

"Imagine That...(1) - The Asian Angel of Mercy and Assassins."

By Carl "J.C." Pantejo, Copyright May 2008

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**Note from the Author:

When asked about my military career, I simply tell people that I was "Dumb, Stubborn, and Lucky (Dumb enough to volunteer, Stubborn enough to stay, and Lucky enough to survive)."

The "Imagine That..." series chronicles some of the more amusing experiences (that I can still remember) from over two decades of U.S. military service; most of which was in the Asian theater.

But, please keep in mind the following conversation:

Curious Man: "What did you learn from your years in the military?"

Me: "The first and last thing they teach you is to forget."

Curious Man: "Who are they and what were you supposed to forget?"

Me: "I don't know. I forgot."

Curious Man: "I see. You must have been a good student."

Me: "I'd like to think so."

The above conversation gives a clue why some things will neither be mentioned, nor explained in some of the stories of this series.

Simply put, I forgot.

Nevertheless, I am certain you will enjoy these stories, my friend.

Carl "J.C." Pantejo

"[Life] Amazing! Isn't it?"

- Asian Angel of Mercy -

Assuming that I'd not heard her the first time, she repeated, "Chief, is there anything else I can do for you?"

She was a 19 year old Fil-Am (Filipina-American) who had recently graduated from Basic U.S. Navy Corpsman School. She was doing her mandatory clinical phase/rounds aboard this Navy Submarine Tender (a ship equipped with hyperbaric chamber facilities), the ship I'd been flown to almost 20 hours ago for hyperbaric treatment. I had just finished a Table VI (or V?) treatment in the "squeeze chamber" and was on the ship's tiny medical sickbay cum ward.

The cute Corpsman had assumed correctly.

(And what a sweet ass-sumption it was! But I stray from the story. Many tangents will follow.)

I hadn't heard a word of what she said since reporting to her ward. I was too enamored with her brown skin, almond eyes, and oh-so-slim and sexy body. Most other bodily functions were put on hold – except of course, you know what.

Us men are like that.

When I arrived at the Tender yesterday night, via emergency MEDEVAC (medical evacuation) helicopter, I was semi-conscious and clad in only my dive shorts (the Navy issued "UDT", khaki-colored shorts worn by all U.S. military divers, Special Warfare, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Teams) and wrapped in a couple of black wool blankets to combat the coldness of shock.

The helo crew and medical attendants were more than happy to release/dump me on the Diving doctor at the Tender. Apparently, and later verified by the official medical reports, I was so disoriented and obstinate that I tried to free myself from the gurney straps and jump out of the MEDEVAC helo... not once, but three times!

Luckily the attendants were consummate professionals; and although they couldn't sedate me (sedation masked symptomatic alterations of consciousness and rendered further neurological checks useless), they nonetheless; "motivated" me to behave.

They did this by menacingly waving a large urethral catheter in front of my face while simultaneously snapping the bases of their surgical gloves! The meaning was instantly understood: "Chief, play nice or we'll have to shove this rubber tube up your crank; AND/OR perform a sphincter muscle control check. BOTH WITHOUT LUBRICATION!"

Prudently, I acquiesced to these kind and caring medical professionals.

Most divers "free-balled" it.

We didn't wear anything under our dive shorts. It was much more comfortable and practical. At least that's what we'd rationalized as we pissed and crapped in our shorts during long dives, or scratched sand from our balls while on the beach.

Of course, we were more disciplined during cold water dives that required a wet or dry suit be worn over our dive shorts.

Fantasizing about the Filipina Corpsman, I was pitching a rather obvious tent under the bed sheets.

The Corpsman blushed as she took my vital signs.

She went about her business as professionally as possible (temperature, pulse, and blood pressure checks, I.V. drip check, neurological/circulation checks, level of consciousness checks, etc.) while still managing to steal glances, and sometimes longer looks, at my erection.

Probably projecting my wishes upon her, I could swear she looked hungry.

- Too much of a "Good Thing" -

She asked me if I was experiencing "priapism," a medical condition characterized by an uncontrollable erection and can be caused by trauma to the spinal cord, various drugs, neurological disorders, and vascular diseases.

