

A Best Seller

(Part 1)

This Autobiography contains

The Lively Life Lived

and the

Life Lessons Learned

by

Stan Billue



***THE* Sales Training Legend**

You are about to discover the **Mind Set needed** and the **Skill Level required** to become a Mega-Buck Income Producing Pro.

Included in Part One are Sales Skills, Negotiating Techniques, Marketing Ideas as well as Personal and Professional Lifestyle Tips.

This was written for Sales Pros, Sales Managers, Business Owners, Entrepreneurs, Speakers, Trainers, Consultants, Coaches, Work-at-Home Specialists, and anyone who desires to become the Best they can become.

Some Chapters will entertain you and some may shock you however each and every Chapter contains invaluable Knowledge that will help you become the Best you can become. Welcome to over 150 invaluable "**Life Lessons Learned**".

I wish you a "Fanta\$tic" Future

Stan Billue

www.StanBillue.com

Foreword

As I started the outline for this Book I quickly realized that as much as I had planned on it being a Business Book on Sales and Marketing, it was quickly turning into more of an Autobiography. As I recalled different Life Lessons and Skills I've learned, I found myself searching back as far as my Grade School years and each Lesson had a Story behind it.

In looking back it certainly appears that I was born to be a Promoter. I have a true fascination about Life and love to ask questions. In addition, I have a sincere interest in learning from anyone who does whatever they do better than others. Because of these traits I usually see and seize opportunities that most people don't or won't.

I often refer to my first 34 years as being a self-made failure since I was a High School drop out, Bankrupt and Divorced twice during that time. You'll read about my early Childhood of recruiting neighborhood Kids to cut Grass and deliver Papers, to being the fastest Western Union Delivery Boy (until I got caught), and then becoming the youngest Fuller Brush Man (Boy) in the Country, to being a Brick Mason, a Plumber, a Disc Jockey, making Donuts and raising Tropical Fish all while I was still in High School.

After quitting High School, I got Married and joined the Army and became the only Rock n' Roll Piano Player in Army Band history. In addition I made more money a day than my fellow Soldiers made all month while in Germany and ended up going to Prison.

Coming back to the States, I worked as a Car Salesman, Collector, Repo Man, Musician, Talent Manager, Record Producer, Booking Agent and produced Commercials, all before meeting my Mentor, and then my life shifted into high gear and it started getting really interesting.

In reality, I did enjoy some Success from time to time, however I never had any consistency because I was missing the Knowledge I required. Although I started a lot of different Careers and Companies they all fell by the wayside, before I met my Mentor.

There are hundreds of people who have helped me achieve the levels of Success I enjoyed during the second half of my life however I certainly have to pay my humble gratitude to my original Mentor, Jerry Ross. Jerry was a High School drop-out who was Married and 3 Kids (1 set of Twins) by the time he was 18. He was a Millionaire by 21 and a Multi-Millionaire by 23. When he offered to be my Mentor I truly believed that if he could accomplish what he had, that I could also.

With Jerry's belief in me and his encouragement to become a Master of my Craft, I was able to double my Income for five consecutive years and then became a Professional Sales Trainer and Motivational Speaker and traveled the World for over 20 years conducting up to 22 Speaking engagements a month. I became recognized as one of the most Referred-to, Ripped-off and Respected Trainers the World and my Audio and Video Training Programs and Training materials are still sold over 60 Countries.

The "**Lively Life Lived**" makes for interesting reading however the real value of this Book are the "**Life Lessons Learned**".

List of Chapters and Lessons Learned

[1] Childhood Hustling – The Grass Crew

Do something at least once so you know the right way to get it done.

Hire others to do the grunt work and be a supervisor.

When you get good at something and others take notice, make your services available and start to make a profit.

[2] Childhood Hustling – The Paper Route King

Learn how to do what you do better than everyone else and you'll make more money.

Don't be afraid to appeal to people's generosity.

Always be Prospecting.

When you find something that works well, expand it.

[3] Childhood Hustling – Turning 25 cents into 500 Hundred Dollars

You never know where and when an opportunity will present itself.

Use your imagination and then take action.

[4] Childhood Hustling – Selling Bing Cherries and Bartlett Pears

Whenever possible, offer a Free Sample to get your Prospect hooked.

[5] Childhood Hustling – The Fastest Western Union Delivery Boy

Don't cheat.

[6] Childhood Hustling – The Youngest Fuller Brush Man in History

Be willing to adapt to special situations.

Use creative openings to get in the Door.

Play "dumb" to lower their defense barriers.

[7] Childhood Hustling – Donuts, Plumbing, Bricks and Tropical Fish

Search out Experts and be a sponge.

Making Commissions is Great.

[8] Dancing on TV, Rating Records and being a Disc Jockey

Learn about the latest Craze and Trends.

A Smile can make the difference.

Learn to tell Stories to be interesting.

Keep parlaying your Success.

[9] Quitting High School to see the World

There is always a way to make something exciting happen if you are persistent.

[10] We made the Troop Ship Rock

Ask questions and probe until you find out what people need.

Don't be afraid to commit to being able to do something if you believe in yourself and your ability to pull it off and Walk the Talk.

[11] Making a Fortune on the German Economy

Do your research ahead of time.

If you are always looking for opportunities, they will appear in abundance.

It's good to be close to the Boss.

[12] Rocking the Night Away

Always ask for Referrals.

Learn when it's time to slow down and appreciate what you have rather than pushing yourself until your World falls apart.

[13] I Paid the Ultimate Price – My Freedom

Don't Buck the System when there isn't a chance you will Win.

There is always a Chain of Command or Pecking Order you can benefit from.

Don't be afraid of trying something new if you are confident of your abilities.

Keep your Friends Close and your Enemies even Closer.

[14] We also Rocked the Boat on the Way Home

Plan ahead (even 2 years).

Get Letters of Reference whenever possible.

Conduct Surveys to find out what your Prospects want.

[15] After the Army

How to drive a New Car for Free.

Brain Pick your Competition.

If there isn't a Job available, don't be afraid to Create one.

Don't be afraid to be Pro-Active and make something happen.

Have a Photo Album, etc. of Happy Customers.

Go where the Money Is.

If possible use Bird Dogs and pay them well.

[16] Rock n' Roll is in the Blood

Use a Famous Name or variation when possible for familiarity.

Please your Customers instead of doing something the way you want to.

Learn to overcome Objections before they come up.

[17] Collections and Repossessions

If you're only having Fun at your Job but not making enough Money, move on.

When you get Shot at it's time for a Career Adjustment.

[18] Hitting the Road as a Musician

Don't chase a Dream if it's not Financially feasible.

Be the Best at whatever you do for a Living.

[19] Becoming a Talent Agent

When you are excellent at what you do, others will hire you away and pay you more.

Hire and Train other Salespeople and make an override on their efforts.

[20] Becoming a Manager and Record Producer

Develop additional Products to sell to your Audience or Customers.

Don't believe everyone even if they are Famous or have a Famous name.

Don't put all of your Eggs in one Basket.

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[21] Back to being a Talent Agent

Know when it's time to go out on your own.
Figure ways to sell your Customers more often.
Take something that isn't working and reinvent it.
Name recognition can be worth a lot of Money
Know when to slow down before you Crash and Burn.

[22] Starting to Produce Radio Commercials

Start all the way at the Top whenever possible.
Try a New Approach to attract New Attention.
Humor can go a long way.
Instead of saying you don't know how to do something, ask what is needed and then learn how to do it.
Take someone else's Failure and make it your Success.

[23] I became a Gopher

Make every Offer contingent on your Partner's or the Owner's acceptance.
Use O.P.M. (Other People's Money) when possible.
Have people come up with a possible solution instead of always telling them what to do.
It's usually easier to explain later than get permission ahead of time.
Try to hire people by the hour instead of paying the Bid Price.
There's always a faster, cheaper and/or better way to get something done.

[24] Turning a White Elephant into a Cash Cow

When all else fails, try a little Common Sense.
Always ask for Referrals and/or References.
When you can't Lease the entire Building to one Tennant, split it up and make twice as much money.

[1] Childhood Hustling – The Grass Crew

As soon as I was old enough to push a Lawn Mower, I was put in charge of mowing and trimming the Grass in our yard. Unfortunately we lived in a Home which had a very large Corner Lot and it took the better part of an entire day. My Parents also made me use a “catcher” behind the Hand Mower which I had to continually empty. In addition to the Mowing, I had to Trim or Edge on both sides of all of the Sidewalks.

Back in the 50's we didn't have Electric or Gas Weed Eaters or Trimmers so it was just me on my hands and knees with a set of Clippers. After one full day of that hard work I started to figure out how I could keep from doing all of this hard labor.

This was probably my first recollection of being a “Promoter” because by the time the next weekend rolled around and I had Recruited 5 neighborhood Kids to work for 50 cents an hour for 2 hours each and we were done with the entire yard in 2 hours. Although it did require that I pay them all of my 5 dollars a week allowance, I thought it was pretty neat since all I really did was tell them what to do and they did all of my work and I freed up 6 hours of my time.

Several Neighbors walked by while we were Cutting and Trimming and they complimented me on how nice the yard looked and how efficient my “Crew” was. About the second one to say that inspired me to tell them that we called ourselves the “Grass Crew” and even though we were young (6 to 8 years old) we took enormous pride in our work. Then I would ask them if we could do their Lawn.

Within 2 weeks I had 15 Lawns to take care of and hired a few other Kids to help. Even after hustling up a couple of additional used Lawn Mowers, Rakes and Clippers, I started showing a Profit of \$30 a week. Wow, only 3 weeks after working my young tender hands all day Cutting and Trimming my own Lawn, I now had a “Grass Crew” that took care of my Lawn plus 15 others and I was making 6 times my original weekly allowance.

Since I lived in Ft. Wayne Indiana it was a natural for my “Crew” to rake Leaves in the Fall, shovel Snow in the Winter and then we started back on cutting Grass in the Spring and Summer. I had just become an Entrepreneur at the ripe old age of 8.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Do something at least once so you know the right way to get it done.

Hire others to do the grunt work and be a supervisor.

When you get good at something and others take notice, make your services available to those others and start to make a profit.

[2] Childhood Hustling – The Paper Route King

About a year or so later I had a friend who had a Paper Route and he delivered the early Morning Paper. He went on vacation with his Family for a week and asked me to take over. I quickly found out that I didn't enjoy getting up at 4 AM to deliver Papers however there was some fairly good Profit to be made.

As it turned out, my friend decided he didn't want the Route when he came back from vacation so I took it over. I discovered that many of my Customers weren't paying on time and were constantly 2 weeks to 2 months past due. The Newspaper automatically cancelled a person's Delivery when they got 2 months past due and wrote off the balance due since they knew that most of the young Kids who were delivering the Papers weren't very good collectors.

The wheels started turning again and within a Month I picked up 3 additional Routes. Now I had 4 Routes and I hired 4 neighbor Kids to deliver the Papers while I handled the Collections each week for all of the Routes. I made up a nice Note for my Customers that basically said;

**“Hi my name is Stan and I'm your Paperboy. I go to Forrest Park Grade School and I'm trying real hard to make some extra money to buy a used Bike so I don't have to carry all of these heavy Newspapers. What you maybe didn't know is that when you don't pay your Bill on time the nasty Newspaper takes that money out of my little bit of profit. Please help me get my used Bike by paying your Bill on time. Your balance is \$ _____.
Thank you very much, Stan.”**

I would leave that Note with an Envelope addressed to me and of course if they were Home I would read it to them real slow as if I was kind of bashful. Within about a week almost every Customer on all 4 Routes was paid up current and I even got a few extra Tips with some nice Notes from several people telling me to buy a new Bike instead of a used one.

I also quickly discovered that only about every 1 in 3 Houses on all 4 Routes were getting a Morning Paper. When I was Collecting, I would stop by every House that wasn't taking a Paper and give them my little sales talk or leave this Note;

**“Hi, my name is Stan and I have the Morning Paper Route in this area. I go to Forest Park Grade School and I'm trying real hard to make a little extra Money to buy a used Bike. All of my Friends have one but my Parents can't afford to buy me one. If you could Subscribe to the Paper you would be a really nice person.
Thank you very much, Stan”**

Within 2 weeks I had increased each of the 4 Routes by an average of 35%. I was the Paper Route King at the ripe old age of 10.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Learn how to do whatever you do better than everyone else is doing it and you'll make more money.

Don't be afraid to appeal to people's generosity.

