

Remembered but Forgotten

By Pete Clark

My interviewing experience is limited to the examination of job applicants long ago in a different life, a life that was more physically active and much more daunting mentally. So with limited experience and no other victim to interrogate, I interviewed myself, questioning why I had failed to write about an incident I had intended for my piece on Energy. The truth is that when I sat down to create the discussion, I couldn't remember what I had wanted to discuss and had to extemporize. The result was acceptable.

The difference between now and as little as five years ago is, back then if I forgot something, when I remembered that I had forgotten whatever it was, I knew what it was that had been forgotten. Now concerning the situation in question, it took until four days after the paper was read for me to remember the incident I initially wanted to write about. Once the memory returned, the questions that I put to myself let the long gone situation unfold in tones that would make Technicolor look washed out. The most important question about this incident has always been: Why did I do what I did? The only answer I've been able to come up with is rather simplistic, but you can judge my response when I get there.

This event happened more than forty-five years ago when I worked as a Division Manager at a big box department store. Besides merchandising and keeping shelves and pegs full and neat I had other responsibilities pertaining to the operation of the store as a whole. One area of my responsibility was helping with security and maintaining order in the store during business hours.

One evening I was on my way to an upstairs office to figure an order when I noticed a fairly large crowd forming near the entry doors. I didn't see a flashing blue light indicating a fifteen minute special, so I walked to the front of the store to see what was going on. I made my way through the mob of people and saw two men fighting with the security guard in the foyer between the inner and outer doors. All of the people stood there doing nothing, watching two well dressed thugs pound on the guard, who was not a big man.

I stepped into the foyer and not being well versed in fisticuffs I wasn't sure what to do, so I put a wrestling takedown hold on the man nearest me and bounced his head off of the Coke machine a couple of times on the way to the floor. Soon after we hit the floor the man complained that he couldn't breathe so I tightened my lock on him. He was such a brave guy. The guard subdued the other thug and I relaxed my hold and let the man get up. We told both of them to leave and never again come into the store. I believe I did what I did because I do what I have to do.