Prolonged priapism can be a medical emergency because the human penis was not meant to be perpetually engorged. The specialized, sensitive tissues can be permanently damaged or necrose (die). The condition is considered hazardous after three hours, critical after four hours, and a medical emergency after five or six hours (depending on the patient's age and physical condition).

The treatment for priapism begins with mild, over-the-counter medication (e.g., pseudoephedrine). If that doesn't work, treatment becomes more aggressive.

To make your erection go away, blood is aspirated from the corpus cavernosum (a reservoir for blood and pressure). Layman's translation: The doctor sticks a needle in your dick and tries to deflate it by relieving the build-up of pressure. Sound fun?

Finally to the final of all options, if all else fails – AMPUTATION OF THE PENIS IS NECESSARY. Yikes!

That's why the abuse of erectile dysfunction drugs (e.g., Viagra, Cialis, Levitra, etc.) can literally cost a man his own manhood!

"Unlike the mind, a penis stretched by new stimuli MUST return to its original size."

I had only experienced priapism once in my life. It happened a few years ago after a rather nasty PLF (Parachute Landing Fall)...

...I couldn't "John Wayne" it in (meaning: a trotting, stand-up landing) because we, my Jump Team on the stick, were jumping with old Army "Set 10" parachutes. These chutes were big, awkward to steer, and were made for average, "American-sized" men carrying full Army Infantry gear.

Everyone on my team was Asian or Hispanic and much smaller than the average American soldier. To make matters worse, we weren't wearing any Infantry gear. That meant we were using parachutes designed for much bigger men and much heavier loads.

Why?

Although I wasn't paid to ask why (I was paid to Do), I figured that someone, probably a Department of Defense scientist/geek working on his thesis and/or government contract, needed the data. And of course, we volunteered for the two weeks of "basket leave (free vacation)" and additional "Experimental/Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay" upon mission completion.

Besides, what could happen?

We were all well-versed in jumping. We all wore the gaudy, golden "Jump Wings" on our uniforms. The Jump Wings and shiny, silver "Dive Bubble" (the Navy SCUBA Diver pin worn above the wings) proclaimed to all that we were loony enough to be free-fall qualified and macho/horny enough to be Navy Diver certified.

And of course, in our minds, we (my team mates, fellow connoisseurs of beer, PT - physical training, women, and out-of-the ordinary adventures) were all crazy, little f*ckers – a batch of brown escapees from the local Mental Ward.

In short, multiple incarnations of Superman.

Oftentimes, hushed words were spoken from onlookers when one of us was seen in our uniforms.

I never got used to all the attention. In fact, all the hoo-hah about divers, jumpers, and shooters usually made me feel uncomfortable. When someone asked too many probing questions, I would find an excuse to quickly leave.

Perfectly happy doing my job out of the limelight, I performed my duties as professionally and quietly as possible. Yup, being "invisible" was just fine with me.

It's always the shiny, "special" things (or people) that become targets first.

To my knowledge, there is only one photo of me in my "work clothes and green/brown make-up" in existence. It (with other documents and computer files) is in the custody of a very trusted friend; safely tucked away in an old wooden desk, in an old Asian village home, in an old and remote Asian Province. And there it will stay until enough time has passed and I don't need "insurance" anymore.

All smart people have insurance.

'Nuff said about that.

- Wannabes and Groupies -

Most of the other "normal, honorable, respectable" soldiers envied the lifestyle I and my men lived everyday.

To them, we were all Desperados.

It was a well-known fact that we enjoyed more p*ssy, more money, and more excitement than the usual serviceman. On top of that, we wore our uniforms less frequently and enjoyed more individual freedom on the job.

Those men who "look, want, but can't" are affectionately called "Wannabes."

And the women, oh the women.

There were two types of "Groupie Women." The first type, the Thrill Seekers, got off by having sex with us "dangerous, young studs." The other type, the Gold Digger, was looking for security (meaning, the money and security left by a deceased serviceman spouse).

If a woman thought "we were what we were," the usual response followed: Instant Flirting. Her pupils would enlarge, she'd heave whatever chest she had, she'd fiddle with her hair, smile, and lick her lips. You could almost read her mind. She wanted to sample the athletic, wiry, six-packed, muscular bodies we all possessed.

