



“I started as a nameless little beagle from the streets of Virginia”

An Executive Canine Officer shares the secrets of his success

OH, HELLO, HUMAN FLYING ON American Airlines. I'm so glad you absentmindedly flipped to this page and are now wondering, "Was this really written by a beagle who lives in a hotel?"

Yes. Yes, it was.

I am Lord Monticello (Monti for short) and I am the Executive Canine Officer (ECO for short) at The Jefferson. It's a small boutique hotel in the nation's capital, and I've been here for almost four years. I may be partial, but The Jefferson is the nicest hotel in D.C. (I'm also not allowed in the other ones.) It's on a corner, which means lots of local dog traffic, and it's got the best flower bed to sniff through on my daily jaunts. You would not believe the bounty of smells!

A dog? As an executive? How does this happen? I'm so glad you asked.

You see, I was always destined for greatness: it just took a little while for me to find my purpose in life. I started as a nameless little beagle from the streets of Virginia and eventually ended up at a small shelter in Maryland, waiting for someone to bring me home. As luck would have it, The Jefferson was looking for a dog to become the official face of their historic hotel. (Other than the founding father, of course.)

The competition was fierce. I beat out a golden retriever named Cindy and a basset hound named Boomer. In 2014, my career at the hotel began.

The training was arduous. Not only did I have to remember everyone's name, but I also had to learn some tough



rules, including: No Dogs in the Kitchen. Other things came naturally, though, like discovering that everyone who walks through the door is a potential back-scratcher. I was put through my paces by my boss, the general manager, to ensure that I had what it takes to remain on staff and make the hotel a better place.

My daily tasks include, but are not limited to: greeting both our human and our canine guests, barking at the squirrels that try to eat the flowers in front of the hotel, allowing the staff to pet me when they're having a long day (hospitality is not for the faint of heart) and showing off my talents, which include wagging my tail, doing my tap dance on the marble floor in the lobby, begging for treats and—my greatest trick—performing the “full Monti,” where I lie on my back and wait for someone to pet me. There's no shame in my game!

Since I'm the hotel's official mascot, I also attend local events and am basically a D.C. celebrity. (By celebrity, I mean all of the dogs in downtown D.C. know me and all of the squirrels fear me.)

Being an ECO at a luxury hotel does have its perks. I have a bespoke coat that I wear in the winter with a pocket for my business cards and, if I look sad enough or am not feeling well, I get to snack on chicken made by our Michelin-starred chef. Eat your heart out, Lassie!

Should you ever find yourself in D.C. and want to visit me, here's a tip: I like bacon. Like, a lot.

Monti is on Instagram at @LordMonti.