Always be Prospecting.

When you find something that works well, expand it.

[3] Childhood Hustling – Turning 25 cents into 500 Hundred Dollars

I went to my first Auction with a Friend of mine and really didn't know what it was all about. Towards the end they tried to Auction off a big Cardboard Box and they never opened it and no one knew what is in it so no one would bid on it. The darn thing was about 4 feet by 8 feet and I guess I was fascinated and curious at the same time. Just for the heck of it I walked up to the Auctioneer when the Auction was over and offered him 25 cents for the Box. I don't know if he felt sorry for me or he just didn't want to lug it back to wherever it came from, but he said OK.

We got the Box Home and when we opened it there were about 800 little Blue Light Bulbs and if I remember correctly, they were 15 watts. Unfortunately they were all dirty and some even had some rust on the part that screws in. I called a bunch of neighbor Kids over and we spent the next few hours cleaning them up. I wasn't quite sure what the heck I was going to do with them but I ended up with 800 bright and shinny Blue Light Bulbs. That night when I went to Bed I took one of them with me and screwed it in just to see what it would look like in the dark. Wow, instant Night Light.

The next day I went Door to Door selling these brand new "*Lifetime Guaranteed Night Lights*" for only \$1 each or 2 for \$1.50. I had all of them sold within 2 days and only one person ever asked how to reach me if one of the things ever burned out. I had just turned 25 cents into over \$500 in profit.

LESSONS LEARNED:

You never know where and when an opportunity will present itself.

Use your imagination and then take action.

[4] Childhood Hustling – Selling Bing Cherries and Bartlett Pears

We had a Bing Cherry Tree in our Yard and there were 5 or 6 others in the Neighborhood. Also our next door Neighbor had a Bartlett Pear Tree and I found 3 or 4 more Pear Trees in the immediate area. I asked each Home owner if I could pick their Cherries or Pears, clean up the Yard when we were done and they got to keep one or two buckets full of the Fruit for themselves. Needless to say I recruited the neighbor Kids to climb up in the Tress and pick the Fruit and clean up the yards. Looking back I'm sure glad none of them ever fell out of any of the Trees.

I bought some quart containers for the Cherries and some large bags for the Pears and sold them door-to-door. I would offer everyone a Free Cherry or even a Free Pear when they said "No" to me and then they usually bought from me. Maybe they were just trying to get rid of me however almost everyone who took a free sample of Fruit ended up being a customer. I priced them about one half of what they cost in the Grocery Store and still made a very tidy Profit and always sold out within 2 days. They were a real hit and I could have sold 10 times as many.

By the way, the Pears were a lot heavier than the Cherries plus the Cherries made me a lot more profit. That sucked.

LESSON LEARNED:

Whenever possible, offer a Free Sample to get your Prospect hooked.

[5] Childhood Hustling – The Fastest Western Union Delivery Boy

About the time I started High School I bought a little Cushman Motor Scooter. Although I originally bought it to get back and forth from School which was several Miles away, I quickly discovered I could put it to work making some extra Money. There was an Ad in the Paper for a Western Union Delivery Boy. Yes, they really used to deliver Western Union Telegrams by Hand.

I applied and got the Job although I was supposed to only ride my Bicycle because of their Insurance coverage. Needless to say I would leave the Western Union Office on my Bicycle with my Telegrams to deliver and ride my Bike over to my Motor Scooter which was parked about a block away. I was delivering 2 to 3 times as many Telegrams as any other Kid there and they thought I was the fastest bicycle rider in the City. I was raking in some nice money for several months until they finally figured out what I was doing and fired me.

One nice bonus was that I learned where the more affluent areas of town were which you'll see I put to good use in the next Chapter.

LESSON LEARNED:
Don't cheat.

[6] Childhood Hustling – The Youngest Fuller Brush Man in History

Based on the success I had enjoyed selling Lawn Care, Newspapers, Light Bulbs and Fruit door-to-door, someone suggested I should sell more expensive Products which made a lot of sense. In the same amount of time I could make more money. I looked around and found a fairly successful Fuller Brush Salesman that worked in the area where I lived.

He agreed to give me a little Training which basically consisted of showing me how to knock on the Door and offer the Lady of the House a Free Gift in order to get in the House and go through the Catalog with her. Since he already had the area where I was living, I had to go to neighborhoods about 5 to 10 miles away. That was OK because I had my trusty Scooter and I had discovered where the more affluent parts of the City were from delivering Telegrams.

Although the Free Gift worked OK to get in the Door, I quickly discovered I could play off of my youth. So many Ladies were amazed how young I was and even giggled when I announced that I was their new Fuller Brush Man, that I changed my opening to something like this;

“Hi my name is Stan and you’ve heard of young men working their way through College, right? Well I’m working my way through High School. I sure don’t know much about Selling but my Mom really likes this stuff. Would you at least look through the Catalog real quick?”

You’d be amazed how many would at least start paging through the Catalog. Whenever they stopped on any Page and gave something a second look, I was prepared with something like;

“Wow, my Mom really likes that Broom, my Mom says it will last forever.” or
“That’s our most popular Cream, my Mom says it makes her look a lot younger.”

I was only working about 3 hours in the afternoons and within a couple of weeks I was actually out selling the Old Pro that trained me. It was really a trip to see me delivering this stuff when the Orders arrived the next week. If you can imagine me riding a Scooter and trying to balance a half a dozen Mops and Brooms plus all the other stuff they had bought. I had to hire a neighbor Kid to ride with me to help carry all the stuff so I didn’t wreck my Scooter.

LESSONS LEARNED:

When you are good at Selling, find higher priced Items to Sell.

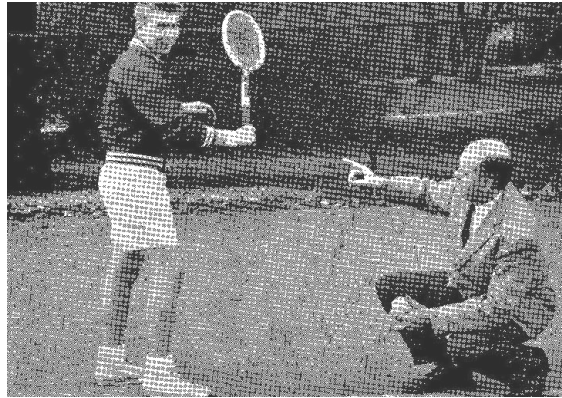
Be willing to adapt to special situations.

Turn any disadvantage into an Advantage.

Use a supposed lack of Sales ability to lower their defense barriers.

[7] Childhood Hustling – Donuts, Plumbing, Bricks and Tropical Fish

During my 3 years of High School I was actually able to schedule my 4 Solid Subjects one right after the other. I had mine set from 8 am until Noon so I had the whole afternoon free, except during Tennis Season when I practiced from 5 to 7 PM, Monday through Friday plus one tournament a week. That left me the afternoons and weekends available to work, which I certainly did, plus all 3 Summers for 3 straight months each.



Making the Tennis Team (me on left)

When I first started delivering the Morning Newspapers, I used to stop by a Donut Shop every morning when I was delivering Papers in that neighborhood and the Owner would always let me in and give me a Free Donut. I used to ask him a lot of questions about how he made Donuts and one day he asked if I wanted to learn how to make them. He was amazed how quickly I learned. He offered me a Job so I would work there making Donuts from 5 AM to 7:30 AM, Monday through Friday, go to Classes for 4 hours from 8 AM till Noon, then sell Fuller Brush stuff in the afternoon and still have my evenings free. He had been a Baker and had owned Donut Shops for 40 years and was a real Master of his Craft. I always paid close attention and asked a lot of questions. He truly enjoyed teaching me and I loved to learn from him. The only downside was that after about the first month, I couldn't eat another Donut for probably 10 years.

During the Summer months a neighbor who owned a Plumbing Company offered to make me an apprentice. I wasn't sure what an apprentice was but I've always been a sucker to learn about anything new. It turned out he was rated as a Master Plumber which meant he was the very best of the best. He was a great Teacher and I was a great Student. He never had a Son and he became almost like a Father figure to me. He agreed to pay me for 40 hours a week and even when we finished early on a Job or he didn't have any work for part of a day, he always paid me a full week's pay. As I recall he also bought my Lunch for me everyday. In those days many of the old Houses still had Lead Pipes and when they sprang a leak the only way to fix the leak was a technique called "Sweating". He taught me how to Sweat Lead Pipe and I believe there were only a hand full of Master Plumbers in the entire State plus one 14 year Kid that could do that.

Since I was working as a Plumber's helper during the week and had my weekends free, I kept my eyes open for more opportunities to earn money. About this time a Drunk moved into an Apartment a few doors down the block and for some odd reason we struck up a friendship. He had a great sense of humor and told some very funny stories. As It turned out he was a Brick Layer however he specialized in Tuck Pointing because

it paid way more money in the same amount of time. Of course, I had already started to like this Formula of doing Less and earning More. Tuck Pointing is basically repairing the concrete between the Bricks on Front Porches and Chimneys. He offered to teach me how to lay Brick on the weekends and I agreed to try it.

When he headed out the first Morning I asked where we would be working and he just smiled and said that we would find out shortly. As it turned out, he never advertised and didn't have a single Job lined up whenever he started each day. He would simply drive up and down streets and he would look out his window and I would look out mine until we saw a Porch or Chimney with some of the Bricks that were loose. He would pull up and park and we would head to the front door together. I honestly learned a lot about selling from him because he would put the fear of God in these people about their Porch falling apart while they were sitting on it or that their Chimney could fall down and cause their House to burn down if they didn't get it fixed immediately. If that "Close" didn't work he would always put his Arm around me and give them the saddest puppy dog face you've ever seen as he said; "My Son and I haven't eaten in 2 days and we really need the work."

Interestingly enough, although he was almost always Drunk he really knew his Craft. He was a phenomenal Teacher and I was a quick and eager Student. Believe it or not one of the most important things I learned is that there is an art to mixing good Mud (concrete). By the second or third Job of the day, he would always get me started and then tell me that he had to go get some supplies. Needless to say he would show up 2 or 3 hours later smelling like a Brewery and of course hadn't bought any supplies. I can't complain because he paid me very, very well and never forgot where I was so he could always pick me up at the end of the Day.

After a few months, evidently some Creditor or the Law must have been after him because we were on a big 3 day Chimney job and when he picked me up the third day, he had his Truck loaded with all of his personal belongings. He explained he had to leave town for awhile but I should finish the Job and keep all of the money. When he dropped me off at the Job he explained to the Owner that she should pay me the full amount at the end of the day and I never saw him again. The \$600 for 3 days work sure was nice plus I ended up with some free Tools.

About the time that weekend Job pooped out a new store opened a few Blocks away that sold Tropical Fish. The Owner was an Ichthyologist which meant he was an expert on the Subject. Since I seemed to search out Experts who I could learn from, I jumped at the chance to work there on weekends when he offered me a Job. Although I was hired to clean Fish Tanks, sweep the Floors and keep the Shelves stocked, I was a sponge and absorbed every single word he said to every Customer about every kind of Fresh and Saltwater Fish.

The second weekend I was working there he had his Grand Opening Event and we were overloaded with potential Customers. Whenever he and his Daughter were busy with a Customer, I would walk up to people and tell them that I was brand new but I would try to help them. The Owner was blown away when he heard me describing every Fresh and Salt Water Fish they might have an interest in, what Fish got along with others and which didn't, how they bred, etc. Then my Sales skills really kicked in when it came time for them to buy a Tank because they would walk out with a Pump, Filter,

Gravel, Decorations, Plants, Food and a Cover with a Light in it. Sunday evening he ended giving me a huge bonus which he called a Commission. I had never heard that word before but I really liked it.

I became intrigued with some of the Fish and picked several of the highest priced ones to start breeding in my Basement. At one point I had 20 Tanks set up and Bred Siamese Fighting Fish, Sea Horses and Fancy Tailed Guppies. Taking care of all of those Fish honestly ended up being way too much work and since I never made any serious profit I stopped my Breeding Business.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Search out Experts and be a sponge.

Making Commissions is Great.

Be willing to give up something that isn't working.

Hobbies usually aren't profitable.

