

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

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“Life is a tragedy for those who feel, a comedy for those who think.”

Jean de La Bruyère

What follows is not, as they say in court, “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.”

Being largely based upon memories that provide something less than total recall, and covering a period of more than two-thirds of a century, a full accounting of my life would be an impossible undertaking; and would, in any case, require a length far beyond anything reasonable. But the following is fact, not fiction.

Having been a pilot for more than fifty years, it follows that the subject of flying will be involved in the account; but this is not a book about flying or pilots.

Having been involved in the capturing, importing and selling of exotic wild animals for a period of many years, it also follows that such subjects will be mentioned; but this is not a book about animals.

Having founded and operated companies involved with a wide variety of activities, the subject of business will be mentioned; but this is not a book about business.

Having produced income of hundreds-of-millions of dollars, the subject of money is unavoidable; but this is not a book about money.

Having invented, and sometimes marketed, a wide variety of things in several fields, including Nautilus exercise machines, MedX medical-testing machines, lenses, stabilizing camera mounts and editing machines for motion picture production and a long list of other things, the subjects of inventions and inventors also are included; but this is not a book about my inventions.

Having filmed, produced and directed more than three-hundred films for television, as well as four theatrical films, the subject of film production will be touched upon; but this is not a book about the film industry.

Having visited almost every country in the world, and having lived on four continents for long periods of time, the subject of travel will be involved; but this is not a book about travel.

Nor, in today’s society, is this book ‘politically correct.’ Which, as the British say, will unavoidably make it ‘off-putting’ for some readers. So be it; while it is neither my intention nor my desire to insult anybody, I am not trying to please anybody either.

So much in regard to things that are not the main focus of this book; and a few words about the primary subjects: this book is about people, a few good people and a long list of very bad people.

Sour grapes from a bitter old man? I hope not; but I can only recount my experiences in the light of my reactions to the things that have happened to me. Pleasure and pain; success and failure, the good, the bad and the ugly.

To what purpose? I don’t really know; a number of people have attempted to get me to write an autobiography, or to permit somebody else to write a biography with my cooperation, but I have always refused such requests. Have usually refused on the grounds that it is not even possible to publish the truth in today’s society, and because I have no desire to publish lies. But, recently, my daughter told me that if I do not write an autobiography, to set the record straight, that sooner or later somebody else will attempt the story of my life, and that they will get it all wrong.

Perhaps. But it is also possible that I may not be able to get it right; so all I can do is try.

But I do at least have quite a few things that should help me to get it right. The conversations quoted in both previous and later chapters were not based upon an admittedly imperfect memory; were, instead, dated by my detailed

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flight records covering that period and copied from my even more detailed diaries. I learned that memories tend to fade over the years, so long ago I started keeping accurate accounts of everything that appeared to be significant; and, fortunately, my flight records and diaries were not stolen along with almost everything that I had after I left Rhodesia in 1968 and returned to this country; so I was not forced to rely upon my memory in such cases. These quotations have been edited in attempts to remove a lot of repetitious statements that were included in the original diaries, but nothing has been added and the context has not been altered.

Additional accuracy was provided by the fact that all of the earlier chapters, and portions of several following chapters, were originally written more than twenty-six years ago, while I was still living in Africa; were written then but never previously published. Fortunately, that earlier manuscript was also preserved; together with at least a few of the pictures that were taken during my first trips to Africa.

It is generally believed that adults retain very few, if literally any, clear memories of their experiences prior to an age of about five years. Perhaps; but, in my case, my memories extend back to an age of only a few months. Memories that were clearly imprinted into my mind by painful experiences that occurred at a very early age.

The earliest of these memories remain crystal clear even after so many years; I know exactly what happened, where it occurred, and who was involved, and I know why these memories were retained while so many others were lost. All of these experiences involved either pain or fear, or both; physical or emotional factors that stamped these memories into my mind for the remainder of my life. Much has been lost from my first years, but a surprising amount still remains.

My earliest memory? I cannot now be certain which was first but two such memories concern things that occurred before I was a year old. In both cases these memories remain as 'third party' experiences; that is, the scenes are not viewed through my own eyes. Instead, the mental pictures that I retain show the scenes as viewed through somebody else's eyes, so I am in these scenes as if being seen by someone else.

