

If the Gods Are Not Crazy, Then Surely These Corporate Executives Are

Alec Aaron

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An immigrant relates unique work experiences in the hopes of helping those currently struggling.

For those whose work experiences have them wondering if common sense was left in the parking lot, Alec Aaron is here to sympathize. His memoir, *If the Gods Are Not Crazy, Then Surely These Corporate Executives Are*, recounts his experiences as a minority in corporate America, highlighting illogic and surprise.

Aaron was born and raised in Trinidad. After completing high school and receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of the West Indies, he came to the United States and earned two master's degrees from the University of Michigan. While there, he began to experience issues with how American corporations dealt with what they considered his "unusual" background. Interviewers questioned the quality of his high school and undergraduate careers, ignoring the fact that both were good enough to gain him acceptance into the University of Michigan.

The absurdity didn't stop once he was on the job, either. He was once told on a Monday that he was exceptional at his job, only to be placed on probation on Friday for poor performance. Aaron injects humor into some of his stories—he nicknames one co-worker MT for "Must be Tripping"—and writes with obvious passion about his subject.

Though Aaron shares many anecdotes from his life in the workforce, they are often very short, vague accounts. The book expresses hope that sharing his experiences will help other minority or immigrant job-seekers avoid the same issues that Aaron faced. Still, discerning the precise nature of those difficulties is sometimes a difficult task.

In one case, Aaron takes exception to a manager telling another manager that "Alec does not cause any trouble; he comes to work on time and does his work." Aaron questions why the man would use his name and "trouble" in the same sentence: "Is this some type of corporate profiling as opposed to racial profiling? A combination of the two is the possible answer." The relation of this event, though, does not include enough detail to make Aaron's suppositions seem wholly substantiated. The question of whether his reactions are proportional recurs throughout. In addition, there doesn't seem to be a clear order to which the anecdotes are told, which is disorienting.

If the Gods Are Not Crazy relates unique experiences from the business world of the 1980s and 1990s, with an eye toward helping those who may be struggling with difficult work situations themselves.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (December 28, 2015)

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