

KILLER JOBS

HUNTING FOR MEGALODON TEETH, INSPECTING THE HULLS OF GIANT SHIPS FOR EXPLOSIVES, WASHING WINDOWS OF THE CITY'S TALLEST BUILDINGS—WHAT WON'T WE DO FOR MONEY?

LAUREN HUNSBERGER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RYAN GIBSON

"You couldn't pay me enough to do that!" That's usually the response out of people's mouths when Brady King tells them what he does as a profession—he is a rope-access window washer who sometimes spends up to eight hours a day dangling above the city with a suction cup in one hand and a squeegee in the other.

South sought to learn more about the area's most adventurous, dangerous and killer jobs. Whether these guys are seven stories above the ground or 70 feet below sea level, let's face it, the competition is going to be pretty slim.

Megalodon Shark's Tooth Diver

Bill Eberlein

About 40 feet down, in the creature-infested black-water landscape of Savannah's rivers and

oceans, is a bed made up of broken bones.

"There are bones, as in fossilized bones, from millions and millions of years ago," says Bill Eberlein, a highly trained scuba diver who sifts through exposed portions of this bottom layer in search of some of the most unique fossils found anywhere on the planet.

The rewards are impressive and include finds like a 12-pound mammoth tooth and an ancient mastodon tooth. But Eberlein says the real thrill for him comes from finding teeth that once belonged to one of the largest predatory marine animals to ever roam the ocean—the megalodon shark. This shark was estimated to be 60 to 70 feet long and could weigh up to 100 tons; its teeth could be about the size of a human hand and are extremely rare.

"I have dove somewhere between 250 to 300 local spots where the conditions looked just



Three times
a week Bill
Eberlein dives
for megalodon
teeth as big as
human hands.

**“I LOVE BEING
ABLE TO EDUCATE
PEOPLE ABOUT THESE
AMAZING CREATURES
THAT ONCE SWAM IN
OUR WATERS”**



"THERE IS NOTHING PRETTY ABOUT THIS JOB."

9 Most Dangerous Jobs in America

Sick of your desk job? These positions provide a whole new level of stress.

① Fisherman

This job has long hours in unsafe water, and Mother Nature takes over.

② Logger

Falling branches and chainsaws make for a chaotic workspace.

③ Airplane Pilot

No matter how many years of experience a pilot has, no pilot can control the weather or the visibility when flying through mountains.

④ Farmer and Rancher

These workers face potential issues not only from machines, like tractor rollovers, but also from animals.

⑤ Miner

Mining itself is a dirty and dangerous job, but operating the mining machinery creates the most risk.

⑥ Roofer

Any job involving heights ups the fatality factor, and with roofing, don't forget fires and electrical issues.

⑦ Garbage Collector

Being on the road, and on and off the truck daily, makes this occupation a hazardous one.

⑧ Truck Driver

Driving and delivering all day and night can push workers to their limits.

⑨ Industrial Machine Maintenance

Working with large, heavy machinery has its inherent risks, but repairmen also have to be careful of toxic chemicals and fires or explosions.

right, and I have only found something worth bringing up in maybe 10 to 12 of those spots," Eberlein says, adding that more than 99 percent of the fossils he encounters are in poor shape and badly broken due to exposure and natural decaying processes.

With that record, it might be hard to understand why about three times a week he takes the risk of diving for the teeth.

"It's kind of funny, because when you learn to dive you're taught: Don't dive alone," he says. "Don't dive in water with limited visibility, especially if there are strange creatures in it. Don't dive in strong currents. And I not only do one of those, but I do them all at the same time." Stories of his numerous encounters with the wildlife and occasional gear malfunction only add to the question: Why?

Eberlein makes money from recovering these fossils and selling them to fossil fanatics across the world, but selling at just a few hundred dollars a pop, there must be another reason for his excursions.

"I love being able to educate people about these amazing creatures that once swam in our waters," Eberlein says about his work. "I love being able to preserve that history."