Which might lead some people to believe that these are not true memories, that they are, instead, based upon my recollection of stories told to me after the fact. But that is not the case, since neither of these experiences were ever discussed with anybody.

SCENE ONE: I am on a bed in a hotel room in Little Rock, Arkansas, naked, face down, on the second floor of the hotel and facing to the east. Why do I remember this so clearly? Because my rectum was hurting me; maybe I was constipated; but regardless of the actual cause, I was in pain.

SCENE TWO: I am on the floor, on a rug, again face down and naked, in a bathroom; my older sister was in front of me and my mother was behind me, and they were engaged in a loud and violent argument.

And just what, if any, significance do these two earliest memories have? No specific significance; but they do convince me that our memories are reinforced by physical and emotional responses to experiences. Believe me, you will probably never forget your first gunshot wound, your first poisonous snake bite, your first airplane crash or your first sexual experience.

My earliest sexual memory? At the age of three years I could produce an erection by looking at pictures of women. How can I be sure of my age at the time? Because I can clearly remember the house in which I was living then, and also know my age when I was living there.

I did not then understand just what was happening, or why it occurred, but I was clearly aware of it and found the experience pleasant. One of my former wives told me that she has a clear memory of masturbating to the point of orgasm at the age of three years. If true, then she was ahead of me by nearly ten years. I did, at the age of eight, attempt intercourse; but without success.

A friend of mine, Billy Crosby, who was about a year older than I was, talked two neighborhood girls into prostituting themselves to us in return for a promised payment of thirty-five cents. One girl was about twelve and the other about fourteen. The four of us crawled under the floor of Billy's house, removed our clothes, and attempted

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intercourse. Later, Billy claimed that he was successful with both girls; but I tried with only one girl, and failed. I wanted to, and I certainly had an erection, but penetration never occurred.

Afterwards, when it came time to pay them, we did not have thirty-five cents; so, for the next couple of years, we walked an additional four miles a day on our way to and from school in order to avoid these girls. This occurred during the depths of the Great Depression; and, at the time, thirty-five cents was a meaningful sum of money. A ticket to a local theatre was a dime, a hamburger a nickel, a triple-dip ice-cream cone a nickel. A couple of years later, when first introduced, a six-pack of Cokes went for fifteen cents. The deposit on the Coke bottles was more, eighteen cents, but that was refundable.

Along about that time, when my father, a doctor, raised the price for delivering a baby from twenty-five dollars to thirty-five dollars, most of the people in town were outraged; now my daughter, also a doctor, gets exactly one-hundred times as much for the same procedure, \$3,500.00. Which, actually, is not a true comparison, because my father's fee included literally everything, delivery room, nursing, medication, his services and anything else involved; while today, my daughter's fee covers only her services, and total costs may exceed \$8,000.00.

Both of my paternal grandparents died before I was born, but I did know my father's stepmother. I also knew both of my mother's parents; my maternal grandfather was a Methodist preacher in the Indian Territory, later the state of Oklahoma, and he was also a bigamist, had several wives and a large number of children.

The only thing that I can clearly recall learning from my maternal grandfather was the fact that it was a good idea to keep your window in a car rolled up when you were riding in the back seat, and when the person seated ahead of you was chewing tobacco and spitting out of his window.

My paternal grandfather was a doctor who practiced in the state of Arkansas until he died shortly after the turn of the century. He probably graduated from medical school about the time of the Civil War, but I never learned much about him. His second, much younger, wife, my father's stepmother, outlived him by about thirty years and lived with us for several years before she died.

My father, William Edgar Jones, was born in 1887, in Arkansas, during the reign of the infamous 'Hanging Judge' Parker of Fort Smith. Following in his father's path, my father attended medical school in Louisville, Kentucky, and graduated in 1911. Then, in 1912, after a year of internship, he went to Panama, where they were building the canal. Being the only source of support for eight members of his family, he went to Panama for the 'big money;' most of the people who went to Panama died there, so it was a hardship post, and the salaries were based upon the risk. As a doctor, my father was paid \$150.00 per month; which, in 1912, was a very high salary. In contrast, a master craftsman of that period was paid about \$200.00 per year.