[8] Dancing on TV, Rating Records and being a Disc Jockey

About the time that Tennis Season ended during my Junior Year in High School, American Bandstand became a huge hit on TV. Of course almost every decent sized City with a TV Station started a knock off version and Ft. Wayne was no exception. Our local Program was called "Dance Date" and it quickly became the hottest craze in town. Within a couple of weeks of going on the Air the waiting list to get on the Show grew to over 6 months. I was glued to the TV most afternoons like most Kids watching Dick Clark and I quickly noticed a few things. There were a group of Regulars that were always dressed very sharp, knew all of the latest Dance steps and Smiled a lot to the Cameras.

Needless to say I was prepared for my first appearance on Dance Date. My Black Pants were pressed and were accented by a thin White Belt and my White Buck Shoes. My Pink Shirt was starched and creased, my Hair was in a perfect "D.A." and I had a huge Smile on my face every time the little Red Light lit up on one of the Cameras. I had studied and practiced all of the latest Dance Steps so whenever the Camera came on I always did something extra special which the Camera Guys loved. My best friend had come with me since his Grandmother was doing the driving and he quickly picked up on everything I was doing to become "Camera Friendly". At the end of that first appearance both my friend and I were given "passes" which meant we could come back any day we wanted to and didn't have to be on the Waiting List.

The next day I made it a point to meet the Host and suggested they do a "Rate the Record" just like on American Bandstand. He liked the idea and told me they would be ready to start it the next day and asked my Friend and I if we would be the first 2 to participate. I asked him which 2 or 3 Records he wanted us to Rate and that evening I did any research so I could to learn something about the Artist or the Producer or the Record Label. The next day on the Show my Friend and I blew everyone away with our ability to have an intelligent and interesting conversation about each Record. Needless to say we were asked to be the permanent Record Raters. In looking back, this was probably be first experience at Public Speaking and I really liked being in the Spotlight.

A great benefit of being on TV everyday was the fact that my popularity went through the Roof. I was getting phone calls almost every day from every good looking Girl in School who wanted to be my Date on the TV Show. Life was Good.

After several weeks I got a phone call from a Couple who wanted to start a Teen Night Club. They had seen my Buddy and I on TV and wanted us to be the Disc Jockeys. They did a great job of remodeling a Building, bought a nice Sound System and gave me money to buy all of the Records we needed. If I remember correctly they never did a real good Job of promoting it and they weren't making very much money selling Cokes for a dollar each. I begged them to advertise on the Dance Date TV Show since it would have been a natural tie in however they never did. Although it only stayed open a few months, it was my next experience in "Show Business". I was on the Dance Date TV Show as many as 5 afternoons each week and performing in front of a crowd as a Disc Jockey 4 nights a week.

When they closed the Teen Night Club they couldn't pay me for the last week of work so they let me keep all of the Records. My Friend and I immediately started a Disc Jockey Service called the "Knights of Wax". For you younger folks, 45 rpm Records were called A Best Seller – Revised 7/12/2013

“Wax” back then. My step-dad helped us put together a Turntable, Amplifier and Speakers and we ended up being booked several nights a week at School Dances and Private Parties which paid very well.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Learn about the latest Craze and Trends.

A Smile can make the difference.

Learn to tell Stories to be interesting.

Keep parlaying your Success.

[9] Quitting High School to see the World

Four days after the start of my Senior Year, I quit High School and joined the Army. I honestly felt like I wasn't learning anything in School that was going to prepare me for Life, especially since I was already making more money than all of my friends combined. I shipped out to Ft. Leonard Wood, MO for my first 16 weeks which consisted of 8 weeks of Basic Training and then 8 more weeks of Specialized Training. Out of all of the choices for my Specialized Training, the only thing I knew at least something about was Heating and Air Conditioning because of my experience in Plumbing, so that's what I chose.

When I finished my 8 weeks of Basic Training I started my Specialized Training. Based on my skill and knowledge about Plumbing, plus considering the idiots who were in my Class, I really stood out to the Trainers. We immediately became friends and my second week they pulled me out of Class and actually made me an Instructor for the remaining 7 weeks. That was incredible since you had to be at least a Buck Sergeant (an E-5 with 3 stripes) to be in that position. Although I couldn't be promoted yet, they had Stripes sewn on all of my Uniforms. The phenomenal benefit was that I could now go to the NCO (Non Commissioned Officers) Clubs on Base instead of the EM (Enlisted Men's Clubs). At 18 years of age I was the youngest "Sergeant" in the entire Army and it was Party Time.

When it came time to graduate my Specialized Training they did everything they could to keep me as an Instructor however my Orders had already come through to ship out to Korea. At that time there was a lot of conflict in Korea plus I had gotten Married just before I joined the Army and I wouldn't be able to have her join me in Korea. This was a real challenge and I started asking everyone I could who they knew that could pull some strings. Every time I was told "No" I would ask who else they knew or who they worked for. After 2 days of non-stop hustling, I found a Clerk that for the right price could change almost anyone's Orders. After some knock down drag out negotiating, he had my Orders changed and I was reassigned to the US Army Band so I could stay at Ft. Leonard Wood.

It's a long story however I found out that this Clerk owed a favor to one of the Sergeants in the Army Band that I had met at the EM Club. This Sergeant had a 3 piece Rock Band that played behind the Strippers at a Night Club just a few Miles from the Front Gate in Rollo, Missouri. As it turned out the Sergeant had just lost his Piano Player and I could play just enough to be dangerous. Keep in mind that Rock n' Roll in the 50's was primarily 3 Chords and the Slow Songs were only 4 Chords, so it wasn't that difficult to learn a bunch of Songs almost overnight.

I reported to the Band Commander with my new Orders and he just about crapped his pants when he found out he now had a Rock n' Roll Piano Player in the US Army Band. The Sergeant talked him into keeping me and they made me the Librarian which meant all I did was keep track of all of the Sheet Music, etc. The real benefit was for the next 9 months our 3 piece Band played 4 nights a week at the Strip Clubs in the evenings and I made more money each week than my buddies made from the Army in a whole month. In addition I met many wonderful young ladies.

LESSON LEARNED:

There is always a way to make something exciting happen if you are persistent.

[10] We made the Troop Ship Rock

When I finally did ship out after a year in MO, it was to Germany. We got there on a Troop Ship which took 8 to 10 days to cross the Atlantic. The first few hours on the Ship were pure Hell since they had us scrubbing down the Decks on our hands and knees. I couldn't see myself doing that for 8 to 10 days so I started asking questions.

As it turned out, there was a Special Services Department on board that was responsible for entertaining the Wives and Families of some of the Officers. They were on a separate Deck that was darn near like a Cruise Ship. I found out they had a Piano on the ship and a few Instruments. I tracked down the person in charge of Special Services and told him this was his lucky day because I was going to make him look like a hero. He asked how I was going to do that and I told him that I was part of a Rock Band and we just all happened to ship out together for Germany. He agreed to try out my Band that afternoon from 3 to 5 PM. Of course I didn't have a Band . . . yet.

I started talking to every Soldier I could find that looked like they might be a Musician and ended up finding a Drummer and a Guitar Player. I explained to them that we were supposed to have been together for 6 months and we got our stories straight. Then we quickly wrote down the Songs we all knew, what Key they were in and who could do the Lead and Background Vocals on each Song. We showed up at 3 o'clock and we were an instant Hit. As it turned out, we played everyday from 11 AM till 2 PM and again from 3 to 5 PM for the Officer's Wives and Kids. We got to sleep in, never had to scrub another Deck and got to eat the real good food in the "better" Mess Hall. There were some other great side benefits however I'll let your imagination figure those out for now.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Ask questions and probe until you find out what people need.

Don't be afraid to commit to being able to do something if you believe in yourself and your ability to pull it off and Walk the Talk.

[11] Making a Fortune on the German Economy

When I arrived in Germany I had already changed my Designation to a Clerk Specialist. I did that ahead of time because I had found out I was going to be in a Construction Battalion and that meant they spent a lot of time Camping out in the Woods and building Bridges and stuff like that. I wanted my Wife to join me in Germany and it wouldn't be much fun if she was there and I was out in the field camping out playing soldier. I became the Mail Clerk for a few weeks until the existing Company Clerk shipped out and then I was assigned his Job.

The moment I was assigned the position of Company Clerk some amazing things started to happen. The Company Commander was loaning money to his Troops for the old "2 for 1". You borrowed a dollar and paid back two. Since it was evident that he was a businessman and was greedy, after we got to know each other fairly well, I hit him up with an idea. I explained that we had 600 soldiers in our Company and only about 250 of them Smoked. Everyone that Smoked had a Ration Card which allowed them to buy 1 Carton a week for each Month of the year. At that time a Carton at the PX was about \$1.50 and amazingly enough, they could be sold in the German marketplace for 20 Marks which was about \$5 at that time. That would be a profit of \$3.50 per Carton.

We started small by assigning Ration Cards to 50 guys who didn't Smoke and they never even knew they had a Card in their name. My CO knew someone at the PX who would ring up the extra Cartons one at a time against the fake Ration Cards and then give them to us in bulk. Do the Math and your jaw will drop. 50 Ration Cards meant 200 Cartons a month times \$3.50 profit per Carton. We paid the guy at the PX .50 cents a Carton for his part and my CO and I split the remaining \$3.00 per Carton, or \$300 each per month. Please appreciate that my monthly Army pay at that time was around \$90 so I was in Hog Heaven.

The next month we added 50 more Cards and kept going until we had almost 600 Ration Cards issued for only 250 Smokers. I hope you get the Picture. 300 extra Ration Cards equals 1,200 Cartons a month, times \$3.00 profit per Carton totals \$1,800 a month in his pocket and \$1,800 a month in mine.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Do your research ahead of time.

If you are always looking for opportunities, they will appear in abundance.

It's good to be close to the Boss.

[12] Rocking the Night Away

Although I had everything going for me, I was starting to miss the Music part of my Life. I checked around and auditioned a whole bunch of good musicians. We ended up with me on Piano, plus a Guitar player, Bassist and Drummer. We actually did sound great but there were several other very good sounding Groups on Base. I went and saw every other Band and although they all sounded good, they didn't look that great and they sure weren't Entertainers. Based on what I learned from my research, I had my Band quickly develop a lot of Dance Steps, got matching Outfits and added a Front Man. We worked on our MC skills and really went in to each Club with the Attitude that we were there to Entertain and not just sound good.

Every single time we Auditioned at the EM Clubs, NCO Clubs and Officer's Clubs, we got booked. I always asked each Club Manager what other Managers they knew at the other Bases and asked if they would refer us. Within a few weeks we were booked 7 One Nighters every week with Saturday and Sunday Matinees at several Bases in the area. Although the pay wasn't that great, I started pulling down another \$150 to \$250 per week on top of the \$450 a week I was making from selling the Cigarettes on the Black Market.

After a few months someone told me about the German Rock Bands that were playing in downtown Stuttgart which was a major City about 20 miles way. My Band played on the different Bases from 7 to 10 PM and then we had to drive back to our Base because my Guys needed to be in their Bunks by Midnight. Since I was Married and living off-base, one night I decided to head to downtown Stuttgart. I found the biggest and best Clubs and quickly introduced myself to a couple of the best Bands. They asked me to sit in for a few numbers and I blew the Crowd away. By this time I was playing almost like Jerry Lee Lewis and standing up when I played the Piano and even stood on a Chair and played. Although many of the German Bands learned to sing American Rock in English, they still sounded like a German trying to sing in English with an accent. Here I was, a 19 year old White Kid, playing Piano like a man possessed and making American Rock sound like it was supposed to sound. The Bands Loved me, the Crowds Loved me and the Women Loved me, but those are other great Stories.

The bottom line was that the German Rock Bands played until 3 or 4 AM in the morning and then the parties started. Many Mornings I barely made it back to Base by my 7 AM start time. I was certainly burning the Candle at both ends and soon turned to Drugs. I was taking Uppers to stay awake during the day and evenings and when I did come straight back to Base at 5 or 6 AM I would pop some Downers and lay my head down on my Desk and try to get 1 or 2 hours of sleep.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Always ask for Referrals.

Learn when it's time to slow down and appreciate what you have rather than pushing yourself until your World falls apart.

[13] I Paid the Ultimate Price – My Freedom

About the time I was crashing and burning and doing Drugs, my CO was promoted and left our Battalion. His replacement was a rifted down Major which meant he had been busted from Major down to Captain and was pissed at the World. We didn't hit it off at all and he very quickly made me pull back all of the extra Ration Cards and busted me from E-3 back down to E-2. I was still making a bunch of money playing in my Band and living off-base which meant I could also sit in with the German Rock Bands, so I decided to ride out my remaining few months in the Army.

