

## BEE STING

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By James Collins

Lunch each day consisted of two large hamburgers, a chocolate shake and a full order of French fries. Chris B. stated that he required this to sustain his 6-foot four 250-pound frame. A retired major from the Air Force he had completed his military service and was now working as a marketing representative for Kollsman in the Washington DC area. He suited the job to a T. He was friendly, humorous, affable, big, welcoming and very smart.

It was Tuesday and I had just landed at National Airport to meet with Chris at a restaurant in Crystal City. His directions were great and I met him right on time. As he rose from the table and extended his hand, I was stunned. His right hand was normal but his swollen left hand looked like a baseball mitt. All the fingers, grotesquely enlarged, made it difficult for Chris to bend them. I asked him what happened and he told me that he had encountered a bee that stung him in his left hand. Obviously, Chris had a serious allergic reaction to bee venom. I suggested he immediately go to the nearest hospital because the inflammation and the swelling were staggering. Chris sat down and indicated I should sit down and order.

Chris told me, "This has happened a few times before and if I wait long enough everything goes back to normal."

"Chris, that swelling is far from normal it indicates you have a potentially lethal reaction to a bee sting. If you go right over to Walter Reed, the doctors can look at it and possibly give you something that you can keep in your pocket to counteract anaphylactic shock. You are a retired major and that is probably the best hospital in this part of the world for any kind of an emergency. I'm sure there will be no charges but you will get the best attention available."

"Jim, I've been through this before. My father was a doctor and medical care was jammed down my throat. I do not like dealing with doctors and if I can avoid it I can. I do not go near them. The swelling is a minor annoyance and it will pass but I am not going to the doctor for something this insignificant. I recommend the hamburgers, the fries and whatever you like to drink. The food here is great every day."

For the next four days, I was in constant touch with Chris and we met for lunch each day at his favorite restaurant. The swelling decreased day by day and when I had to leave for Thursday's flight he was it was almost down to normal possibly 10 to 15% oversized. Each day I implored Chris to go to the doctors at Walter Reed and get one of these EPEE pens to counteract anaphylactic shock. All my entreaties were to no avail.

**When I return to the home office in New Hampshire, I related the story to the marketing department and to upper management. I told every one of my concerns and I know a few phone calls went down to Washington, but Chris was intransigent. He never went to a doctor.**

**Three weeks later, I got a call from Washington that Chris was at death's door at Walter Reed hospital due to multiple bee stings. We learned he was mowing the lawn in back of his house when he encountered a hive of bees buried in the ground. Apparently, the vibrations from the lawnmower and the noise irritated the bees and a group flew at Chris. He received at least four bee stings including two in the neck. He immediately cried out to his wife, "Call 911! It's a medical emergency." Then he fell to the ground. His wife told us the ambulance arrived within minutes rushed to the backyard and found Chris dead. They immediately started CPR and using paddles, they were able to revive him. They loaded him in the ambulance and headed towards the hospital. He again had a seizure and died a second time while in the ambulance. They were forced to pull over and using all the personnel they managed to revive him a second time. They reached the emergency room and turn him over to the trauma team. Once again, he encountered a seizure and his heart stopped but luckily, the trauma team revived him.**

**For two days, he was in intensive care and his blood pressure kept spiking. Finally, he encountered a final seizure and died. Unfortunately, no matter what medications they tried they were unable to revive him. At the autopsy, they discovered that two of his major arteries were 95% closed with plaque. Apparently, the daily lunch, meant to sustain him, was slowly killing him.**

**After the funeral and all the heartache attached, the insurance company decided that they were not going to pay the accidental death policy which was a half million dollars. They claimed he had recovered from the bee sting with the three resurrections, but that the plaque in his arteries was the actual cause of death. The Corporation, which had sales of 1.2 billion, took exception to this arbitrary decision and threatened lawsuits and disclosure of the insurance company's intransigence to the Department of Defense and the military organizations that we were supporting. Since we had factories in at least 10 states, the Congressional delegations from each of these was lobbied. They contacted the insurance company and explained what might happen to their bottom line. The only good thing that came out of this event was that the insurance company relented and Mrs. B received the policy in full. She needed that to support herself and the three children.**

**THE END**