

YOU MEAN THAT REALLY HAPPENED.

By James Collins.

Adelphi University in 1971 was undergoing a siege by the undergraduate student body. The 18 and 19-year-olds were feeling their oats and decided to take over the University to show the administration that they were in charge. Other colleges and universities throughout the country were undergoing the same catharsis. The crazies thought they were in charge.

Grown-ups populated the graduate MBA program at night. Many, like myself had several children, worked full-time jobs, and payed to get a graduate education. We showed up at school in the evening and labored until our classes ended. Big Bill, an NBC employee ,and I were both in the same class and close to graduation. Bill had three children and I had four. This night was a graduate class in marketing and we and three other students were early. One of the 18-year-old crazies who was about five foot six and weighed close to 140 pounds came into the classroom and announced in a shrill voice, "Everybody out, we're closing down the school and we are taking over." Nobody moved. He looked about, seemed a little frustrated and again shouted, "Everybody out right now."

I looked over at this small Napoleon type and told him, "Get lost, and get out of our classroom we're busy."

He got flustered, looked around at the rest of the class, and yelled, "I'll be back."

Within three minutes, Napoleon returned with two more of his compatriots, both built like members of the Ping-Pong team. Not one of the three exceeded 5'8" and their largest stalwart weighed 150 pounds. Again, Napoleon pontificated and said, "Everybody out. We are closing down the school. We are in charge."

At this point, I was really annoyed. I stand 6'2", weigh over 200 pounds, and slowly rose out of my chair. I told the triumvirate, "We are here to get an education and we are paying for it ourselves. We all have families to support and this education is part of our plans. You have parents paying for your education and they have no idea what you are doing to waste our time and theirs. We are planning to attend this class and we do not want you around annoying us. If you do not leave right now, I will personally throw you out the window. (Note: we were on the first floor and the ten-foot high windows were wide open. On the other side of the window was a well-maintained green lawn. They would not have been significantly hurt). Big Bill matched me inch for inch and had an additional 20 pounds of muscle. He slowly rose and silently joined me. The triumvirate paled, backed up, turned and ran out of the room. Our class met as scheduled. The 'take over' lasted two days, and fizzled out. The following year we both graduated with our degrees.

In 1989, I, my wife, two of our children and one of their fiancés were touring Ireland and stopped at Blarney Castle. After a full day travelling, we went into a tearoom to have tea and scones. Shortly after we entered, a half dozen Americans came in and sat down at a table to our left. Two of the youngsters at that table had been at Holy Cross College in Worcester and recognized my son and his fiancée as former schoolmates. They started comparing notes against former alums, and as a natural event, the two tables merged together. As introductions were in order, we all started exchanging names and the father of the group looked at me and asked, “Weren't you in Adelphi University in the MBA program?”

Immediately, it came to me, this was big Bill from the MBA program. I said, “Aren't you Big Bill from NBC?” I reached over and shook his hand.

“Nancy, this is the Jim I told you about at the University who threatened to throw the pompous little kids through the window when they tried to close the classes down.”

His wife, Nancy, responded, "You mean that story was true?"

Bill responded, “It sure was.”

Then my wife Eileen reacted and said, “You mean to tell me that story was true?”

“I have not lied to you yet.”

THE END