The new CO started using a Company Jeep to have his Wife driven to get her Hair done and buy groceries plus he took a TV and a Pool Table out of our Company Day (Recreation) Room and moved them to his Home off-base. He told me to keep a separate set of Books so whenever we had an IG (Inspector General) Inspection, nothing would appear to be missing. A couple of weeks later we indeed did have an IG Inspection. You guessed it. Cocky little me thought I would get back at my CO and I showed the Inspectors the real set of Books in hopes that the CO would be busted and transferred.

Unfortunately for me, all the CO got was his hand slapped. The next day which was a Friday, he called me into his Office and said he was going to hang me the first chance he got. In fact, he told me that I had to stand Inspection at 5 PM that day. Just so you know, everyone that lives in the Barracks usually had an Inspection of their living area at 5 PM on Fridays before they got their weekend passes. Anyone living off-base was exempt from those inspections plus usually the Company Clerk was excused as an extra privilege. When I made him aware that I didn't live on base so there was nothing to Inspect, he told me to be there or else.

Well, dumb me skipped the Inspection and headed out with my Band to play at a neighboring Base. About 9 PM that evening the MPs showed up at that Club and arrested me, took me back to my Base and locked me in the Stockade. The next morning my CO came by to let me out but told me that I was restricted to Base for the entire rest of the weekend. Again, stupid me took off to play with my Band at another Base that afternoon and the MPs came and got me and arrested me a second time. I spent the rest of Saturday and Sunday in the Stockade and when Monday morning rolled around, instead of getting out, I got another shock. I was presented the paperwork for a Special Court Martial with 19 counts of Insubordination, Disobeying Orders and being AWOL to name a few of the charges.

Wow, reality just set in. To make a long story short, this was not a General Court Marshall. Since it was a "Special Court Marshall" I was now facing Life behind Bars at Dachau Prison, which is where the Army sends all the Murders, Rapists and bad people from all over Europe. My former CO (bless his heart) was kind enough to come back to Base and act as my Defense Attorney. I went before 8 to 10 Colonels and Generals who quite frankly were ready to throw the Book at me. My former CO did a masterful job of getting everything thrown out however there was some bartering needed. The Tribunal agreed to dismiss 18 out of the 19 charges, change it to a General Discharge instead of a Dishonorable Discharge, BUT I had to serve 90 days. Hey I was due to go back to the States in about 2 months anyway, so what was an extra Month, Right?

Wrong. When I arrived at the Prison the reality of being sentenced to 3 months at Hard Labor sank in immediately. The first day we started busting Concrete with a Sledge Hammer and I was told I would be doing that 10 hours a day, 6 days a week, in the Hot Sun for the next 90 days. Well hell, what now? They certainly didn't have a Band there however I did notice a bunch of Prisoners wearing a White Arm Band. I was told that these were called Trustees and after you were in there for 60 days and behaved yourself, you became a Trustee and got easier Jobs. I don't know what you know about Prisons, however there is a Chain of Command within the Inmate population that is as strong if not more powerful than the Officers running the Prison. No, they can't get you out, but they can get almost anything in. Over the next few months I saw Whisky, Drugs and even Women coming into that Prison. Anyway, back to my Story.

That first evening I started asking questions on who was in charge within the Population. As a 20 year old white Boy I had already been told that I was going to get all of my teeth kicked out that night and become someone's Bitch, which didn't appeal to me at all. Hell, it scared me to death.

I quickly talked my way through the Pecking Order and was ushered into a Cell of a Brother who was a Giant. He was basically the top dog of all of the Prisoners. I noticed he had a Stereo system and some Record Albums from Groups that I knew something about. I was able to quickly start developing some rapport and we struck up a fairly cordial conversation. He was very quick on his feet and I had been clean and sober for about 2 weeks so I kept up with him mentally. He liked how quick I thought on my feet and asked what he could do for me. I explained that I didn't want to bust concrete for 90 days and also that I didn't want to become someone's lover. He confirmed that only Trustees got the choice jobs and said there was only one opening for a Trustee position and that I would really owe him if he could pull this off. I mean come on, if he could get me a Trustee status my second day there and I got to keep all my teeth and I would be the only one in my own pants, I was ready to promise almost anything. He didn't tell me what he had planned but we shook on it and he told his Buddies to pass the word that I was Off Limits. I actually did get a great night's sleep not worrying about waking up to a Bunk Buddy in the middle of the night.

The next morning I felt great because I still had all of my teeth. During Roll Call I was called out of formation and told that the Warden wanted to see me. As I passed by my new Friend he gave me a wink. I was taken to the Warden's Office in Hand Cuffs and was told to sit in front of his Desk. When the Warden came in he was all Business and certainly didn't have any personality. He was looking down at some Files while he explained that they had 600 Inmates and that they were losing their Barber and he understood I was a Professional Barber. As he said that he looked up and I don't know who was more in shock, him or I. He asked how I could be a Barber when I was only 20 and I explained that my Dad had a Barber Shop back in Indiana and that I had actually been cutting Hair for over 8 years. He then explained that it was highly unusual that I would even be considered for the Job since it was a Trustee position. I reassured him that I wouldn't disappoint him and almost fell on the floor when he said; "OK, let's see how good you are."

We went down to the Barber Shop and as luck would have it, strapped in the Chair was an Inmate who had just arrived that morning. He evidently had been AWOL for over a year before being caught and had shoulder length Hair. They undid my hand cuffs and I greeted the new Inmate;

“Welcome to Dachau, how would you like to have your Hair done today?”

The Inmate and the Warden and the Guards were all looking at me like I was the stupidest person on the Planet. The Inmate, still looking dumbfounded, said that he would like a little off of the sides but to keep the back long. I told him that wouldn't be a problem as I took the electric trimmer and started at his neck and ran a straight line all the way to his forehead. The inmate started to scream and the Warden started laughing hysterically. He told me I had the Job as he left the Room. Later the Guards told me that was the first time they had ever seen him laugh in 3 years. Needless to say, every new Inmate gets a Burr Cut their first day in Prison. I knew that and just decided to make it entertaining.

After cutting an average of 40 to 50 Heads of Hair a day, within a few days I actually got really good. I was doing Razor Parts on the Brothers and then even started cutting the Guards Hair. That's where the Favors start kicking in. I was told which Guards to work with that would cooperate and I would give them extra Letters to slip out plus Orders for Booze or Drugs or Food or even Hookers for them to bring in. Needless to say I received all kinds of extra benefits from not only being a Trustee, but the fact that I was on the good side of the King of the Mountain and the Warden and the Guards. No one ever bothered me and my 90 days actually flew by fairly quickly.

When it was time to be released, I was surprised to see my First Kick (the Company Master Sergeant) waiting to pick me up in a Jeep. He explained that the Base CO had left instructions that I should be picked up in shackles and locked in the Company Stockade for 3 days until it was time for me to board the Boat to go Home. My First Kick and I had been real close and he knew I had been railroaded or at least almost dared to cross the line. He said that since the CO was out of town for the weekend, he had arranged for a 3 day pass for me plus some of my friends had chipped together a few bucks for me to hit Stuttgart one last time. It was an incredible weekend and as promised, I made it back to Base on time to ship out on Monday.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Don't Buck the System when there isn't a chance you will Win.

There is always a Chain of Command or Pecking Order you can benefit from.

Don't be afraid of trying something new if you are confident on your abilities.

Keep your Friends Close and your Enemies even Closer.

[14] We also Rocked the Boat on the Way Home

On the Boat on the way to Germany about 2 years previously, I had asked for and received a glowing Letter of Reference from the Director of Special Services. He praised me and my Band for our ability to entertain the Kids, the Families and even the Officers and their Wives with a wide variety of Songs. As soon as I arrived on the Boat going back to the States I located the Special Services Officer, showed him the Letter and was immediately given the opportunity to form a Band and entertain the Wives and Families. We were such a Hit that they also had us play a couple of evenings in the Mess Hall for all of the Troops.

I didn't go into this much detail in the earlier Chapter, however when I put the Band together on the Boat going over, that first afternoon I had a flyer quickly printed up that we handed out to everyone in the Audience. It asked them to list their favorite 10 Songs that a 3 piece Band might be able to play for them. After we passed the Audition, my Band spent that whole first evening going through the Lists and learning as many of the Songs as we could before the next day. Since we had just dramatically expanded our repertoire, we also started playing "Guess this Tune", some Polkas, a few Country favorites, "Musical Chairs" with the young Kids plus celebrated Birthdays and Anniversaries. In other words, we played exactly what they wanted to hear and not necessarily what we wanted to play. We basically had unlimited time to practice so we could 'kick out the jams', "get down" and "get funky", etc. on our own time.

LESSON LEARNED:

Plan ahead.

Get Letters of Reference whenever possible.

Conduct Surveys to find out what your Prospects want.

[15] After the Army

When I arrived back home to Indiana I was completely torn apart on what to do. Needless to say my Marriage had suffered because of my infidelity plus my confinement in Prison. In addition, I had actually signed a Contract to head back to Germany in 30 days and play with one of the most popular German Rock Bands. They even had a Hit Record out and were going to start a Concert Tour all over Europe instead of playing 6 nights a week in the Bars. After some discussion with my Wife and her Family, they convinced me to stay, get a "straight job" and try and make our Marriage work.

I immediately called the Plumber I had worked for in High School and he hired me back in a Heartbeat. I did enjoy working with him and we even talked about me getting a Plumber's License, getting a second Truck just for me and eventually taking over his Business in 3 to 5 years. Unfortunately, I wasn't making enough money and we were barely getting by in our one Bedroom Apartment with our first Child. I remember one day working on a smelly and dirty Septic System and thinking to myself that I should have been in Europe on a Concert Stage playing Rock Music and surrounded by screaming Young Ladies. About that time a Hose broke and I got covered in Crap which really brought me back to reality.

About this time the old Car I was driving also gave out. Although my Boss was nice enough to pick me up and drop me off everyday at Home, after a couple of more weeks I decided it sucked not having a Car and falling further behind on our Bills. I saw a Recruiting Ad in the Paper for Car Salespeople and it said that you get a Demo. I wasn't quite sure what that meant however when I called for an Interview I found out I would be furnished a New Car as part of the compensation. I don't remember what Brand of Car it was however I scheduled the Interview for the next day. I immediately borrowed a friend's Car and spent the rest of the day going around to other Dealerships pretending like I was a Prospect. I wanted to find out how their Salespeople greeted me, what questions they asked, how they made their Presentations and how they tried to make a Sale. I also wanted to pick up some of their "Insider Buzz Words". I got quite an education in just one afternoon.

Interestingly enough, later that same day I drove by a Volkswagen Dealership and was curious because I had owned a VW while in Europe. A Bell went off and I thought that I would probably have more success trying to sell a Brand that I was familiar with, so instead of pretending that I was a Prospect, I went inside and asked if they were hiring. The Manager told me I could sign up to be on the waiting list which didn't really appeal to me. As I was looking around I noticed a very distinguished Gentleman who I was told was the Owner. I quickly struck up a conversation with him and explained that I had been in Germany for 2 years and had owned and loved the VW Bugs as they were called. I also explained that I had been training myself in Sales Skills (all day, right) and that since I was young and ambitious I could and would work any hours he needed. I went so far as to volunteer to start as a Detail Person (getting the Cars ready to deliver) and only sell when they needed me for overflow. Even though they weren't Hiring, I left there with a Job and a Brand New Car.

I quickly became their Number 1 or 2 Salesperson out of 10 guys because I learned to sell myself and my personality. Back then a new Bug sold for about \$1,695 and there was NO discount for Cash and since they didn't have the Mark Up like other New Cars they couldn't inflate the value of the Trade Ins. The American Consumer wasn't really A Best Seller – Revised 7/12/2013

ready for that and thought we were trying to steal their Trade In. In addition, you only made a \$20 Commission on a new Bug, \$50 on a Karman Ghia and \$120 on a Van or Bus as they were called. You made another \$5 if you sold a Radio which was the only option offered. Since the Vans paid so much more, I decided that is what I would specialize in.

While all of the other Salespeople would stand around waiting for a "Front" which was their next "Mooch" (Prospect), I would get on the Phone and started calling every Business in the Yellow Pages. I would find out how many Trucks or Vans they had in their Fleet, what Brands they used, how often they Traded and who the Decision Maker was. I then researched the other Brands to find out what their Gas Mileage was and any particular problems they had been experiencing and their cost of Service, etc. Armed with this new knowledge I started calling back to get an Appointment with the Decision Makers. Unfortunately they all wanted me to mail my Card and Brochure and they wanted to "call me" when it was time to start looking to Trade.

