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Almost every evening, Brandon Herbert walks up the same stone steps and into the dimly lit movie theatre near the edge of Blacksburg, Virginia. He walks straight towards the customer service desk, settles behind the concessions counter, and clocks in for a long evening. Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille + IMAX is just off South Main Street, just twenty-two minutes from Radford University's campus.

"I don't think I'll be ripping tickets my entire life, but for right now I guess this is where I'm gonna be," Herbert said.

Herbert is a Virginia Tech sophomore who spends his work hours at the usher's booth, ripping tickets and studying for his Calculus exam he has coming up on October 2nd. Brandon has been working at the theater since February 2016. It started with a family connection. His older sister worked in the kitchen several years before Herbert decided to apply.

"The crew would describe me as very quiet but hard-working. I keep to myself and study at the stand," Herbert said as he gestured to the textbooks to the side of the ushers stand. "[Managers] Daryl and Max understand that the theatre isn't our only priority do they allow us to what we can as long as we don't screw up with the viewers." Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille + IMAX's management prides themselves on hiring diligent but studious employees. Sixteen out of nineteen concessions and usher's employees are students from Blacksburg High School, Virginia Tech or Radford University.

"I have always loved movies. Free movies don't hurt, either." Herbert rips a few customers' tickets as he talks. "Your movie will be in theatre one, to the right."

After he clocks in, Herbert stocks candy takes inventory and sweeps up and trash and popcorn cornels from previous shows.

Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille + IMAX pays the federal minimum wage, which is \$7.25 per hour. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, theatre ushers, lobby attendants, and ticket takers nationally, earn a median hourly wage of \$10.45. Workers also receive one free

movie every other week, as well as 40% off popcorn.

“Working at a theatre you get your fair share of weird customers and engaging stories,” Herbert said. “The night that ‘Star Wars: The Force Awakens’ premiered we lost power for almost a full hour and had a crowd of angry fans at our throats. Then just a few weeks back when we premiered ‘Annabelle: Creation,’ a couple had a bar tab of almost \$200 racked up. They had gone to see the film but were so belligerently drunk they had to crawl out of their seats. Several of the restaurant workers tried to get them to safety and sitting, but they got stopped by the cops when they tried to drive home.”

Working at Frank Theatres CineBowl & Grille + IMAX may not be where Herbert wants to spend the rest of his life, but it’s a good fit until he graduates from college. “Working here is easy. As long as you show up on time, get your work done and remain respectful to both the coworkers and the customers, you’ll be fine.”