

By James Collins

In the Bronx in the 1950s, many teenagers would steal a car to go Joy riding with their friends through the various neighborhoods. At the end of the ride, they would abandon the car, which would eventually be returned to the owner. They were not stealing the cars for monetary value or for involvement in a stickup but purely to learn how to drive and look like tough guys to their friends. Some also got involved in street fights, which became police assaults if the police who attempted to break up the fracas got injured. Unfortunately, Mickey, not knowing there was a police officer behind him, swung around and hit the cop in the mouth. All this series of mishaps happened to Mickey Hamlin. Most of the car thefts occurred before he was 16, but the incident with the police officer occurred while he was 17. Luckily, he had not yet reached 18.

While Mickey was standing in front of the bench, the judge was reviewing Mickey's yellow sheets. The Police arrested Hamlin three times for joy riding in stolen cars, and now he was up for assaulting a police officer. The judge slowly folded the file, looked at Mickey and said,

“Mr. Hamlin according to your records you are on your way to a life of crime. Now, I believe we can do something to block that course. However, the decision is entirely up to you. Either I can sentence you to a New York State reform school or you can join the Air Force. The decision is purely up to you.”

“Your Honor, I thank you for the opportunity and I select the U.S. Air Force.”

After basic training, Mr. Hamlin received orders to report to an Air Force Station in North Africa, Morocco, to be specific. This was an Islamic country was not overly fond of Americans. Liquor was not sold nor permitted in any section of this country and on random occasions, the natives with their heads wrapped in turbans carrying rifles would attack the front gate of the air station. Mr. Hamlin while on guard duty experienced one of these attacks. He shot a couple of the attackers but a few of the others identified him. As a result, he could not leave the air station for his entire duty period.

Boredom quickly set in. Mr. Hamlin was quite intelligent but had never applied his native ability to studies. Now he used all of his excess time to getting a GED. Upon receiving that document and still having a lot of time on his hands, Mr. Hamlin started taking college courses and quickly completed 80% of his college requirements. He was then honorably discharged, came back to America, went to City College and obtained his bachelor's degree.

**At that time, IBM was actively soliciting college graduates to fill the ranks of their rapidly expanding company. Mickey applied went through an extensive interview process and was accepted by the company as an employee. The first day at IBM, his time was totally filled with filling out paperwork. He filled out the basic application, the medical application, the pension application and he listed both his beneficiary and his next of kin. The one question that concerned him a little was the one that asked, "Have you ever been arrested?" Of course, he answered, NO. Personnel looked at all his paperwork, saw all was in order set, him down at a desk and put him to work.**

**For three months, Mickey did everything asked of him and was far above all of his other contemporaries. He worked hard and diligently and put in lots of hours of overtime as needed. He always completed his assignments ahead of schedule.**

**Early on a Monday morning, Mickey received a phone call to go to his manager's conference room at 9 o'clock in the morning. He had a suspicion they might have learned of his previous history and his yellow sheet. As he entered the conference room he saw his supervisor, the head of personnel and the head of security already seated around the table. Now he was sure the fat was in the fire.**

**The manager who called the meeting initiated the discussion.**

**"Mr. Hamlin we found a discrepancy in the paperwork you filled out when you first applied for a job. Do you remember filling out this form?" The manager asked as he placed the form in front of Mickey.**

**"Yes said this is the form I filled out I recognize my handwriting and my signature."**

**"At the top of the second page is item 17. Could you please read what the question was and how you responded?"**

**"Item 17 asks, have you ever been arrested? And I responded No,"**

**With that, the security officer stood up holding a large file and walked over to where Mickey was sitting. He placed the file in front of him, opened it and pointed to a series of paragraphs.**

**"Mr. Hamlin this is your yellow sheet from the New York City Police Department and it indicates that you were picked up several times driving a stolen car and you were involved with assaulting a police officer. Did you forget all these or were you lying to us?"**

**"No I did not forget and yes they are all true."**

**"Why did you lie when you filled out the form?"**

**“If I had told you I had a police record and you saw that yellow sheet would you have hired me?”**

**“Probably not.”**

**“That’s why I lied on the form. I knew if I told the truth you would never hire me. I also knew that you would eventually find out about the arrest record. You have, and that is why we are all meeting here today. If you look at the report you will see that everything happened before I was 18 and over the last three or four years, I completed my time with the Air Force and got an honorable discharge. I earned and received my GED and a bachelors from New York City College. I have also been working for you for the past three months and you had a chance to see me, watch me in operation and learn about my personality and my work habits. I wanted that opportunity to show you what I could do. If you like me and think I would make a good employee I am here. If you want me to go, I will leave. Either way it has been a pleasure working with you all here I wish you well.**

**40 years later Mickey Hamlin retired as a senior manager from IBM. To the best of my knowledge he is the only IBM manager who retired who had a rather significant yellow sheet on record with the NYPD.**

**THE END**