

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

www.ArthurJonesExercise.com

64

“You have to do what you have to do.”

Gary Garrison

Gary Garrison was a very large man who was working for Ross Allen in Silver Springs, Florida, when I first met him in 1951, shortly after I married Eva in Mexico and then left the Tarpon Zoo. Gary was in charge of selling snakes and animals for Ross Allen, was married and lived with his wife and young son in a small house in the woods near Silver Springs. Eva and I lived with Gary and his family in his house for a while, and I liked him so well that I later named my oldest son after him.

Eva and Gary’s wife got on very well in spite of the fact that Eva could not speak a word of English and Gary’s wife could not speak Spanish; nevertheless, somehow they managed to communicate quite well.

Gary had been an Army officer during the war, serving in the CBI theater of war, China, Burma and India, and had been assigned to the OSS, the Office of Strategic Services, which was the forerunner of the CIA, in charge of overall military intelligence. But he got into a lot of trouble, was arrested and shipped back to this country in chains.

He and a British officer that was serving with him discovered a Japanese concentration camp where the British officer’s wife was being held prisoner together with a large number of other civilians that the Japanese had captured. So they applied for permission to mount an attack against that Japanese prison camp in order to rescue the prisoners; but their request was refused. But they made the raid anyway, and rescued all of the prisoners while killing all of the Japanese guards and without losing any of their own troops. A result that was not enough to satisfy the general in charge of the area; so he arrested Gary, shipped him back to this country for a court martial and had him thrown in prison while awaiting his trial. He was also stripped of his commission.

But during the later trial he was acquitted of all charges, had his commission restored, was paid all of his back pay and was given a medal; so it turned out well in the end in spite of the general’s efforts.

Forty years later, then an old man, Gary was a bounty hunter; hunted down wanted criminals all over the country, arrested them and brought them back for trial, in return for any outstanding rewards. Which is a very tough job indeed.

But Gary was a very tough man, and one of a very few totally honest men that I ever knew. He quit working for Ross Allen after I pointed out to him some things that Ross was doing that were not honest, quit in spite of the fact that his job paid a relatively high salary at that time and place, far more than he could earn otherwise.

I lost contact with Gary for a long time, but later ran into him again and he made a trip with me to Wichita, Kansas, when I went out there to take delivery of a new jet that I had just bought. Shortly afterwards, his wife died, and he was very disturbed by that; but now I have lost contact with him again and don’t know what he is doing now, or even where he is, if he is still alive.

Most of my real friends are now dead, together with many who were not so friendly. All four of the Miller brothers are now dead, together with Ralph Demers and his wife, Ray Olive, John Peters, Jack Hamm, Brad Bradford, Jim Lassiter, Earl Brockelsby, both of the Piper brothers, Johnny Stephens, Raymond Johnson, Otto Martin Locke, C. C. McClung, Bob Hoffman, Milo Steinborn and quite a few others that have been mentioned in earlier chapters, together with many others that have not been mentioned. Quite a few others are now in jail, including Mike Tsalickis, Joe Renado and Sam Mutrux, among others. So, one way or another, the list of people I have known is growing shorter.

Most of these people were unique in one way or another, and I doubt if many such people will appear on the scene very soon, if ever; perhaps such people cannot be produced under different circumstances. My experiences with many of them were seldom very pleasant, but were certainly memorable; one thing that I now regret was the fact that I never got around to tape recording any of the many stories that they told me about their lives. I intended to do so, but always

The Arthur Jones Collection

waited until it was too late; and thus a very interesting part of history was lost forever. Regardless of its length, this book can only touch upon rather random bits and pieces of my history, or the history of any of the people mentioned.

Having had all of my earlier records apart from my flight logs and diaries stolen by the Rhodesian government in 1968, I don't even have pictures of most of the people mentioned herein, or any of my correspondence with them. So most of this book had been dragged up out of an admittedly imperfect memory; but it has been, I believe, surprisingly accurate in spite of few records for confirmation of my memories. As I write, things come back to me clearly that I have not thought about for years; even names that I thought I had forgotten usually spring quickly to mind; and I do have almost perfect recall of conversations held many years ago, together with most of what I ever read. If I cannot recall some things exactly, I can, at least, paraphrase them closely enough to avoid any meaningful error in regard to the actual meaning expressed at the time. That being true primarily, I believe, because many of them contained enough in the way of a shock to stamp them into my mind for the rest of my life. Much else, I am sure, has been lost; but a great deal will probably remain as clear as it was when it happened for the rest of my life. Some things stick.

As I said in an earlier chapter: you will probably never forget your first snake bite, your first airplane crash, your first gunshot wound or your first sexual experience. Quite a few people mentioned in this book probably will wish that my memory was not so good, and some of them may, probably will, try to dispute the facts as reported by me herein. Well, let them publish their own versions if they are so inclined; I will stand by mine.

The person who made the greatest impression on me during my life? Probably Enna Rhodes, a woman we called Peggy, about whom I have had very little to say. She came as close as anybody did to raising me throughout my early years, up to the age of about ten. The last time I saw her before she died was in the fall of 1952, when I stopped by to see her in her father's small house in Byrdtown, Arkansas, on my way to Slidell with Owen Baker. Baker was seemingly stunned by my relationship with Peggy; apparently did not suspect that I had so much respect and admiration for people like Peggy, but I did, and will never forget her considerations and efforts on my behalf. If most people were like her we would have very few of our present problems.

I have tried throughout my life with very little in the way of success to extend such consideration to the other people I have known; but it was seldom appreciated, and most people considered it a sign of weakness on my part and tried to take advantage of me in return for my favors. Which sometimes produced results that were not at all what they expected. But I had to do what I had to do. I seldom acted, usually reacted in the only way that appeared to ensure my survival.