

Anecdotes by Papi

“I AM GOING TO DECK HIM TODAY!”

As promised this is the third installment of tales that took place thirty five years ago in Orlando Florida at a business enterprise called Mectron INC. I worked at this place right after I got married to my beautiful wife Ladonna in 1973 which was right after I had gotten out of prison in 1973. I don't know if that particular year was a turning point for any one else; it was certainly nothing less than that for me.

The Great “I AM” had just delivered me from a 6'x 9' maximum security prison cell, of which I shall write about in days to come; and had sent me on a journey in life that included being as “Humble as an Old Hound Dog.”

That's the name of the first story from Mectron and is a part of the series set forth as “Anecdotes by Papi.” For any who are interested there are also the following: Proverbs by Papi, Poetry by Papi, Songs by Papi and one other that is on hold at present. The second narrative in this series was called “I'll Just Write You another Check”; and of course this third one is fondly remembered and entitled “I Am Going to Deck Him Today!”

My job description was welder/ fabricator and it is something that I had excelled in since my early teens. At 16 years of age I was awarded 1st Place in a national welding contest; besides receiving a substantial monetary sum my story and accomplishments were included in a National Industrial Magazine. Beyond this it allowed me to walk in the door of several Aerospace Industry giants and be awarded top dollar in pay wherever I have worked over these many years. I made mention in the last story that I have never had to work for minimum wage. This is neither boast nor is it to belittle any who have had to work for minimum wage; I count it as blessing.

This blessing has made additional allowances for my ownership of three separate fabrication businesses, and has afforded me lucrative contracts wherein. I would

be called in the middle of the night to go and repair something that hundreds of other welders on sight could not do. I was good at it! During my secular teaching tenure I authored two books and helped author two others on welding procedures among other things that I had contracted for with the State of Georgia concerning their vocational teaching program. Has any one ever heard of a legendary individual by the name of “Red” Adair? No I was not as famous as he was; however, I was the go-to-guy in certain circles that extended over several states and into a couple other countries. There are numerous tales concerning the God given prowess germane to my ability to execute “just knowing what to do and how to do it” in most situations, whether it was construction or destruction. I say destruction because many of you are aware of the fact that I was a professional prize fighter before I went to prison. I was a fighter!

I am going to deck him today! That’s what I told my wife one morning as I left for work.

Now would be a good time to set the stage regarding such words coming out of an individual’s mouth who has just claimed to have been as “Humble as an Old Hound Dog.”

The work ethics: that I suppose are to be attributed to my upbringing; that I have taught the children that I have raised; have served me well over the years. Scripture teaches us to perform our work as doing it unto the LORD. There is nothing untoward about taking pride in what you do. This policy provided a reputation that preceded me wherever and whenever I was employed in secular activities and brought an element of blessing in multitudinous ways for many, many years. I have always been a no nonsense guy with little tolerance for bullies, fools, and loud mouths. Work is a serious matter with me.

Less than four months ago I meet an old acquaintance of twenty plus years in the local grocery store parking lot. He said, “Do you know what I remember most about you?” “No,” I said. “You were the hardest working #%%&\$ man I have ever seen in my life.” He continued “All that hard %#^%& work that you did ... do you still work like that?” Actually he had not seen me for the last few years. Thoughtfully I said, “No ... I guess I had to slow up a little.” There are a lot of stories I could relay about just how hard I have worked in certain arenas over the years and at least one that has a faith tale with it that I hope to eventually share.

So then ... what is the reason for all this discourse concerning my work ethics and so-called expertise? Certainly I have been “handled” or as it were called by name on numerous occasions as not “a jack of all trades” but rather “The Jack of all Trades”. The first assignment of “a jack of all trades” under close scrutiny can actually carry with it a derogatory slant of character; the second is a bestowal of honor. Beloved, I have ALWAYS taken work very, very, very seriously! Can’t help it, don’t know any other way to say it, but thousands can attest to the statement I’ve just made. Once again, perhaps not needful but nonetheless offered, I say with utmost humility and fear before my LORD and keeper - ALL of Papi’s renderings are nothing but truth.

My Father has taught me to think on whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Things of virtuous living and praise giving unto my Father are what interest me in this journey of learning to give what I have freely been given. I would not trade my salvation and my relationship with Him for all the gold in earth and the chance to tell a single falsehood. I am more serious about that than I am about work. So yes I have never liked to be interrupted in serious matters. Amen.

Here it is!

There was once upon a time – this time – when I was WORKING [... duh!?!] at Mectron and there was this black man. He was one of the most obnoxious, arrogant, illiterate, unprincipled, and presumptuous; did I say arrogant ... yes ... individuals I have ever met? I have indeed met a few but this guy was outstanding in the field above. He bothered me while I was WORKING!