Cowboys working on big ranches during the development of the western part of this country were paid an average of \$30.00 per month, and many people have expressed surprise that they were willing to work so hard for such a low wage. Well, in fact, during that period, a wage of \$30.00 per month was actually a very high level of compensation.

For a period of several years, during the late 1930s, we hired women for \$3.50 per week, for 96 hours of work each week; something less than four cents an hour. Starting work at six O'clock in the morning, they worked straight through until eight O'clock at night, six days a week. On their 'days off,' on Fridays, they worked only twelve hours. Duties? Literally everything: all of the cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing and anything else required to maintain a rather large family.

I don't know how much my father was earning during that period, but do know that it wasn't much. And also know how hard he worked: he maintained office hours from eight in the morning until midnight, seven days a week; then performed elective surgery and delivered babies during the remainder of the night. So, to my later regret, I saw very little of my father during my earliest years.

In fact, I had very little contact with any member of my family during the first fourteen years of my life. My father was married three times and was widowed twice; when he married my mother, his second wife, she had a college degree but did not have the credits required for medical school. So she had to go back to school for two years prior to

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starting medical school at the University of Oklahoma, in Oklahoma City. Two years of college, four years of medical school, and a year of internship effectively removed her from the family for seven years; then, shortly after the end of her internship, she was diagnosed with cancer of the lower colon, spent four years in treatment, including eleven surgical procedures, and then died. So, for one reason or another, I had very little contact with my mother during the last eleven years of her life.

Effectively, I had almost no contact with either my father or my mother from the age of three until fourteen; and almost no contact after that; because, by the age of fourteen, I was gone from home, supporting myself as best I could and out of contact with my family.

Siblings? I had one sister, a half-sister and a half-brother; but I was the youngest and had nothing in common with any of them.

School? Very little; I finished the ninth grade and started, but did not finish, the tenth grade. But it should be pointed out that a ninth grade education in the 1930s was at least the equivalent of a Ph.D. today. We had more homework during an average month than most students today get during a period of sixteen years in school. Almost every day I talk with Ph.D.s and M.D.s who are, by my standards, functional illiterates. During the last twenty-odd years, I have been the principle speaker during more than a thousand medical seminars, have talked with thousands of doctors and have attempted to answer their questions. Please note the qualifying term in the previous sentence, I have 'attempted' to answer their questions; which is not easy, because most of these people not only do not understand the simple laws of basic physics but in many cases are not even aware of them.

Why? Because, during the last sixty years, the schools in this country have gone to Hell. In the current issue of NEWSWEEK, an article provided a comparison between the hours devoted to 'hard' subjects in schools in this country and the hours devoted to such subjects in other countries; schools in America provide less than half as many hours of such subjects as schools in all other developed countries.

At the age of five, I could read the newspaper in two languages, English and German, and nobody taught me to read, I taught myself; during later years, at one time or another, I have become at least reasonably fluent in a total of eight languages. My youngest daughter, now forty-one, is raising her five-year-old daughter in a trilingual fashion, English, Spanish and Polish. Last week, a group of eleven physical therapists were sent here by the Dutch government in order to attend a week-long course at the School of Medicine of the University of Florida, and all of these people are fluent in several languages, Dutch, German, English, French and Flemish.

I first tried to run away from home at the age of eight, had become rather successful at it by the age of eleven after several attempts, was gone most of the time from eleven until I was fourteen, and all of the time after I turned fourteen. In fact, it was more like 'running towards' rather than 'running away,' because my home provided everything I needed and almost everything that I wanted. But, somehow, that was not enough; I wanted something else. By the time I was fourteen I had visited every state in this country, parts of Mexico, Canada and British Honduras. Hitchhiking, riding freight trains and tramp steamers; working where and when I could find work of any kind, which was not easy during those years.

Things have changed since then; kids knocking around the country today are in grave danger, a lot of them end up dead and most of them find themselves in serious trouble of one kind or another; but instead of meeting people who tried to hurt me, I encountered many people who tried to help me. One of my greatest regrets is the fact that I cannot now locate these people in order to express my appreciation.