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON EBERLEIN, VISIT MEGATEETH.COM. TO PURCHASE A SHARK TOOTH, VISIT PLANTATION JEWELS AT THE RIVER STREET MARKET PLACE, OR MEET EBERLEIN AT FIRST SATURDAYS.

Rope Access High-Rise Window Washer

Brady King

Brady King says the most

important skill to have when cleaning windows while dangling from a rope dozens of stories above the city streets is to know how to go over the edge. He means this literally, as in you have to know how to work your gear, what the safety procedures are and how to approach different shapes and sizes of buildings. But he also means this philosophically.

Something he has learned throughout his career as a high-rise window washer—which began in New York—is that successfully going over the edge is not just about stepping off the ledge of a skyscraper with secure gear. In fact, it's much more about the ability to drop into what's often called "the zone," or a deep state of concentration and focus.

"There is something in all adventure sports and activities that's very meditative in that you have to be so conscious of your environment and everything you do," King says. "In rope-access window cleaning, not only are you high off the ground, but you have to get into a rhythm. You're swinging, and using your suction cups, and you don't have the time or ability to think about bills or relationships or anything else



**"IN ROPE
ACCESS
WINDOW
CLEANING,
NOT
ONLY ARE
YOU HIGH
OFF THE
GROUND,
BUT YOU
HAVE TO
GET INTO A
RHYTHM."**



Brady King spends his weekdays hovering over Savannah's cityscape and suctioning his way around its tallest buildings.

like that. It's a kind of bliss."

But you can't bliss-out too much, he warns—an important part of reaching that edge is to respect the elements and the danger you're putting yourself in.

"You have to have some fear, but there's a fine line between being incapacitated with fear and allowing the fear to keep you focused," he says.

After growing up surfing, sailing, snowboarding, kiteboarding and engaging in pretty much any other adventure sport that involves a board or catching air, it wasn't too hard for King to find his groove with rope-access window cleaning—or to help other adventurers get off the

ground. Thirteen years ago, he started his company, Soap On A Rope, and now has about six or seven other climbers capable of polishing some of the most famous eaves, windows and ledges in Savannah's architectural treasure chest.

SOAP ON A ROPE OFFERS A RANGE OF RESIDENTIAL AND NON-HIGH-RISE COMMERCIAL CLEANING SERVICES AS WELL. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT SOAPONAROPE.ORG.