I decided to become pro-active and started driving around to the bigger Prospects (based on my earlier Phone Surveys) and would "drop in" just to say Hello to the Decision Maker since I was "in the neighborhood". Once the Greeting was over I would invite them out to the Parking Lot for a quick minute. There I had a beautiful new VW Van for them to see. Quite often I could even get them to Drive it around the Block. I left them with a VW Brochure PLUS I had made up a little Flyer that compared their existing Brand's performance and mileage and repairs and service costs, etc. with the VW. I had blanks for them to fill in based on the Miles they drove each of their Vans or Trucks and what it cost them for Gas and Service, etc.. I would always follow up several times by Phone and within a couple of Months I was selling almost as many Vans for the Dealership as they were selling Bugs. In looking back, this was my first experience in Telemarketing.

After every Sale I would follow up with each Client for Referrals, a glowing Letter of Reference plus I would also stop by and take a Picture of their New WV Van as soon as they got it Lettered with their Logo or Company information. I had those Photos made into 8x10's and put together a neat little Scrap Book that I would start carrying around on my Surprises Visits to Prospects. That worked wonders when they could actually see all of the other Companies with their New VV Vans and read the collection of Reference Letters.

Unfortunately it gets very cold in the Winter in Indiana and quite frankly the Heaters in the VW Vans SUCKED. Back then all you got was some Warm Air from the Engine and it took forever for the Windows to defrost and for the Van to warm up to just above Freezing. I actually ended up with a bunch of unhappy Customers until we worked out a solution with a portable forced air Heater to add to their Trucks. Thankfully the Dealership and VW of America ate the extra Costs.

Since I couldn't really use my existing Customer Base for Referrals and References any longer, I decided to switch to the Used Car Department. The Manager and I had become Party Buddies and he had been trying to get me to switch for several months. I still took a Picture of every Customer when they took Delivery of their Used Car which I had enlarged and used in my Happy Customer Scrap Book. Unfortunately I couldn't get on the phone and Prospect for people who might need a Used Car so I started asking for Referrals. One person said he would consider being a "Bird Dog" and asked what

would I would be willing to pay him. I had never heard that term before so I asked him what he wanted. He said everyone else in the Car Business paid him \$20 so I said I would pay him \$50.

Some of the other Guys around town that used Bird Dogs were indeed only paying \$10 or \$20 if they sold a Referral from them. I offered \$50 on the 1st Sale, \$100 on the 2nd and \$150 on the 3rd Sale and even had Business Cards printed up with the Bonuses listed on the back of the Card. That caused a lot of attention and the word spread quickly. I ended up with a lot of people referring potential Prospects to me that had never even bought a Car from me. I ended up setting all kinds of Sales records and actually very few people ever got to the 3rd Level which was about what I was making on each Sale.

Since I was the Number One Salesperson, I could always have my choice of driving any Car on the Lot, which I did through the week. However on Fridays I always took a Van Home because you guessed it, I started another Band playing on the weekends.

LESSONS LEARNED:

How to drive a New Car for Free.

Brain Pick your Competition.

If there isn't a Job available, don't be afraid to Create one.

Don't be afraid to be Pro-Active and make something happen.

Have a Photo Album, etc. or Happy Customers.

Go where the Money Is.

If possible, use Bird Dogs and pay them well.

[16] Rock n' Roll is in the Blood

Although I was making great money selling Cars, the Music Bug hit me again and I formed a Rock Band to start playing on the weekends around the area. I quickly discovered that the local Talent Agencies didn't want to Book a New Band without a track record or reputation. In addition the bigger money was to be made playing in the weekend Clubs over in Ohio which was an hour or so drive away. In Ohio you could Drink at 18 instead of 21 in Indiana. This meant they got their own residents plus a bunch of Kids who would drive over from Indiana with fake IDs. Since I couldn't get a Booking Agent to give us any Jobs I started calling the Clubs myself. In retrospect, this was my first experience at Booking Bands which would later serve me very well.

Since I knew that I would be running into the same challenge with the Club Owners not wanting to Book a Band they had never heard of, I used a skill I learned in Car Sales which is to try to overcome an Objection before it occurs. At the time there was an extremely popular TV Show called the "Invaders" so I simply renamed my Band the "Invaders". When I called the Club Owners I would say something like;

"I have a kick butt 4 piece Band called the Invaders and we would like to play at your Club. You've probably heard a lot of talk about our Name, right?"

Even I was amazed at how well that worked and within a few days my Band was Booked solid every weekend for months in advance. Of course we used the same technique of asking the Kids what Songs they wanted to hear instead of playing the Music that we necessarily wanted to play. We also bought Matching Outfits and my MC ability by that time was second to none. Virtually every Bar that we played at wanted us back and I was able to usually get at least 50% more money on our repeat engagements.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Use a Famous Name or variation when possible for familiarity.

Please your Customers instead of doing something the way you want to.

Learn to overcome Objections before they come up.

[17] Collections and Repossessions

While I was selling Used Cars I had to get very creative with Financing. If I had a Prospect that was “upside down”, which meant they owed more on their Car than what it was worth Wholesale, many times we had to “Double Dip” and even “Triple Dip” them, which meant getting them a second and even third Signature or Small Loan just to get enough cash to get the Deal done.

I became a close friend with the Manager of one of the Small Loan Companies I used a lot and I became fascinated with his stories. It turns out he was doing a bunch of Loans to Hookers (prostitutes) who of course didn't have a real Job. He had an owner of a Dry Cleaning Store that would fake or vouch for their Employment so they could qualify on the Books for a Loan. Then he would go around and “collect” once a week and sometimes he got Money and sometimes he took it out in “Services” rendered.

When I asked him how in the World he could afford the Loan Payments to make up for all of the “Services” he was getting, he explained that all he did was make a small Interest only Payment on their Loan or Extended their Loan Agreement by another Month. The bottom line was this Guy was having more Sex with more Woman than probably any other Guy in town and was getting it for Pennies on the Dollar.

In addition, I found out he had a phenomenal side Business by repossessing Cars. He had a small Used Car Lot and would sell most of the Cars he repossessed at Retail instead of Wholesaling them at the Auction or to a Dealer like most Loan Companies or Banks do. Then when he sold the Car at Retail he would show on the Books that the Loan Company sold it to his Used Car Dealership at Wholesale and he kept all of the Profit.

He convinced me to come to work for him because I could meet a lot of “Ladies” plus make very large commissions from selling his Repos. The down side was that several nights a week we were out after Midnight repossessing Cars. If the truth be known, it was probably more like stealing then repossessing since some of the Vehicles were actually chained to a Tree or locked in a Garage. We got chased many times and I even got shot at once, which is when I decided on a Career Adjustment. I honestly never made as much Money with him as I did when I sold Cars for the Dealership however I was meeting a bunch of Ladies and certainly having an adventurous time.

LESSONS LEARNED:

**If you're only having Fun at your Job but not making enough Money, move on.
When you get Shot at it's time for a Career move.**

[18] Hitting the Road as a Musician

All during the time I was selling Cars and working for the Loan Company, my Band was playing on the weekends at Clubs within about a 60 mile radius of town. Looking back I'm not exactly sure why, however I decided I wanted to go on the Road and play Music professionally. That's a fancy way of saying I wanted to go play in Bars 6 nights a week and try to live on \$300 to \$400 a week when I had been making 3 to 5 times that much selling Cars. We replaced the Guitar player who didn't want to travel, had some Promotional Pictures shot, called up a Booking Agent and hit the Road.



My first Band on the Road

(Left: On the left – Right: In the Back - with the bleached hair)

I won't bore you with all of the trials and errors (or the juicy details) but I stayed out there for 2 years and played in about 8 to 10 States primarily in the Midwest. The first few months we were starving to death and living in Flea Bag Hotels or even sleeping in our Cars and it just wasn't working financially. By talking to Club Owners and the Booking Agents I found out that the highest paid Bands not only had matching outfits, but most of them had a Horn Section and actually put on a Show. They were as much Entertainers as they were Musicians.

We kept improving and eventually we developed into a 5 piece Rock/Show Band where everyone doubled on Horns so many of our Songs sounded like an 8 or 9 piece Band with a Horn Section. Yes the Drummer could actually play Drums with one hand and a Valve Trombone or Trumpet with the other, the Base Player could play Base with one hand and Trumpet or Valve Trombone with the other, the Guitar Player also doubled on Sax, I played Organ with one hand and doubled on Sax or Trumpet with the other and

our Horn man played Trumpet, Tenor and Alto Sax and Flute. I used the old idea from the Troop Ship and we passed around a Flyer to everyone in every Bar the first night we were there asking them to list their 10 Favorite Songs. Then over the next few days we would try to learn as many of those as we could. We did Funk and R & B and eventually added a pretty fancy Light Show. We also ended up with about 15 different matching changes of Outfits and on the Weekend nights we actually changed into a different outfit for each of our 4 or 5 Sets.

During the day I did a lot of research about the Songs we learned and played and became a phenomenal MC because I would tell the Audience a brief story about many of the Songs or the Artists. I was also in charge of calling our Sets (the list of Songs to play each Set) and rather than plan our Set Lists ahead of time like most Groups do, I became real good at watching the Audience and calling the best combination of Songs to fit the mood of the moment. My background as a Disc Jockey also helped. We added some Comedy and some incredible Medleys of Songs by a certain Artist or from a Label like Mo Town or Stax Records and had arrangements that blew people away. We also had dance steps just as good as the Temptations and we Kicked Butt. Back then if something was really great you would say it was a "Gas" and we changed the name of our Group to the "Gas Company". We changed a few members of the Band and within a year we were making twice as much as any other Group playing the same circuit of Clubs.



My last Rock/Show Band on the Road.
(I'm the one on the Organ)

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Don't chase a Dream if it's not Financially feasible.**
- Find out what your Customers want and give it to them.**
- Be the Best at whatever you do for a Living.**

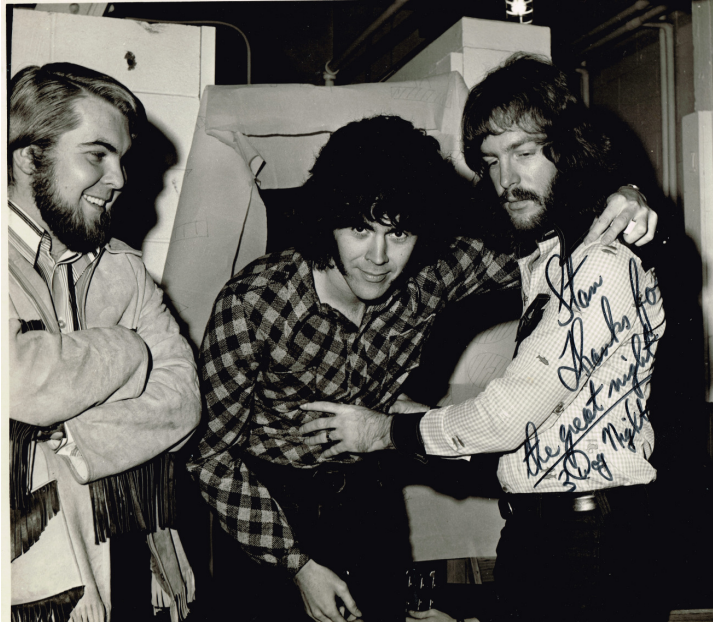
[19] Becoming a Talent Agent

After 2 years I finally got tired of the Road and decided to become a Talent Agent to still stay close to the Music Industry. Since my Wife at the time was still in Ft. Wayne the closest Agency where I could find a Job was in Indianapolis. I would work there 5 days a week and drive Home for the Weekends. The Owner was very experienced in running an Agency and I learned a lot from him in that regard. Unfortunately he specialized in One Night Party Bands for High Schools and Colleges and my expertise was 5 and 6 night a Week Club Bands. The bottom line was I didn't have much Talent to work with so I started calling around to other Agencies to see if they had any Bar Bands that needed work.

As it turned out I found a very similar Agency in Columbus Ohio that also featured primarily One Night Groups. They also has 3 excellent Bar Bands that they were having a real challenge keeping Booked. I jumped on all 3 and within about a week had them all Booked 3 months in advance. The Owner of the Ohio Agency was so impressed that he drove over to meet me personally and made me an offer I couldn't refuse. He paid to move me and my Wife to Columbus, furnished me with a Brand new Luxury Car, co-signed on a Lease for an Apartment in an exclusive Gated Complex, gave me a great Salary and an even better Commission arrangement.