I always appeared to be older than my actual age, at sixteen I was usually thought to be about thirty; the combination of losing most of my hair by my middle teens and the damage done to my face by years of exposure to the sun added to this impression.

While my memories of those early years remain very clear in many ways, I am aware that they are distorted in at least one respect; my sense of time for that period is obviously wrong. Things which, based upon memory, appear to have occupied several weeks, could not have involved more than a few days. Given the number of things I did, and the

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places I went, if my memory in regard to time was accurate it would have taken a period of ten years or more rather than the actual period of about three or four years.

In 1939, I started flying, and from then until 1967 I maintained an accurate log of my flights, records that I still have, and these logbooks provided me with records that now enable me to establish the dates of my activities during those years. By the end of December, 1967, I had logged a total of 14,090 flights, involving 17,393.6 hours of flying, in every state in this country and in fifty-six foreign countries. Since then, I have flown an additional total of about 15,000 hours; none of which time was logged, something else which I now regret.

Having been a prolific reader from a very early age, I would not venture a guess regarding just how many books I have read, but the total would certainly run into the thousands; even now, I average at least one book a day; together with several hundred scientific articles every year, on a wide variety of subjects. During the last twenty-five years, I have written and published four books and several hundred articles; most of which writing was devoted to the subjects of exercise and physical rehabilitation. Starting in January of 1972, and continuing up to the present, a period of more than twenty-two years, I have devoted most of my attention to continuous medical research; a project that eventually produced the first, and still the only, meaningful tools for the purpose of testing human functional ability, the current line of MedX Medical Machines. Equipment that is now in clinical use in hundreds of medical facilities worldwide for the treatment of chronic spinal pathology, the most expensive, generally non-life-threatening, medical problem in this country today.

But I am getting ahead of myself. Nothing can be evaluated, or even understood, until it is viewed in context. Merely seeing the result tells you nothing of value; you must also know how long it took to produce that result, and what it cost. One thing that should be obvious to almost anybody, is the fact that a government does not appear to be able to produce any sort of worthwhile result. The politicians and bureaucrats are never the solution, are usually the problem. Everything they set out to improve they inevitably destroy.

Having been given an almost free hand since Roosevelt's first days in office, the self-proclaimed 'experts' in Washington have destroyed practically everything of value that existed in this country sixty years ago. Having been there then, and being here now, and having experienced what happened in the meantime, I believe that most people in this country were better off, and far happier, during the Great Depression than they are now.

I have been as poor as anybody ever was, have also been far richer than most people, so I have seen things from both sides. When I was poor the government did nothing to help me, and when I was rich it did everything possible to hurt me. As a child I hated school, and left as soon as possible, but I now realize that the education provided in this country sixty years ago was far superior to what is available here now.

Pick a random group of graduating Ph.D.s from the supposedly best schools in this country, stick them in a time machine and take them back sixty years in time and enroll them as starting students in the fifth grade in a small town in Oklahoma or Texas, and it would be highly likely that most of them would flunk. They would not be able to cope at that level; would not understand the basics. Exceptions? Certainly there are exceptions, but they are just that, 'exceptions,' and they are damned rare.

Shortly before he died, in 1964, my father told me that the biggest mistake of his life was voting for Roosevelt when he first ran for President; a mistake he never repeated. Shortly before he died, Eisenhower said that the biggest mistake of his life was appointing Warren to the Supreme Court. Throughout most of his life, my father's greatest fear was that the government would socialize medicine. Now, given the chance, Slick Willie and the Iron Maiden intend to revolutionize health care in this country.

And, yes, there certainly are problems in the current health care system; but, no, the government can never be the solution to these problems; will, instead, given the opportunity, produce a situation that will make the current problems look like blessings.

I am not a medical doctor, but I have had as much experience with doctors as anybody who ever lived: fourteen members of my more or less immediate family are, or were, doctors, and my activities during the last twenty-five years have brought me into direct contact with literally thousands of other doctors from all over the world. My current

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opinions are, admittedly, primarily limited to only one area in the broad field of medicine, physical rehabilitation; so it is at least possible that other specialties are not in such bad shape. But I doubt it.