Tree Surgeon

Ervin L. Chandler

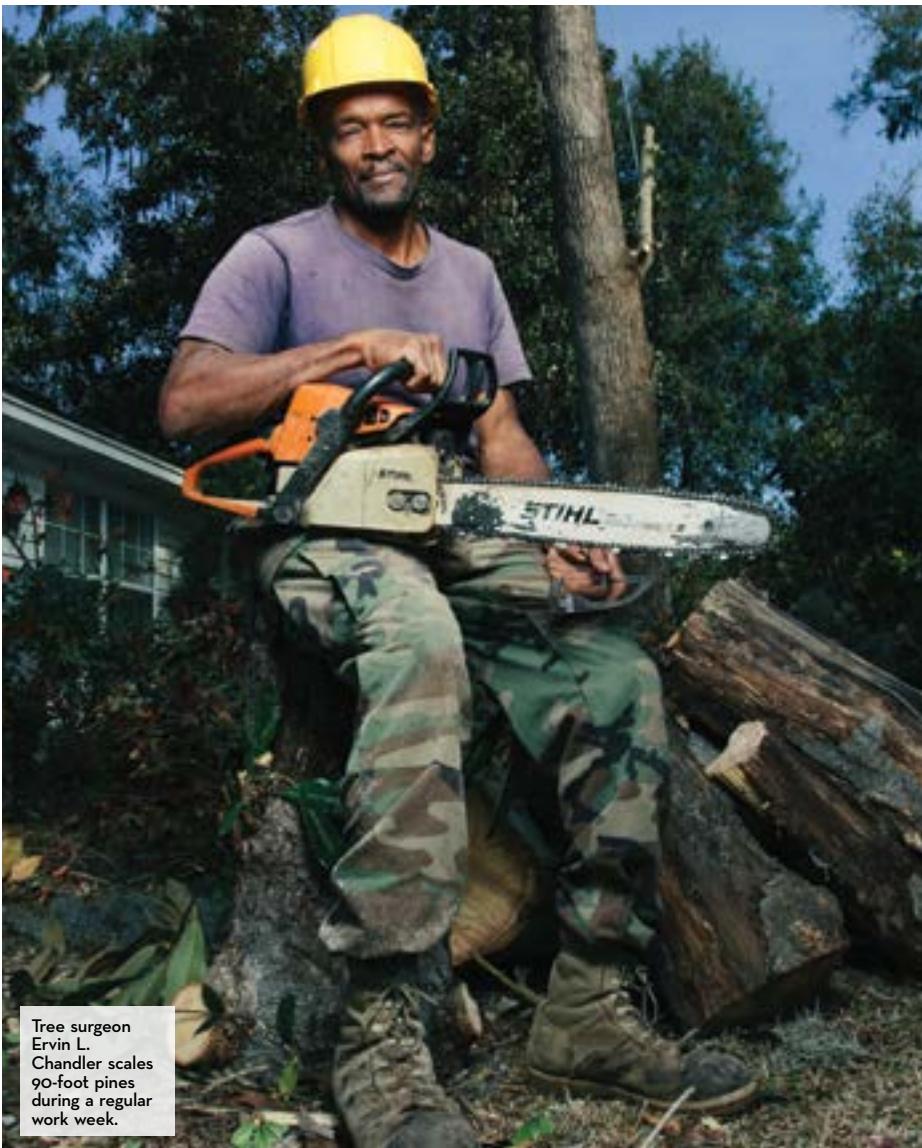
Ervin Chandler's talent and skill lie firmly in his willingness to go to great heights to protect the homes and lives of residents in the

Lowcountry. He is a tree surgeon, and has spent the last 10 years in Savannah scaling 90-foot pine trees, expansive live oaks and even the occasional grapefruit tree in order to prevent them from falling over or dropping large, destructive limbs onto the houses below.

"When trees are around your house, they require a certain amount of maintenance," Chandler says. "If you ignore these trees, they will encroach on your space and they have potential to cause harm to your home or family. So that's what I do. I call myself a surgeon because in order to do this you've got to get up into the tree and make very precise

incisions based on all kinds of mathematics and geometry—and handle them with great care."

Chandler has a crew of about 15 guys that now help him with many of the large jobs, but he says at 56-years-old and "one-hundred-and-fifty-four pounds with two bricks in [his] pocket" he still enjoys the thrill of inching his body as far out as possible to get at the exact right angle. It's a very specific skill he learned years ago from his uncle, and one he's now teaching to his crew. He understands it's not exactly a job most people would enjoy, especially those who have height issues, but ultimately it's a profession that



comes with great rewards. "If trees are threatening peoples' homes and safety, and they don't feel tranquil in their homes, the trees need to be removed," Chandler says. "And that's the thing that really makes me happy, when I satisfy a customer and make them feel safe."

TO CONTACT CHANDLER FOR TREE REMOVAL SERVICES, CALL 912.631.5569

SCMPD Underwater Search and Recovery Diver

Sgt. Hiram Rivera

One of Sgt. Hiram Rivera's most memorable cases as a diver with the Savannah-Chatham Metro Police Department's dive team involved a high-volume drug seizure that took place 70 feet below the ocean's surface.

