

DUMB & DUMBER

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Many years ago, I had built up a '57 Ford for drag racing. The gears in the rear end were not intended for the street, but we lived only about a mile from my work, so I decided to drive it to work one day. A fellow worker wanted me to take him for a ride in the car. At lunch time we decided we'd go for that ride. The plant we worked at was located at the edge of town.

I pulled into the middle of the road, stopped, then I let out the clutch and mashed the accelerator to the floor, the rear end rapped up to the point it pulled the drive shift out of the transmission and it was now knocking on the bottom of the car floor, trying to get at our feet. We were both lucky it did not tear out the floor, and we escaped without being injured. The drive shift ended up being bent and now would have to be replaced. This was act one, "Dumb."

I decided to get another drive shift from a junk yard, and took our kids with me. This was one of those junk yards that you could do your own wrenching. I had taken a tripod type jack with me just in case I might need it.

The kids decided to stay in the car, so I went on a hunt for a drive shift. I found a '57 Ford that had all of the wheels removed, but could not tell if it still had a drive shaft, so I went back to the car to get my jack, and to check on the kids.

The kids still wanted to stay in the car, so I left carrying the tripod jack and tools. This type of jack is designed to lift the car, and at the same time pulling it backwards. Of course with all the wheels off the car that I was jacking up, it did not want to roll backwards. Instead it pulled the jack forward. The drive shaft was still in place, but now the car was not safe to climb under. I remembered seeing cars that were up in the air with tires jammed under them along the frame so I found a couple tires and wheels and put them on each side of the car to help stabilize it. This was where act two came into play, "Dumber."

I crawled under the car and was taking the bolts out of the yoke when the car started to move! I grabbed on to the frame and tried to steady the car, but could not keep it from falling over sideways. Now I was

pinned under the car with my head under the drive shaft and the frame sitting on my right leg. I knew that I had to get my head out from under the drive shaft and tried to lift the car as much as I possibly could. I tore my head out from under the drive shaft. Then, I started to scream for help!

No one seemed to hear me and I figured I might be there for a long time before anyone found me. I knew I could not let myself pass out, or even go to sleep. I did a lot of thinking about the family and how I should have bought more life insurance. I also did a lot of praying and whole lot of screaming for help.

This is the part that is still hard for me to believe even to this day. A farmer in the field next to where I was pinned under the car was on his tractor fitting his field when he heard something and thought something was going wrong with his equipment. So he stopped and turned the tractor off, to check it out. That's when he could tell it was someone calling for help. I had been screaming so hard I had broken blood vessels in both eyes! I could hear his foot steps with my ear still next to the ground, but with all the cars in the junk yard the farmer had no idea where to look. I told him what color the car was and could tell when his foot steps were getting closer. Even when he was at the car, he could hardly tell except for one foot showing out from the edge of the car.

He wanted to go for more help, and I said don't you dare leave me. Take the jack, and jack the car up again and I would crawl out.

When I got out, the farmer took one look at me and said I was hurt pretty bad. I told him I would be all right, but let me sit here for a few minutes. When I did try to stand up, I keeled over. I thought maybe I needed to sit there a little longer, as it must of taken more out of me then I thought. When I got on my feet the second time, I stood still for a minute to see if I was going to be all right. Ok now, lets get me over to my car where my kids must be going crazy. But soon as I took a step, down I went again. So, I told the farmer to see if he could find me something to use for a crutch. I thought my leg must be broken!

The car I was driving was a stick shift, and with my leg not working, I asked the farmer if he could drive us to my doctor's office. I told him I lived in the same town as my doctor, so when we got there he could just turn around and take my car back to his place. He agreed, and I could

not thank him enough for saving my life! When we got back to my car the kids freaked out seeing me hurt!

I had torn up the left side of my head from the drive shaft. So the doctor scrubbed out the wound and sewed me up. I also had a concussion, so he took a big syringe and pulled a lot of fluid off my head. Next, he wrapped my head up, big time, with lots of gauze. While all this was going on I was trying to convince the doctor my leg was broken. But, he insisted that it was not!

When he finished with my head. He told me to stand up, which I did. Now he said to take a step. When I tried, down I went . Ok, now do you believe me! He checked out my leg again and told me because of the weight of the car on my leg for approximately forty-five minutes which had shut my circulation off, my leg was now paralyzed. However, with physical therapy and much massaging, it would recover.

I remember going home and resting on the couch. It now seemed like the whole town knew what had happened. The phone was ringing every few minutes with someone asking if there was anything they could do to help. Some even came to the house to see if there was anything they could do. One told me I looked like Frankenstein , and I said, "Gee, thanks a lot." However, when I finally did get up to go to the bathroom, I almost fainted when I saw myself in the mirror. My head was swelled up the size of a basketball and all wrapped up.

My leg did respond to the treatment quite fast. However, when I got tired and tried to push myself, my right knee would kick out like a trick knee. That is when I knew it was time to slow down and take it easy and give it a rest. The trick knee finally went away after many years.

When I did put the drive shaft back in the '57 Ford, I was still very gun-shy getting under a car again. I almost built a foundation under the car, which left hardly any room to work. While under the car, our dog came into the garage without me knowing it and when I saw the dog's shadow move I thought I was going to have a heart attack because I thought the car had moved.

Many men have lost their lives under a car and I feel very blessed not to have been one of them!