And if you have been brainwashed into believing that the scientists will eventually provide the solution to our problems, then be informed: in my opinion, the current crop of scientists are, as a group, probably the dumbest people on the planet. Being products of our current educational system, most of them actually understand very little.

Millions of testing procedures are performed in this country by medical professionals every year in fashions that are nothing short of an outrage; and thousands of supposedly scientific articles are published every year in scientific journals that are based upon research that was performed with tools that are incapable of performing any of their intended purposes. Applied to joints like the knee, such procedures are nothing short of outright fraud; applied to spinal testing, these tests step across the line into the area of criminal malpractice.

Having been the principle speaker during more than 250 day-long medical seminars in 1985 and 1986, and now being the principle speaker during two medical seminars held each month at the School of Medicine of the University of Florida, Gainesville, I have been brought face to face with thousands of medical professionals involved in rehabilitation; have heard their questions and learned their opinions.

Have also learned that meaningful communication with many of these people is simply impossible. While the things that we are trying to teach these people are actually quite simple, should in fact be obvious to almost anybody, can be explained in line with simple laws of basic physics, and can be clearly demonstrated in undeniable fashions, it does not follow that most of these people understand any of it; instead, these presentations are apparently intellectually intimidating to many people, they go away with the impression that it is simply too complicated to be understood.

This impression resulting in spite of the fact that our presentations have been reduced to a level that is so simple that it should be obvious to an average blacksmith; and probably would be obvious to an average blacksmith, but nevertheless remain far above the head of an average scientist.

Worse: it is also apparent that most of these supposed experts base their opinions on emotions rather than logic; if they like me, for whatever reason, then they tend to believe what I say; but if they do not like me, then they will believe nothing that I say. Which common mistake is a result of basing your opinions upon 'source' rather than 'substance.' In general, 'who' is considered to be more important than 'what.'

When you tell such people something that is new to them, and damned near everything of any slightest value is new to them, the first thing most of them ask you is something along the lines of . . . "Oh, where did you read that?" Which, translated, means . . . "Which long-haired, dope-smoking, scrawny, jogging, Ph.D. published that in which eminent, peer-reviewed scientific journal?"

My response to such questions being a strong desire to tighten their necktie by several inches, drag them out into the alley and explain things to them; that is, kick their ass.

Oh! So you are violent? Well, as a friend of mine says . . . "I don't care what the problem is, the solution is violence." And while I am no longer anywhere near as violent as I once was, the temptation is still there. So I am also guilty of emotional reactions; but would like to point out that violence has never gotten me into trouble but has gotten me out of trouble on a number of occasions.

Politically, I am 64,000 miles to the right of Atilla The Hun; by my standards, Genghis Khan was an ultra liberal, left wing pinko. Given the power, I would have ended the Vietnam War in less than twenty-four hours, and would have won it, and neither the Russians nor the Chinese would have done anything in response.

World opinion? Fuck world opinion; you will seldom please anybody, and will never please everybody. So look out for yourself, because you can be damned sure that very few, if literally any, other people have any slightest interest in looking out for you.

Which attitude, in my case at least, presents a bit of a paradox: because knowing the proper use of power does not mean that I have ever sought power; quite the contrary, I sincerely believe that anybody who does seek power is insane.

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Nor does my attitude mean that I am in favor of hurting people; instead, most of my efforts throughout my lifetime have been aimed in the direction of trying to help people. But frequently bitter experience has taught me that Mark Twain was right when he said . . . “If you take a dog that is starving, and make him wealthy, he will not bite you; and that is the principle difference between a dog and a man.”

Have also learned that Edgar Allen Poe was right, about 150 years ago, when he published a brief statement on the subjects of intelligence and integrity. In an article entitled ‘The Hunting of the Slan,’ he said . . . “I have sometimes amused myself by endeavoring to fancy what would be the fate of any individual gifted, or rather accursed, with an intelligence very far superior to that of his race. Of course, he would be conscious of his superiority nor could he (if otherwise constituted as man is) help manifesting his consciousness. Thus he would make himself enemies at all points. And since his opinions and speculations would likely differ from those of all mankind - that he would be considered a madman, is evident. How horribly painful such a condition! Hell could invent no greater torture than that of being charged with abnormal weakness on account of being abnormally strong.

