kernel issue](#). They were running into mysterious crashes during their stress testing and asked for my help in debugging it. I helped out other teams quite a bit, like [writing a new version of Dr. Watson for the Windows 98 team](#) or [writing a new version of the MSConfig tool based on a sketch on a bar napkin](#). And for a time, I followed the official policy for moonlighting to make sure everybody understood that I was doing work outside the boundaries of my official job duties. When the Money folks asked me for help, I told them that before I could help them, they would have to help me fill out some paperwork.

- Who will you be working for? Microsoft Corporation.
- Where will you be doing the work? Office XX/YYYY on Microsoft Redmond Campus.
- When will the work begin and end? Begin on YYYY/MM/DD at 5pm, ending YYYY/MM/DD at 11pm.
- How much will you be paid for this work?

The Money folks were not sure how to answer that last question, since they didn't have any formal budget or procedures for hiring an outside consultant, much less any procedures for hiring one *from inside the company*. I told them, "Just write [One slice of pizza](#)." Nobody from the Personnel department seemed to notice the odd circumstances of this moonlighting request; they simply rubber-stamped it and put it in my file. The crash, it turns out, was in Windows itself. There was a bug in the [special compiler the Languages team produced to help build certain components of Windows 95](#) which resulted in an incorrect address computation under a particularly convoluted boundary condition. The Money folks had merely stumbled across this bug as part of their regular testing. I notified the appropriate people, and the Windows team applied a workaround in their code to tickle the compiler into generating the correct code.

As I recall, the pizza was just fine. It was just your average delivery pizza, nothing gourmet or anything. Not that it had to be, because [I wasn't there for the pizza](#).

[Raymond Chen](#)

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