

THE SPY WHO CAME TO DINNER

Not So Fast

By Terry L. Smith Sr

I graduated in 1965 just as the Vietnam War was revving up. The Government was getting ready to crank up the draft so my dad took me aside and said, this is going to escalate and I will pay for you to go to Junior College but based on your record in high school I think you should think this thing out.

You see, my whole four years in high school I may have seriously studied 8 - 10 times. I had the type of brain that I could absorb the class room, look up a few things and Wha Lha get by with a solid C. suffice it to say I was a little bit of a party animal. Although My dad was a functioning alcoholic he was no dummy, he knew that was not going to stop when I went to college, but what he advised made sense.

He went in the Army Air Corp in 1945 when he was sixteen, lying about his age, to escape severe abuse from my grandfather. He told me that he matured pretty quickly and he thought that would be a good thing for me and I could join the Air Force which would give me the best duty and keep me out of combat. He told me this war was not going to be good, and he did not want me to be in a jungle shooting little oriental guys. And he did not want me coming home in a body bag. I knew there was another motive and it came at the end when he said, "plus you get the GI Bill so the Government will pay for your College saving me a boat load of drinking money."

I swiftly went down to the recruiting office with a few of my buddies and signed up. We had to take a test to see what our skill level might be. The day we were scheduled to take the test we had dates to go the lake for some water skiing and partying so we got the test and never read a question, we just went down the answer sheet and market a bunch of those little circles. That is how I ended up as an aircraft fuel system specialist.

I went to Lackland Air Base for basic training then off to Tech school in Chanute Air Base in Illinois then assignment to Okinawa. Yep right straight to paradise. Naha Air base was a combination of Air Force and Navy. I was very gung hoe while on duty, worked smart and hard and gained rank very quickly. However off duty we formed a group of guys who we called the rat pack, made up of about six or so Air Force guy, about four Navy guys, a couple of Marines and Army guys. we were the rascals and I was kind of the head rascal. Maybe because I had two cars so that gave clout.

Like most GIs we spent a lot of time in the Airman's Club and downtown Naha City bar hopping. After a few months that became a little boring. Most of us were hanging out at the beach and the base pool which was loaded with 16 to 18 year old dependants. Now this was not jail bait per say because we were all 18 to 19 years old and these girl just liked to hang out with us.

These girls were a part of our rat pack and we were always partying with them around the island. All of us military guys passed ourselves off a dependants so we could go to their houses for dinner and special events. The gal I was dating was a Full Bird Colonels daughter who was the wing commander of the amphibian squadron on the base. I told her family my father was a Marine Major stationed on Kadina Airbase about 35 miles up the island. Oh you can just feel where this going can't cha? Well hang on to your seat because it is just getting *wound* up.

One of our favorite sites to party was the golf course. Lots of greens for blankets and no people around. After a little while there was a guy that stared to hang around the pool and the beach whenever we

showed up. He was a short little guy, kind of like the nerdy guy that was around in high school trying to be around the cool kids. Shallow I know but that's how it was.

We had a meeting to see whether we wanted to get him to buzz off our hang out with the group. Everyone agreed that he was harmless and just let him hang out. OK this is where the plot thickens! I spent a lot of time alone away from the group, kind of a break so to speak. This guy started showing up everywhere I was and it was certain that it was no coincidence.

The straw that broke the camel's back was when I was in the movies one afternoon and he came in and plopped down next to me. At that point I thought he was gay, and I was starting to straighten him out when he flashed a badge right in my face. He was an Second Lieutenant agent with the Office of Special Investigation OSI. OH YA, you saw this coming didn't you! The Jig Was Up!! I asked him what was up and was I under arrest? He said no but he had orders to accompany him to the Intelligents Center.

The base Intelligents Center was just as you would imagine, a very large pea green complex with no windows and a guard gate and surrounded by a two rowed barbed wire topped fence. Actually eerie! We checked in with the guard and the Lieutenant flashed his badge and we proceeded inside down a hall and into a large office set up as a bull pin with a bunch of desks. He motioned me to another door so I went in and it was like a conference room with a long table and some chalk boards on a raised platform at the head of the room. We sat down at the end of the table close to the door.