Our hardbodies coupled with our permanent, devilish, sh*t-eating grins that seemed to make all of us look half our ages were most irresistible to the overtly (and covertly) available members of the opposite sex.

Gold Diggers are available around the globe and the U.S. was no exception. Everyone knew of the SGLI (the soldier's life insurance) and Death Gratuity Benefits extended to the dead soldier's family/beneficiaries.

Since people like me and my men tended to die from mysterious "Training Injuries" much more often than the normal guy riding a desk job, we were all that more attractive to the "long-range minded women."

It's "The Golden Rule."

Same-same around the world, I guess. Those with the Gold/Money (or the promise of it) rule!

"Don't mess with THEM. They'd rather kill than f*ck!," one young sailor said to another while I was standing in line at the Base's Mini-Mart.

On the very few occasions that I went shopping in my uniform, when I would walk toward a crowd of shoppers, the reaction was like the parting of the Red Sea.

It was weird.

If you saw me in person and in civilian clothes, you'd probably think I was someone's meek, Asian driver or cook. But put a uniform on me, replete with those two "itty-bitty" pins, and I'm magically transformed into some mysterious, dark-hearted assassin?

Assassin?

The word assassin brings a wry smile to my face. You see, its root comes from the word "Hassassin" – meaning, followers/users of hashish.

Neat story.

Well, actually, many stories revolve around the word "assassin."

Some references reinforce the etymology of "assassin" from "hassassin;" while others refute it, saying that:

1. The Koran and the creator of the Hassassins group staunchly opposed all intoxicating chemicals (e.g., alcohol, hashish, etc.).
2. Trained killers require disciplined training, and therefore; could not have been drug addicts.
3. Hashish in the form of a "potion" (that is, liquid form) and mentioned below in the famous "Marco Polo" accounts of the assassins and their leader is not the normal form of ingestion.

But let me include two other stories.

And they both involve killers and hashish.

The first story, popularized by Marco Polo, tells of the "Old Man of the mountain" (believed to be Hasan-i-Sabbah, leader of the Nizari Ismaili militant group) using a "potion" of hashish as a recruiting tool.

Supposedly, he drugged prospective recruits and brought them to a "Paradise" that he'd setup in a secret, secluded compound. Once there, the recruits were provided anything and everything they desired (wine, women, song, etc.). Soon after, they were drugged again and brought back before the Leader.

He [the Leader] promised them a trip to Paradise again if they served him (or died in his service). Either way, if they completed their service, they (or their souls) were guaranteed a return to Paradise.

The second story involves enemies of the Crusaders.

During the Crusades, a group of small, but deadly armies meandered through the lands to defend the populace from the Christian Marauders (Crusaders).

Their ruthlessness and efficiency with which they dealt out death became legendary. After each successful defense (killing fest), these men would then perform their routine, celebratory ritual – a party and trance induced by heavy hashish use.

They soon became known as "Hassassins." Over time, the word changed into "assassin."

When I was in Laos, I often wondered if the cute purveyors (and tourists/ buyers) of those innocent looking, little, dark-brown-to-black cubes knew the hashish-"assassin" word connection?

Probably not.

[Continued in "Imagine That...(2) - Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP): Anything for a Buck?"]

Your friend in this Intrepid Journey called Life,

Carl "J.C." Pantejo
Pantejo@ynvurcepublishing.com

Imagine That, Filipina, Asian, Angel, hyperbaric, Gold Jump Wings, Silver Dive Bubble, Hassassin, assassin.

Other articles by the author:

"Alternative Notions of Life, a Different Path, articles (1) – (7)." (This is an ongoing series of articles that focus on self-improvement, success, and happiness).

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(By Carl "J.C." Pantejo and published internet-wide, keyword: [title of article] or "Carl Pantejo")

About the Author

He is a retired U.S. Military veteran. Believing that school was too boring, he dropped out of High School early; only to earn an A.A., B.S., and MBA in less than 4 years much later in life – while working full-time as a Navy/Marine Corps Medic. In spite of a fear of heights and deep water, he free-fall parachuted out of airplanes and performed diving ops in very deep, open ocean water. Pantejo@ynvurcepublishing.com
<http://www.ynvurcepublishing.com>

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