THE SOUNDS OF THE OFFICE
BY MICHAEL SIEGEL
The sounds of the office are essentially sounds of paper and machines. Here are some of them, in a rough chronological sequence, from the start of a day to its end, or at least the end of the morning.

### Band 1: Time clock:
- 0:15 start
- 0:24 door opens
- 0:31 card out of rack
- 0:34 punch in
- 0:38 card back in rack
- 0:45 out

### Band 2: Coffee break:
- 0:57 water in sink
- 1:05 water in kettle
- 17 kettle on stove
- 24 open closet
- 30 cup down
- 35 open instant coffee jar
- 38 close
- 50 open powdered milk
- 55 close
- 2:00 close closet door
- 05 starts to boil
- 44 whistles
- 3:10 gas off
- 16 pour into cup
- 24 stir
- 3:30 out.

### Band 3: Dictation and transcription:
- 3:43 start dictation
- 4:59 end
- 5:04 dial secretary
- 24 drawer open
- 27 close
- 32 roll paper into typewriter
- 37 start electric typewriter
- 6:43 stop
- 46 open drawer (remove eraser)
- 52 erase
- 7:01 restart typing
- 7:15 end and out.

### Band 4: Letter opening:
- 7:26 slitting envelope
- 30 removing letter
- 38 slitting another
- 44 removing, etc. ...
- 9:24 out.

### Band 5: Heat copyer (Thermofax):
- 9:34 start machine
- 48 putting in papers
- 10:05 machine off
- 09 staple
- 12 staple
- 15 again
- 19 arrange papers
- 10:22 out.

### Band 6: Coffee break:
- 10:31 water running
- 36 into cup
- 45 heating plug into cup
- 55 boiling in cup
- 11:10 open instant coffee
- 18 close
- 23 instant milk
- 29 close
- 36 stir
- 11:39 out.

### Band 7: Old electric typewriter:
- 11:52 start
- 58 roll in paper
- 12:05 type (envelope)
- 19 envelope out
- 23 new one in
- 26 type again
- 45 out
- 48 papers shuffled
- 54 another envelope
- 57 type
- 13:10 machine off
- 20 stuffing envelopes
- 13:48 out.

### Band 8: Adding machine:
- 14:02 walking to cabinet
- 10 open cabinet
- 19 close
- 29 setting papers
- 36 adding
- 15:09 total
- 14 write
- 18 add, 35 total, 38 write, 41 add
- 16:00 total, 05 write
- 15 back to cabinet
- 20 open
- 26 close
- 16:31 out.

### Band 9: Writing checks, and check protector:
- 16:41 write stubs
- 17:32 tear checks and type
- 18:26 out of typewriter
- 30 tear checks
- 44, 55, and 19:04 check protector
- 19:10 sign checks
- 19:23 out.
Band 10: Manual typewriter:

19:33 roll in paper
49 start typing
20:22 end of line bell
37, 59, 21:20 ditto
21:40 typing stops
41 paper out of machine
21:45 out.

END OF SIDE I

SIDE II

Band 11: Telephone and intercom:

22:04 phone rings
11 answer
17 hold
18 dial intercom
24 intercom bell (another office)
34 hang up
22:36 out.

Band 12: Pop bottle machine:

22:46 machine
23:01 coin change
10 remove bottle
20 cap off
24 drinking
33 refrigerator unit starts
40 bottle into 'empties' box
50 off.

Band 13: Calculator:

24:00 start
04 file drawer out
29 last drawer closed
49 adding on calculator
25:06 total
10 write results
15, 28, 30 add, tote, write
38 enter figures for division
46 machine divides
57 write
26:08 multiply
17 again
26 write
31, 45, 50, 55 add, tote, write, add
27:02 write
21 close file drawer
27:27 out.

Band 14: Plastic laminator:

27:38 paper, machine heater on
55 motor on
28:15 off
21 tear off laminated sheet
28 more paper
36 on

Band 15: Bookkeeping machine:

29:17 file drawers
30 ledger card in machine
34 machine goes
46 change ledgers
30:02 "
08 error
21 change; also 41 and 31:14,
36
31:48 out.

Band 16: Coffee break:

32:04 water and kettle
25 kettle on stove
30, 35 closet and cup
44, 56 coffee and Pream
33:30 whistle
55 pour
34:02 stir
34:06 out.

Band 17: Addressograph:

34:17 loading in plates
41 start addressing
35:22 remove plates
35:31 out.

Band 18: Postage meter and envelope sealer:

35:45 machine on
55 envelopes going through
36:04, 15, 24 repeat
36:43 off and out.

Band 19: Time clock:

37:05 clock
10 card out of rack
15 punch clock
18 return card to rack
25 out the door.
37:29 out.

Band 20:

All the above machines were recorded pretty much by themselves. This last track, from 37:48, through 39:07 ("Quiet") is the office on a busy day, when all the machines are going at once. Perhaps a little exaggerated, these are "The Sounds of the Office".

Michael Siegel
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