About 3 minutes later the door swung open and there stood my girl friends Full Bird Colonel father. A real oh crap moment! I jumped up out of my chair snapped to attention and popped a perfect salute. He returned the salute and said at ease and told me to sit down. I said yes sir and took a seat. He was carrying about 6 folders, a red, a green, an orange and 3 plain manila. Now mind you I knew my butt was toast so I felt a little humor may just help a little.

Oh yah my brain was telling me don't do it, don't you dare do it. Well I dood it. I looked him square in his full bird eyes and said, "well I guess this week's Sunday football dinner was off." If you can believe it he actually cracked a smile, which put me a little at ease. Then he became stern and said "I want you to sit there and be quiet until I tell you that you can speak, got it. Yes sir I snapped back.

He started by telling me that the files were a investigative background check going back to when I was born and even to my grandparents. This cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and he was not very happy. I was taken aback that they would got to all this effort and cost for something as simple as dating a dependant. Oh I was right on the money, it was a hundred time more serious than that. He told me he had eight more of these on members of our little group and that added up to a few million dollars.

He then began to clue me in. There was an espionage ring working on the island and they had knocked out 90 percent of the communication on the whole island, twice, and they traced the source location of one of the events to the golf course one of the nights we were there parting. And with very little effort he found out that my little band of merry men were all military and it looked very much like we were spies. He described it as creating a crap storm, but he didn't use the word crap, if you know what I mean.

He assigned Lieutenant Shorty Pants, my name for him, to the case to infiltrate our little spy ring to get the goods on us. This, while they were completing our background investigations. I blurted out, sir you know that I or my buddies would never be involved in anything like that. He said I know that, you little crap head, again not using the word crap. Now be quiet!

Yes sir I said. He proceeded to open the red file which was marked top secret, showing me a document that said I had been issued a top secret crypto clearance by the FBI and the OSI as a result of the investigation, which just proved we were a bunch of butt heads who did violate orders not to date dependants without the permission of their parents. They had caught the real spies, a band of agents from China or North Korea I don't remember. I had such a sense of relief now that I knew I was not going to the can, the hoosegow, Ft Leavenworth Maximum Security Military Prison, oh yah.

But what came next was a real shocker! He told me that in this green file which contained every test I had ever taken in the military including my first test results from the enlistment entrance test which placed me in the 70 percentile, yet when I took my three days of tests at the Detroit induction center before going to basic training, I scored in the top 3 percent of anyone who had ever taken the test. My tests at tech school were all 97 to 100s. My chief Master Sergeant put me in to attend the Airman's Management Academe which I graduated number one in my class. And he wanted to know why this did not match the Enlistment test! You can speak, he said.

Yes sir I said and I explained my four years of high school and how we took the initial entrance test. Then I said I had no explanation for the results of the 3 day test but I was very serious about doing well and as you know now I am very gung ho on duty. He told me that was also in the files from my sergeants reviews. He said I had no business being in the maintenance field, that the test revealed that my IQ was way up there, I don't remember the number, and that my skill set was one of management and that I was officer material. Then he dropped the bomb shell. He said that he wanted me to come to work for him. I would be promoted to Sergeant and I would be sent to Officers Candidate School immediately and if I graduated I would be promoted to 2nd Lieutenant and come back to work for him. Needless to say I was stunned. I had discussed the possibility of OCS with my master sergeant and he said he would see what he could do. The Colonel knew I was a bit over whelmed and told me to take a couple of days to think it over. He actually invited me to come over the coming Sunday with my answer. I stood up, came to attention and snapped another salute. He saluted back and stuck out his hand and I shook it and I said no punishment for the bull crap I put you through, as I tiered up, and I said I was sorry. He said with a smile just get your fanny out of here before I change my mind, I'll see you Sunday. I said sir what if I decline your offer. He said I want you to do what is right for you, this is all behind us and I will be there for you no matter what your decision. Over the next three days I agonized over my decision. I was thinking about what I would have to do to as an agent. I would have to take on roles and lie to people that I actually might like. It just did not fit my make up but I didn't want to disappoint the Colonel. I finally made my decision!

ON SUNDAY I DECLIND THE OFFER!