"There was a local drug dealer who was taking a boat to the Bahamas to pick up dope," Rivera says. "Then he'd dump the dope in the middle of

the ocean and mark it with a GPS. He was a diver himself and would then go back out later and get the dope." When Rivera and detectives figured out what was going on, a recovery team was sent out. "When we got down there, as soon as the visibility was good, we saw a huge horseshoe ring of about 48 bales of marijuana suspended by chain links and sand bags," Rivera says. "The marijuana was buoyant like balloons, and we just went at them, cutting and sending them floating to the top."

While not all of his cases involve story lines that seem to belong to a late-night crime drama rather than the shores of Savannah, they all usually involve some pretty hairy things. Rivera and the other dozen or so divers that make up the dive team are most often called in to search for and recover a number of unpleasant things, including bodies, vehicles, drugs, guns and other weapons, all of which could be critical pieces of

How to Make Your Desk Job More Killer

Need some excitement in your day? South has your solutions.

Spending all day in a gray, cramped cubicle will make anyone want to ditch a hum-drum job for something more fun. Instead of throwing yourself into the unemployment pool, give these easy ideas a try. Keep in mind that some of these will need approval from the top dog, but others are readily doable in the space of your office.

Avoid the sitting disease. Is it real? Who knows, but sitting all day can make you cramped. Try switching your chair out for an exercise ball, using a stand-up desk or even adding a treadmill to your office.

Take your meetings outside.

Next time a meeting is scheduled, take it to the park outside or—better yet—walk and talk business at the same time. It's an easy way to get fresh air and sun while still getting work done.

Company bikes or kayaks.

Depending on your location, talk your boss into getting some bikes or kayaks for employees to use on breaks or lunches. You'll get out of the office, and your boss will get happier, healthier workers.

Pet- or family-friendly days. For a change of atmosphere in the office, add in monthly bring-your-pet-or-family member-to-work day.

Obviously, your furry friends or cute kids shouldn't interfere too much with work, but the visitors will certainly liven up the workday.

Try it Tuesday. Get your coworkers committed to trying a new food or flavor each week. Whether you have some great cooks in the office or simply order in some new grub, you'll have something to look forward to.



Advanced firefighter Josh Spivey and master firefighter Ben Spence call rushing into burning buildings just another day at the office. Spivey and Spence received the 200 Club Valor Award for 2013.

evidence in a case. "Body recoveries are definitely the most meaningful because a lot of times you're helping bring closure to families," Rivera says. "But that's also the hardest part of the job."

Aside from searching for sensitive objects at the bottom of murky local waterways, the dive team is also sometimes called in by the ports to help search the massive ships, or anything else suspicious underwater—an extremely dangerous mission because "a blast under water can destroy your organs," he says. "There is nothing pretty about this job."

Advanced Firefighter

Josh Spivey

"I was just doing my job," says Josh Spivey, an ex-marine and advanced firefighter, about a 2011 incident in which he and another fireman, master firefighter Ben Spence, rushed into a dangerous two-story house fire on West Victory Drive to

rescue an unresponsive 9-year-old boy who was inside. "He had just simply succumbed to the smoke," Spivey says, who adds that they were able to get him out of the house in time to save his life.

While Spivey has been working as an advanced firefighter (which means he can be tasked with the responsibility of driving the truck at fast speeds through traffic) for four years in Savannah (six years total) and several in Iraq, he says this case was by far the most memorable and touching to him.

Due to their brave acts of selflessness, both firemen were recently awarded the 200 Club's Act of Valor award for their exceptional service. Spivey says he's not exactly sure what it is that keeps him running into a building when everyone else is running out, but he says that when he's not saving lives his sense of adventure keeps him busy with snowboarding and scuba diving. ■

think of our realtors
as your next door neighbors

A local company with a community focus, Judge Realty offers an uncommon level of personal attention to clients facing real estate decisions.

We're Judge Realty, your **local** property shop.

JUDGE 
REALTY

912.236.3000 / 347 Abercorn Street / Savannah GA 31401
judgerealty.com