I said my goodbyes to Nap Town and became a Buckeye. We quickly built my Bar Band Department and within a few months we were Grossing way more than their One Nighter Division. I also got to hire and Train a couple of other Talent Agents and negotiated a small override from their Production. As a side note, one of the Guys I Trained became a big time Talent Manager in Nashville until passing away several years ago and another in still a top Movie and Commercial Talent Agent in California.

Several of my Bands were so good that they got to "open" for some big name Groups like Three Dog Night during their Midwest Concert Tours. Although we got great exposure associating with these top Stars, the partying was total insanity. The Drugs were in abundance we all got stoned every night beyond belief. As a side note I highly recommend the 2 Books written by Chuck Negron one of the 3 original Lead Singers for 3DN. He became a \$20,000 a week Heroin Addict and eventually lost everything. I'm excited to share that he has completely rebuilt his Life and I'm proud to call him a friend.



Getting Stoned with Three Dog Night
(Me, Danny Hutton and Cory Wells from 3DN)

LESSONS LEARNED:

When you are excellent at what you do, others will pay you more to work for them.

Hire and Train other Salespeople and make an override on their efforts.

[20] Becoming a Manager and Record Producer

I had made a few contacts in the Record Industry by now plus I had a couple of very talented Bands. I started going to Memphis about once a month with a different Band and cutting Demos of them in a Recording Studio. I would then mail out those Demos to dozens of Record Labels trying to get some interest. Even if they didn't get an actual Record Deal we would still produce 45's Records (No Cassettes back then) and the Band would sell them from the Stage for extra Income for them and yours truly. BTW, I stole this idea of selling Merchandise from touring Big Name Acts and I don't believe it had ever been done by local Bar Bands before this.

I had developed a friendship with a neat guy by the name of B.B. Cuningham Jr. several years earlier when I was playing on the Road in my Band. We were playing in Memphis, Tennessee and got done at 1 AM. I found out the Clubs across the river in West Memphis Arkansas stayed open until 4 AM so we drove over the first night we were in town. B.B. was playing a Bar Gig in a Group called the "Daytonas" right after they had lost Ronnie, their Lead Singer. They had a Hit Record a few years earlier called "Little GTO" as Ronnie and the Daytonas. We had a lot of fun together and we would go over every Morning and sit in with their Group and Jam. B.B. and I struck up a friendship that ended up lasting over 40 years. Unfortunately he passed away in 2012 and is and will always will be missed.

As a side note, B.B. and I stayed in touch and about a year later they had renamed themselves the "Hombres" and had a Top 10 Hit with "Let It All Hang Out". Now listen to this as an example of friendship. Several times while the Hombres were on the Road doing Concerts for \$5,000 to \$10,000 a night, they would fly on their Chartered Plane into the town where my Bar Band was playing and sit in and Jam with us. That sure made me look like a Hero to the Bar Owners and all the Ladies. I should also mention that B.B.'s brother was an original member of the "Box Tops" who had several Hit Records including "The Letter". Up until 2012 B.B. was still playing and appearing around the World with the "Killer", Jerry Lee Lewis.



B.B. Cunningham Jr. and The Hombres

Now back to my story. B.B. was now an Engineer at the “Sounds of Memphis” Recording Studio in TN and invited me down at reduced rates. One of the Groups I was Booking featured a Female Guitar Player that played like and sounded like Jimi Hendrix. In fact I named her “The Electric Lady”. When I took her to Memphis and cut a Demo, she blew everyone away. To make a long story short, B.B. suggested we drive over to Nashville and play the Demo for Billy Cox, who had played Bass with Hendrix in the “Band of Gypsies”. We did and I swear it’s the first time I’ve seen a Brother turn White. He couldn’t believe what he was hearing. Two days later we were back in the Studio cutting a few tunes with Billy on Bass and Robert (Tarp) Tarrant who was one of the top Session Drummers in the Industry. As soon as we were done Billy Cox suggested we play the Demos for a friend of his named Lelan Rogers, who had a small Record Label in Nashville. Lelan was Kenny Roger’s Brother and was known as the original Silver Fox.

As soon as Lelan heard the Demos he offered to sign her immediately. Although he couldn’t afford any Front Money he did agree to a very healthy Royalty arrangement plus he agreed with my concept of “breaking” her out of England much like happened to Jimi and his Career. We contacted PYE Records which was one of the largest Labels in Europe and as soon as they heard the Demo they signed her immediately. Everyone agreed to name the new Group “Nitro-Function”.



Billy Cox, Char “The Electric Lady” and “Tarp”

Since it made sense for Char to relocate to Nashville plus I wanted to be available to groom her for her future Super Stardom, I jumped at the chance when Lelan offered to hire me to work for his Record Label. Although I was only with Lelan for a few months it certainly gave me a great education about the Recording Industry, plus I got to Produce some exciting Acts. As a side note, the late and great James Brown (The Godfather of Soul) would either fire his Band or they would quit about once a year. I had the privilege of working with Maceo Parker shortly after the entire Band left James. They were called “Maceo and all the King’s Men” and they were as Funky as Funk can get. Unfortunately their Album we produced sounded like James Brown’s Band without James singing.

Anyway, back to my story. One of the Talent Agents I had become friends with was now working for the Largest Agency in the World at that time which was the William Morris Agency. He offered to sign Char and booked her to go on Tour as the opening Act for Stars such as B.B. King and Ted Nugent. My visions of grandeur kicked in and I honestly thought this was going to be my Grand Slam. About that same time I found out that PYE Records had given Lelan a \$20,000 advance but neither Char or myself ever saw a Penny of it. I quit Lelan and decided to become her full time Manager.

We had a Month to get her Act ready so I called a friend who owned a small Night Club in Ohio that was only open on the weekends. The Owner allowed us to have access to the Club all week to practice and then paid the Group to play on the weekend, which gave us just enough money to eat Baloney Sandwiches all week. Billy Cox had some prior commitments so we decided to keep her present Group together for the U.S. Tour and then Billy and a Super Drummer TBA would join her for their first tour of Europe later in the Year. PYE Records wanted to release her Album over there and start getting it Air Play before they promoted a Concert Tour for her. We worked the entire Month on her Show down to the Order of Songs, how long each Song would be played, what she would say and when she would talk, the choreography, what they would wear, what they would say in Interviews, etc. By the way, we were so broke that we were staying at some cheap Cabins on a Lake and many times I would be on the bank of the Lake trying to catch some Fish for our Dinner while talking on the Phone to the largest Talent

Agency in the World. I remember more than once telling my friend at the William Morris Agency to hold on because I had a bite.



Char “The Electric Lady”
(with the William Morris Agency and
“Cat Billue” my Management Company)

A month later the first Concert was in Detroit which I was able to attend. If you don't know anything about Concerts, basically no one cares about the Opening Act. The Concert attendees rarely know who they are nor do they care. The Act is basically there to warm up the crowd and test out the Sound and Lights, which are normally screwed up to begin with.

The Electric Lady took the Stage and although there was some Feedback at times and the Sound Guys screwed up the Mikes on the Background Vocals from time to time, she blew everyone out of their seats. She also had to start 20 minutes late because the Roadies for the main Group didn't have everything ready which also meant she had to cut her Set short by 20 minutes. None of this sat very well with my Super Star in the making however it was a valuable lesson for her to learn. No one knew who she was and no one cared until they heard her. Also she was there primarily to fill time and her main Job was to make the Main Act look good.

She did go on Tour for a couple of months in the U.S. opening for major Acts and continued to get rave reviews. Unfortunately the Band started believing their Reviews and became totally unmanageable. They started changing their Set around and played the Songs they wanted to play in the order they wanted to play them in instead of sticking to the proven Formula that we had invested an entire Month perfecting. In addition, just about the time they were ready to go to Europe we found out that Lelan had not only pocketed the original \$20,000 but he also kept another \$10,000 that PYE

had advanced him to get the Group to Europe. My whole World fell apart again. Char went back to playing in Bars and I was busted and disgusted.

Unfortunately, Char passed away a few years later without ever realizing her full potential and/or recognition she deserved.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Develop additional Products to sell to your Audience or Customers.

Don't believe everyone even if they are Famous or have a Famous name.

Don't put all of your Eggs in one Basket.

[21] Back to being a Talent Agent

I was totally broke and had no idea what to do next. I put out some feelers and an Agency I had co-booked some Bands with in Flint Michigan hired me. He helped me out with a few bucks for the move and even got me a Used Car to drive. It didn't take long before I was Booking Bar Bands like crazy however every time my Check was supposed to get bigger, it got smaller. This Guy had more ways to create deductions than you could imagine. I used to tell him that if he spent half as much energy in figuring out how to make more money as he did figuring out ways to screw me out of money, he'd be a very rich man.

After a few months it just got to be too much. Most of the Bands that worked for his Agency were not under Contract to him, I was doing all of their Dates plus he had screwed over most of them at one time or another. In addition the Club Owners loved to work with me so it didn't take a lot of brains for me to figure out I should finally start my own Agency. I found a neat little Office a few miles away in Grand Blanc, bought some used Office Furniture on payments, had some Phones installed on credit and I was off to the Races.



Within 6 months we were the Top Agency in the Midwest and I consistently had 30 to 40 Bar Bands working every week. I also hired and trained several additional Agents and a full-time Secretary who I later found out was actually a part-time Hooker.

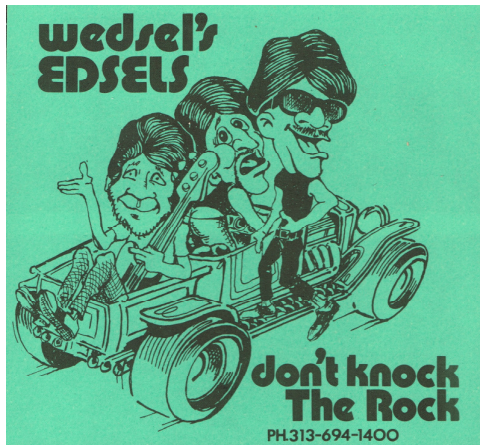
My Secretary turned out to be an incredible benefit. She loved to go out with me to see our Bands and they all loved her. More importantly, she quickly volunteered to entertain Club Owners from out of town when they visited to see our Bands. I won't go into great detail here however it's safe to say that more than one of our Bands got Booked because a Club Owner had a REAL good time when he came to town.

One of the greatest things I figured out was how to Sell my existing Club Owners more Products. Even if they were Booking my Bands 52 weeks a year, and many were, I wanted to learn how to do more Business with them. This was in the early 70's and Oldies Rock from the 50's was just starting to make a small comeback. I met with two of my Bands who quite frankly weren't all that great musically or even very popular. I explained to them that I could turn them into a 50's Oldies Act and Book them on One Nighters and they would make a whole bunch more Money. Both Bands liked the idea so one became "Wedsel's Edsels" (the Leader was Wayne Wedsel) and the other was reborn as "Crunch and the Daddy Cools".

I picked their outfits, chose their Songs, developed their MC work and choreography and then made them practice for a week solid while I got their Promo together and Booked their first Dates. We Booked them into Clubs where they would come in for One Night only and do 3 or 4 Sets. This also opened up another way to Book them which was one nighters for College Dates. Within a month both Groups were Booked 20 to 25

One Nighters every Month and they both repeated an average of 3 times a year at each Club. Instead of making \$800 to \$1,000 for a full week playing in a Bar they were both now making an average of \$600 a night. The other benefit to me was that I could now make 15% Commission on each Single Date rather than the 10% for a full week.

As a side Note, Wedsel's Edsels actually stayed together (with many personnel changes of course) for over 25 years and did many Tours as a back up Band for the original Recording Artists from the 50's. I had created a Monster although I never saw a penny of that after the first year.



Original Stickers from my 2 "Oldies Groups"

Based on the success the Clubs were enjoying with my Oldies Acts, at this point many of the Owners were coming to me and asking what else I had, which of course was nothing. However I told them if they could budget a couple of hundred dollars extra that I had something Big in the works. I determined that if recreations of Oldies Acts were going over in such a big way, the Original Artists from that Era would also do great.