The work areas at this establishment were all under a single roof so to speak with the various departments sectioned with mere aisles or curtains. This man was hired to sweep the floor twice a day with one other guy who was close kin in the department of attitude. He was black also but the color of these men was not the primary reason for my controversy with them; it was entirely their attitude in life. There was no regard or respect for others especially white folks that they constantly talked about; and every other word exceeded the definition of vulgarity. I said “them” because there were two of them and just like the two thieves on either side of Yahushua HaMashiach (Jesus The Messiah), as he bled and gave up his life, one was repentant and excused and the other was not.

This place was huge and here he came incessantly bellowing to his buddy as he SLOWLY made his way through the various departments. These guys were slower

than “the seven year itch” as my Mama used to say! They were also seven times louder than they needed to be; in fact they should not have been trying to carry on such a conversation over that vast distance at all. Loud coming, louder around me, and loud going. Everyday – twice a day and challenging the very quietness that I had chosen to place in my personal demeanor; they wandered unsupervised and uncivilized. At the very least this was my assessment and as long as they continued to challenge me I was obligated to meet the challenge.

When this man arrived into my work area he would purposefully push my welding lead (that’s a cable) with his broom and consequently disrupt the conscientious application that I was intently trying to flawlessly perform. After all with a welding shield down over your head and being in intense concentration this rude behavior was inexcusable. I used to count the ripples I placed per lineal inch as I welded because I was not only conscious of the strength of the application but was also cognizant of appearance. Uniformity and beauty needs to be a part of one’s delivery in life. If I was using an ox-acetylene cutting torch his broom found that target as well, nearly yanking the apparatus out of my hands. Dear hearts this went on day after day.

I didn’t want to lose my job over a fight but there was about to be one! Every single day stressed me out and I shared it with my wife. So one morning I told her “I Am Going to Deck Him Today!”

Furthermore I informed the LORD - “I Am Going to Deck Him Today!”

The very day that I resolved to fix this problem by means that I had been good at (because I could knock out any man with a single punch with either hand) the Lord changed my mind. On the way to work I was praying and told the Lord my intentions and hoped he would provide me with another job when I lost this one and Then Our Father spoke to me “I want you to win that man to me.” Now THAT spoiled everything that I had FINALLY figured out! I knew how to knock a man out but had not a clue as to how you could win a man to consider living holy unto God. Anyway ... my hostilities gave way to humility and I went into the building.

When the man came into my area that morning I had been cutting some steel and there were some pieces on the floor. I stopped what I was doing and picked them up because they were too heavy to move with his broom and I simply spoke to him in a quiet manner “How ya doin’ man?” He just looked and continued cussin’. Some folks call it cussing, others cursing, but when I was growing up it

was plain 'ole cussin'. Later that day I was welding when he came through and I stopped, moved my lead out of his way, and spoke to him once again in gentle fashion. The next day I did the same and the next day I did the same. The third day I noticed a change in his delivery to his buddy. As I have testified this man was loud and did I say arrogant? Yeah I believe so. Here is what changed; as this man got closer to me the quieter he got. When he passed by me the louder he got. Every day this obvious behavior change was intensified just a little bit more than the day before. Sometimes I would speak and sometimes not; he on the other hand refused to speak to me until a certain day about seven days into his new awareness.

He just stopped one day and just blurted out so hard and fast I could hardly understand what he had ask. He said "Say man – you a Christian?" My response was "what?" Like I said I did not understand him and he repeated it. "A Christian – Man – Are you a Christian?" I looked at him dead in those black bloodshot eyes and from my heart said "I try to be."

He whirled around and in an equal tone of decibel delivery of his highest degree shouted to his buddy; "SEE MAN . . . I **TOLD** YOU . . . THIS MAN WAS A CHRISTIAN!"

From that very day forward my assignment from the Lord got easier and easier. He would stop every day and we would talk of the Lord and the scriptures I knew and how good it was to be a Christian. He commenced going to church, turned his life around, and this big black man that towered over me never knew that I was going to hurt him one day but only that the Lord had asked me to help him. My Lord and Savior began to teach me how to become a fisher of men and how to love another and to know that we are our brother's keeper.

This man stood with tears in his eyes and love in his heart the day I left Mectron and came to Jasper Georgia. My memory has lapsed as to being able to call his name or I would. He however is not anonymous upon the page of life that holds his name; providing he continued in his newness of life to make his calling and election sure. As the Apostle Paul stated he planted, another watered, and God gave the increase. Let it be so and even so "Come Quickly Lord Jesus."

Brother wherever you are this sharing of love is memorial to you.

Papi
April 11, 2008