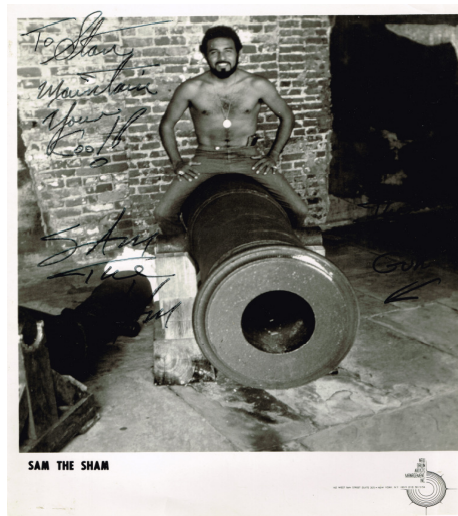
I started digging around, researching and asking a ton of questions. I quickly figured out that I couldn't Book a Band from the 50's to perform since there just wasn't enough Money to be made, so I started to look for Single or Solo Artists. I was able to track down Freddee (Boom Boom) Cannon who was sitting at home in Tarzana California, doing nothing. I told him I could Book him 5 or 6 One Nighters a week for a Month solid and all he had to do is be willing to rehearse for an Hour each afternoon and then do two 60 minute Shows each evening. Freddee actually had 14 Top 10 Records and wasn't that difficult to Book. Just to make sure everything worked smooth, plus get to hang around with Freddee and enjoy his left-overs, I personally drove him around the Midwest for almost the entire Month. I was able to get him an average of \$800 a Night and started making a 20% Commissions instead of 15%. Some of the Clubs had to sell Tickets or charge a Cover Charge but most of them were happy just to break even because they ended up packing their Bar on a normally slow night.

Next I dug up and resurrected the Career of Sam Samudio, otherwise know as Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs who had major Hits with "Wooly Bully" and "Little Red Riding Hood". Sam was a true gentleman and a class act and we became very good friends. Both Freddie and Sam gave me some good Leads of other Singers from the 50's and I could have built an empire if I hadn't ruined it all, again.

Freddee “Boom Boom” Cannon



Sam the Sham



Most nights when I wasn't escorting Freddee or Sam I would stop by an average of 6 to 8 Clubs for 10 to 20 minutes each and sometimes that was in 2 or 3 different Cities. I would visit with the Owner for a few minutes, say Hi to my Band and possibly collect some past due Commissions. I also did way more than my share of partying. In fact since I was having 1 or 2 Drinks at every Bar I also found out later that I had quickly turned into an Alcoholic and didn't even realize it at the time. Most nights I didn't go to sleep until 4 or 5 in the morning and I was back in my Office by 10 AM. I thought I was Superman and was burning the Candle on both ends and probably in the middle.

One night I was trying to make it Home around 4 AM from Lansing, which was about 60 miles away. I fell asleep and rolled my Car 15 times. The Roof collapsed and cut an 8 inch gash in my head. I believed I must have laid by the side of the Highway for almost an hour because the Car had rolled in the median which was lower than the road and no one could see me. When I was finally found I had lost an enormous amount of blood. I was rushed to an Emergency Room where they cleaned the Glass out of the gash in my Head and stitched me shut and pumped some blood into me. When they tried to admit me I demanded to be released. I called one of my Bands that lived in the area and they picked me up and drove me back to Grand Blanc.

I took a shower, went out and bought a Hat for my Head and like an idiot, went into the Office. Keep in mind I hadn't slept for 2 days and had just totaled a Car but I still thought I was indestructible. I had an Owner coming to town that night so I ended up partying all night and then working again the next day. Now I'm on the fourth day without sleep and I found out later that I was starting to lose it mentally. My Employees actually talked my Wife at the time to get me out of the Office or they were all going to quit. I remember we went to some Fishing Camp on a Lake in Minnesota with no Phones or TV and I stayed there for 2 weeks so I could try and rest and heal.

This part of my life is still a little foggy so I'm not sure of all of the details. I do know that when I came back, it was never the same. I don't know if I lost my passion or drive or maybe I still wasn't totally ready mentally to run my Business. All I do know is that it went down hill fast and I finally let my Secretary and a couple of my Agents take it over for next to nothing. I also went through another Divorce so welcome to another bottom.

I should add that a little later in Life I was diagnosed as a Manic Depressive, Bi-Polar and having an Addictive personality. As an Addict, I also learned that we have a tendency to figure out ways to screw everything up just about the time we get something working real good. Go figure!

LESSONS LEARNED:

Know when it's time to go out on your own.

Figure ways to sell your Customers more often.

Take something that isn't working and reinvent it.

Learn what it takes to make your Customer REAL Happy.

Name recognition can be worth a lot of Money

Know when to slow down before you Crash and Burn.

[22] Starting to Produce Radio Commercials

I decided it would be best to do something where I didn't have to be around a lot of people and yet I could still be Creative. I also determined I needed to get out of the Bars and away from the Booze. I had a 4 Track Recorder so I set up a little Recording Studio. I started listening to as much Radio as I could, quickly changing from one Station to the next to hear as many Commercials as possible. At the time there were only 8 Radio Stations in Flint, however no matter which one I listened to I was hearing Ads for a place called Ross Warehouse and Showrooms Furniture Outlet. Since I figured they must have the deepest pockets I decided to try and land them as a Client. I called and talked to their Advertising Manager and offered to do a few Radio Spots (Commercials) on Spec (Speculation), which meant they didn't pay anything unless they liked them after they heard them. He agreed so I went to work.

By listening to the current Ads for Ross, I heard that they were all very dry and boring even though they were using the best Local Announcers and shooting Coffee directly into their Veins to make them sound Hyper and had them cram as many words as possible into a 30 or 60 second Commercial. I mean after a while, the same thing gets old and people have a tendency to tune it out. I decided I would write some Humorous Ads and at the time the Chipmunk Recordings were very popular. I figured out how to record myself at a slow speed and then speed it up to make it sound like a Chipmunk talking. It was actually quite a challenge because you need to talk very slow and pronounce virtu-al-ly e-ve-ry syl-la-ble of e-ve-ry word or it doesn't sound right when playing it back at the faster speed. I wrote and produced three 30 second and three 60 second Ads and called the Advertising Manager for an appointment.

The next day I arrived at Ross and if you're not familiar with a Warehouse and Showroom concept, they have 200 to 300 sample Living Rooms or Bedrooms on display, you buy the Furniture, they pull it out of a Rack and either rent you a Trailer to take it Home with you, stuff it in your Trunk or tie it on top of your Vehicle. It was a massive 150,000 square foot Building and I was fascinated. I met with the Ad Manager and played the Spots and he wasn't impressed. In fact he said he hated them and that Mr. Ross was very serious about his Business, didn't have a sense of humor and would probably throw me out. I said I would take my chances and was determined to have my 5 minutes with Mr. Ross that I had asked for originally and had been promised.

A few minutes later he came back and took me in to meet Mr. Ross. As I had learned by doing a little research ahead of time, Jerry Ross had been a High School drop out and was married with 3 Kids (1 set of twins) by the time he was 18. He sold Cars for a while and then switched to Furniture. Within a couple of months he was the Manager and within a year was a part Owner. Then he started his own Chain of Stores. When I met him he was very short and to the point so I immediately plugged in the Recorder, pressed Play and didn't say a word. As he started to listen his first reaction was shock, then he started seriously listening to every word and then he broke out in laughter. As I later found out Jerry rarely smiled let alone actually laughed out loud.

Much to the chagrin of the Ad Manager, Mr. Ross asked me how much I wanted for the Commercials, I told him and he called Accounting to cut me a Check. He also asked if we could have Dinner together and we did. Over Dinner he asked a ton of questions about my experiences, knowledge, successes and failures. I tried to give him short answers and only expand if he needed me to, which he really liked. He said he liked my
A Best Seller – Revised 7/12/2013

regular Voice (as well as the Chipmunk voices) and proposed that I become the Ross Spokesperson. That meant I would be on location every Saturday and Sunday when they did live remote Broadcasts with all of the 8 Radio Stations. He explained that in the past every station had used their own Announcers and that he wasn't getting the uniformity that he wanted. His idea was for the Announcers to introduce and interview me about the Specials of the Day. He also said he would keep using me to produce some additional Radio Spots for him. The bottom line is that my first Client (and my only Client) was going to pay all of my Bills and even make me a profit.

The first weekend rolled around and he gave me the copy for the Specials of the Week and informed all of the Radio Stations of the new format. I was literally running around from one end of the Store to the other and was doing at least eight 60 second Spots (interviews) an hour with different Stations. Because I had a personality and even used a little Humor, I was a Hit with Mr. Ross and the Stations loved me too. We also had a ton of traffic coming into the Stores saying they heard about the Specials and wanted to see them. We even had a bunch of people actually coming in with their Kids to meet the Chipmunks since on one of my Radio Spots it implied that they were at Ross making the Commercials. The Stations also started offering me some Voice Over business to cut some Commercials for their other Clients. Jerry wasn't real crazy about that but let me do it as long as I agreed that I would never do any for other Furniture Stores.

The next week he asked me if I had any experience shooting TV Commercials and I had learned by now, never to say "No". Instead, I asked what he needed done. He said he liked the fact that I was now becoming the Ross Spokesperson and that we should follow that with me doing the Voice Over for the TV Ads and even occasionally appearing on Camera in the Commercials. As it turned out he bought out the unused Inventory of Time at all of the 5 TV Stations and within a couple of weeks I was being seen hundreds of times a week on TV. I have to share with you that now I was being recognized all over town as "the Guy on TV". He gave me a lot of latitude to have some fun on some of the Commercials and I sure did. One promotion I came up with was to have Mr. Twinkie at the Store one weekend giving out Twinkies to all of the Kids. I shot a couple of Commercials with myself and Mr. Twinkie and they ended with him shoving a Twinkie in my mouth like couples do with their Wedding Cake.

At one point another Warehouse Showroom opened in town which was our first real competition. They had a real catchy Jingle that said; "You've got an Uncle in the Furniture Business, Joshua Door, Joshua door." However they weren't doing any Live Remote Broadcasts which meant all of their Radio and TV Commercials and Newspaper Ads were prepared weeks in advance. Quite frankly they were killing our Business. Not only were they the "New Kid in Town", they actually had a better quality of Furniture at very low prices.

After a couple of weeks of slow Business I came up with a brilliant idea (if I say so myself) of getting the Friday afternoon and Saturday morning Newspapers to see what they had on Sale that weekend. Whatever it was we would sell the same thing, even if we didn't have it in stock or didn't even carry it in the inventory, at a lower price. It was so very simple they didn't know what hit them. I would be doing Live Radio and telling people to check the Joshua Door Ad in the Newspaper and pick out what they liked and then drive to Ross and "Buy it for Less". Someone later told me that I should have trademarked that slogan because the Ross Clothing Stores (no relation) started using "Ross Sells For Less" a few years later. Anyway, we were getting almost all of the

Weekend Business in Town and it took the other Store several months to figure out what the heck we were doing and how we were doing it. To make a long story short, they did eventually sue Ross and Jerry's Attorneys got it stalled just long enough that Joshua Door went out of Business.

Here's another Brainstorm for you. The word on the street was that Joshua Door wanted to just sell off their inventory to one source, close their Doors and get the heck out of town. They also made it very clear that under no circumstances would they sell their Inventory to Ross. We actually bought all of their Inventory under a dummy Corporation and then ran a Joshua Door "Went Out Of Business Sale" out of the Ross Store. On their TV Commercials they used to show this giant Crate that had; "Ship to Joshua Door" stenciled on it. I immediately had one made as close to the original as I could and our TV Spots opened with a shot of the Crate. The whole end of the Crate would then open and fall to the floor and I was sitting inside the Crate and singing a VERSION of their old Jingle. The new version went; "You HAD an Uncle in the Furniture Business, Joshua Door, but NOW HE'S NO MORE." Then I would do about 20 seconds of how we had bought their remaining Inventory for pennies on the dollar and we were passing those savings on to our loyal Customers.

Interestingly enough if you want to run a Going Out of Business Sale and actually use that term, you had to get a City and/or County License and you had 30 days to run your Sale. Instead we called our Sale the Joshua Door "Went Out Of Business Sale" and didn't need a License so we milked it for almost 6 months. There's another famous Chapter from Ross University.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Start all the way at the Top whenever possible.

Try a new approach to attract new attention.

Humor can go a long way.

Instead of saying you don't know how to do something, ask what is needed and then learn how to do it.

Take someone else's Failure and make it your Success.

[23] I became a Gopher

My Boss kept coming up with additional Projects in Advertising and Marketing and actually asked me to start sitting in on their Weekly Marketing Meeting as an observer and share my comments with him in Private after each Meeting. Just as he wasn't concerned about what other people thought of him, he liked me because I realized that I worked for him, I was being paid by him and I did whatever it took to get the Job done, without worrying about making friends or being politically correct. Plus I had a talent of being able to read people very quickly. As the months passed he started giving me additional areas of responsibility and even when I didn't know a thing about whatever it was I was supposed to be doing, he knew I would learn and/or I would be willing to listen while he taught me. I would Go-pher this and Go-pher that and I always got the Job done because I didn't question what he told me to do or waste time worrying about why it couldn't be done.

I worked with him 3 times over 3 years and could tell you dozens of Stories, However here are three of the more interesting ones.

To give you an idea how his mind worked, we were out driving one day and passed a former Zarye Department Store. This was a 100,000 square foot building that currently had a Goodwill occupying part of it. He told me to turn around and as we pulled into the Parking Lot he told me to start making Notes. I may not have every number absolutely correct because this was over 30 years ago however it went something like this. He said the Owners had to be hurting because Goodwill doesn't pay much Rent. He told me how to find out who the Owner was and approach them directly so we might save a little on Realtor Fees but most importantly we would get the Deal done a lot faster without a middleman. He added that they would probably be asking around \$1,200,000 and I should offer \$700,000 and they would counter with \$1 to 1.1 Million. I would then counter with \$800,000 as our Final Offer. I would also get them to Close with nothing down and hold the Mortgage with a 6 month Balloon with no Payments during those 6 months. Keep in mind that my only experience in Real Estate up until now had been Renting an Apartment to live in. He also mentioned that I should always make every Offer contingent upon his approval which would always give us an out or at least allow us one more counter Offer.

He rattled off that we would replace the Glass Front with Blocks at \$1.50 each plus .50 each to lay each one, and quickly computed the number of Blocks needed. Then I would have an Artist paint Logos of all of the Brand Names we carried on the Block Wall. Then he mentioned that we would patch the Parking Lot and paint it with Black Paint which would be a lot cheaper than using actual Sealer. Of course we would Stripe it and even paint the Light Poles. He continued by quickly computing how many Display Rooms we could set up using about 60% of the space and how many 2x4's and pieces of Peg Board and Electrical Outlets and square feet of Carpeting we would need. We would Carpet over the existing Tile for our Display Rooms and keep the rest of the existing Tile for Aisle Ways. I would build a 20'x30' Main Office and then 8 smaller 6'x8' partial Offices for Closing Booths. I would strip the Tile off the Floor in about 35% of the total space and install giant Racks that hold the New Furniture. He told me the best places to try and buy Used Racks as well as the 4 Used Electric Pickers we would need to get the Furniture out of the Racks. He also told me where to order the huge Sign by the Road. With each item he would always tell me the most I should pay and gave me

at least one Lead on where to start to either buy something or hire someone. He then said we would plan a Grand Opening on Memorial Day Weekend. No problem, right?

The only challenge was this was the last week of April and I didn't even know who owned the friggin Building.

To try and summarize 5 weeks into a paragraph, it took almost 2 weeks to find the Owner, negotiate and Close on the Building. However within 2 days of originally pulling into the Parking Lot, I already had Crews at work. One of the ways we were going to get the owners to accept our Offer with nothing down and hold the Mortgage for 6 months with no payments during that period was to convince them that we were going to spend \$300k to \$400k improving their Property so even if we defaulted it would be worth a lot more to them in 6 months. Besides they were already going further in the hole each month with Goodwill as a Tennant. I was able to eventually get our Terms because several times the Owner and I would agree on something and then I would go back and explain that my Boss wouldn't go along with it and we needed to rehash a few things. Remember that everything I ever did was always contingent on my Owner's approval which gave us tremendous bargaining power.

I had Carpenters falling over Electricians and Painters tripping over Plumbers. We had already decided to start all of the work without permits and simply pay the Fines in order to get the work done quicker. I bought the Electric Furniture Pickers from 2 different places and had them shipped to Flint by Rail. I did have to get Permits and have the City pull down some Traffic Signals and get the Telephone Company to pull down some Lines so I could truck the Pickers from the Rail Yard to the Store on Flat Bed Trucks. The last 2 weeks before the Grand Opening I had Crews working 24 hours a day and I actually set up a small Bedroom in the Store and was always there to handle any situation. Probably about 95% of the time that I needed to make a quick decision, I would simply ask myself; "what would Jerry do", and then make the decision. The few times I really wasn't sure I would track him down and ask him. However his way of training me would be to always ask me back what my first choice would be. He always forced me to come up with a possible solution and then would either tell me I was right or give me an alternate way to get it done.

Normally Jerry would always have me hire Workers by the hour instead of letting them Bid on a Project in order to save money. Trust me when I say that for most things he was tighter than Bark on a Tree. However there were many times when even the hourly rate was way more than he had told me to spend. I was constantly asking our Scab Workers (Non-Union) who else they knew that could do something I needed done. One quick example would be the 16 Light Poles in the Parking Lot. They were about 60 to 70 feet high and everyone was quoting me very high prices because they would need to own or go rent a Truck with a Cherry Picker to make it to the top of the Poles. I found 3 Painters that had a reputation for being able to paint anything. In fact the drunker they were the more adventurous they would become. They came out and quoted me such a low Bid for the whole Job that I had to see how they did it with my own eyes or I wouldn't have believed it. They tied a Brick to a small Rope and threw it over the top of the Pole. Then they tied that small Rope to a larger Rope to get it over the top. Then they attached that Rope to a harness that they had put on the drunkest one. They had him covered with Paint Mittens which are the kind that go on your Hand and Arms however they also had sewn them on his Legs and the whole front of his Body. Then

they would pull the rope until he was about 6 feet off of the ground, dip him in a 55 gallon Drum of Paint and then run him up and down each Pole a couple of times and it only took them about 30 minutes per Pole. My only challenge was the drunk was screaming bloody murder and someone called the Police. When they came and saw what we were doing they couldn't stop laughing and actually took some Pictures since they didn't think their Buddies down at the Station would really believe the what they had just seen.

The Store really was ready and we did have our Grand Opening as scheduled. I was exhausted but extremely proud of what I had accomplished for him. I was also expecting a huge pat on the back and hoping for a nice Bonus. Instead, Jerry took a look at everything and then said; "Nice Job. It's about time you did something right after the money you cost me on some of the other projects you handled." I was in shock. I gave him the keys to his Car that he provided for me and told him to shove the Store and resigned.

As I soon discovered, the only way you ever got a raise or promotion was to quit and then he would romance you to get you back. Within 2 weeks, we were "dating" again and I did end up getting a very nice raise to come back to work. He immediately had me pull an Appraisal and get a Mortgage on the Property. If Memory serves me, we got it Appraised at \$1,500,000 after we had remodeled it and got a \$1,300,000 Mortgage. We paid off the original Owner the \$800,000 Mortgage they were holding plus Jerry repaid himself the \$150,000 we put into remodeling. He now had a Building worth \$1,500,000 and owed \$1,300,000 on it which meant he had \$200,000 in equity PLUS he walked away with \$350,000 Cash in his pocket. That's how the Big Boys make Money my friends.

LESSONS LEARNED:

Try to make every Offer contingent on your Partner's or the Owner's acceptance.

Use O.P.M. (Other People's Money) when possible.

Make people come up with a possible solution instead of always telling them what to do.

It's usually easier to explain later than get permission ahead of time.

Try to hire people by the hour instead of paying the Bid Price.

There's always a faster, cheaper and/or better way to get something done.

[24] Turning a White Elephant into a Cash Cow

My second interesting Story from Ross University is about another Building that at one time had been the World's largest Buick Dealership. It had about 150,000 square feet for Service Bays and a Body Shop and then another 50,000 square feet of Showroom. The Building had been sitting empty for years and was actually condemned because one end of the Showroom was sinking into the ground. It was the biggest White Elephant in Flint. We bought it for literally Pennies on the Dollar and the Deal was similar to the other Building. Nothing down, they hold the Mortgage for 6 months with no payments during that time. I got the original Building Plans and Blueprints and discovered that the Contractor hadn't run Pilings down for support on the one end of the Showroom that was sinking. The original Soil samples indicated that he should have gone down 80 to 100 feet with Pilings before hitting real solid ground, but I guess to save money, he didn't. When I found out how much it would cost us, I realized why he had never done it.

The Whole Showroom was a Crescent shape with large Glass Windows front and back with an "H" Beam supporting the Roof every 40 feet. The back of one end of the Showroom was the part that was sinking so common sense told me that instead of having the entire weight of the Roof on these "H" beams I could spread the weight by replacing the Glass in the back with Blocks. I verified that this "could work" with 2 different Construction Companies and armed with that, a few cases of Jack Daniels and some Cash under the table, pulled my Permits. I brought in a Pressure Grouting Crew that was able to raise the Floor in the Showroom to its original Height, which was a heck of a lot cheaper than tearing it out and putting in a new Floor. I then brought in a couple of Cranes to raise and hold the Roof to its original height while another crew Blocked in the 30 feet by 160 feet back wall. I don't mean to make it sound quite that simple because it did take a total of 3 weeks to buy the Building and actually do the work and get it ready to occupy. Now came the real challenge which was getting it rented.

I quickly discovered that there wasn't a dealership in town that was big enough, or that wanted to expand or move or open another location. We brainstormed what we could do with it and decided that since we had 150,000 square feet of Service Bays and most of them had Lifts built into the Floors, that I would turn this into a One Stop for Auto and Truck Repairs. I leased 40,000 sq ft to an Auto Paint Company, 20,000 sq ft to a Company that did Undercoating, 10,000 sq ft to an Auto Upholstery Shop, 10,000 sq ft to a Company that sold and installed Truck Bed Liners, 10,000 sq ft to a Detail Shop, 10,000 sq ft to a Custom Shop, 10,000 sq ft to a Car Stereo Shop, etc. Every time I leased another Space I would ask them who else they knew and I had the entire 150,000 sq ft in the back fully leased within 60 days, for twice as much as we could have got from leasing the entire Building to one Auto Dealership.

The Front was still the challenge. Now I had a Showroom available but no Service Bays so I started looking at what Companies had nice Showrooms to sell their Products. There was a very successful Lumber Company that took a lot of pride in displaying almost everything they sold in the most professional settings possible. I got an appointment with the Owners and although they had an interest they didn't have any plans to expand beyond their existing 4 locations. I had an aerial Picture taken of the Showroom and superimposed their Sign on the front. I then backed it up with the traffic count that went by everyday along with some stats from the Hardware and Lumber Industry on how far people normally are willing to travel to buy what they need.

As it turned out, I proved to them that they really did need a location on this end of town and they didn't even know it. I have to admit that these negotiations took almost 3 months and of course I was getting heat from Jerry every single day because it was "costing him" so much money to have the Showroom sitting there empty. He didn't want to listen when I would try to explain that I already had the entire back leased out for twice as much as we originally thought we could get for the entire Building. In looking back I now understand why he was pushing so hard because the 6 months was coming due and he didn't want to get the new Appraisal and a Mortgage until we had the whole thing 100% leased. One other great benefit to the Lumber Company (that I never offered) was all of the space outside that had been used to store New Cars and display their Used Cars in years past. Shortly after the Lumber Company moved in I saw that they had 6 Semis unloading Lumber in the back and side Lots. They had also started constructing some storage areas which is like a Roof on Poles to put the new Lumber under. I called a meeting with the Owner and made him aware that they had leased the Showroom and a certain number of Parking Places and that's all. They said they had assumed that we would allow them to use the back Lot for storage and I said of course we would . . . for a 20% increase in their Lease Payment. They weren't very happy however Jerry sure was.

We pulled the new Appraisal and got the Mortgage and Jerry repaid himself the down payment plus the money it cost to fix it up and walked away with several hundred thousand dollars in his pocket plus now owned a fully Leased Building worth 4 to 5 times more than what he had paid for it without a penny out of his pocket. Ah yes . . . the Rich get Richer.

LESSONS LEARNED:

When all else fails, try a little Common Sense.

Always ask for Referrals and/or References.

When you can't Lease the entire Building to one Tenant, split it up and make twice as much money.

(Continued in Part 2)