“In like manner, nothing can be clearer than that a very generous spirit - truly feeling what all merely profess - must inevitably find itself misconceived in every direction - its motivations misinterpreted. Just as extremeness of intelligence would be thought fatuity, so excess of chivalry could not fail of being looked upon as meanness in its last degree - and so with other virtues. This subject is a painful one indeed. That individuals have so soared above the plane of their race is scarcely to be questioned; but, in looking back through history for traces of their existence, we should pass over the biographies of ‘the good and the great,’ while we search carefully the slight records of wretches who died in prison, in Bedlam, or upon the Gallows.”

Similar statements have been published by a rather large number of other people over a period of several thousand years; yet, in general, remain overlooked, misunderstood, or ignored. As somebody else once said . . . “The only thing we learn from history is that we do not learn from history.”

But now the situation is even worse: in attempts to assure ‘political correctness,’ history is being distorted to such a degree that it no longer has much, if anything, in common with things that actually occurred in the past.

Roosevelt saved this country from the ravages of the Great Depression, right? Sure. Well, in fact, if you will simply ignore the lies that are being published today on that subject, and instead go back and carefully read the newspapers that were published throughout the depression, it will immediately become apparent that the economic situation in this country actually got worse between the date that Roosevelt took office and the start of the Second World War; then, of course, the apparent boom that occurred during and for a short period following the war was a false boom.

Perhaps I am simply stupid, but I have never been able to understand just how you can take a country that is broke, then spend hundreds of billions of dollars that you don’t have, with absolutely nothing in the way of an economic return, and then suddenly announce that you are wealthy.

While there was enormous wastage during that war, at least some of the costs were justified for our survival, but in no sense of the word did any of these expenditures increase our wealth. Then, having won the war at great expense, we got nothing in return. Instead, devoted billions of dollars towards helping our former enemies, people who tried to destroy us.

I was not smart enough to understand it at the time, but Patton was right when he said . . . “Give me three weeks and I will start the Third World War, win it, and blame it on the Russians.” I did not start to understand what was happening until the Russians blockaded Berlin in 1948; but then I did start to understand, and clearly understood what we should have done about it. Instead of airlifting food and other supplies to Berlin I would have been hauling bombs to Russia. Nuclear bombs. Superior power is not enough, your enemies must clearly understand that you have an unhesitating willingness to use that superior power. If this country had reacted properly in response to the Russians in 1948, the Cold War and many other following wars could have been avoided. Perhaps we could have become a truly wealthy country; but, instead, this country is now so far in debt that we will probably never return to an economic situation even approaching sanity.

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So what comes next? Where do we go from here? Well, I cannot tell you 'when,' but I can tell you 'what.' Frankly, I am surprised that this country has survived as long as it has. But the requirements for continued, long-range survival are no longer in place; before we can start to meaningfully 'rise,' we must first 'fall.' If you live to reach my current age, which is highly unlikely for most of the people now living in this country, you will probably envy the dead. When the total collapse of our current society comes, and it will come, and it will come very quickly once started, you will see cannibalism being openly performed in plain sight; by which point people will be eating other people raw, because there will then be nothing left in the way of fuel to cook them with.

Insane? Certainly it is insane; but if, at this point in history, you still expect anything apart from continued insanity, then you are a fool.

As somebody once said . . . "I was depressed, but a friend told me to cheer up, that things could be worse; so I cheered up, and, sure enough, things got worse."

In 1951, Eric Hoffer published a book entitled 'The True Believer.' Like most such books, his thoughts can be reduced to a few sentences: In essence, he believed that most people considered themselves to be idiots; and, he said, that might well be their only true opinion. So they spend their lives in a vain attempt to find some sort of a guru, somebody to lead them by the hand to the promised land.

But he also pointed out the fact that the followers must never believe that they actually understand their 'cause.' Because, they feel, if it is simple enough for an idiot such as themselves to understand, then it is obviously of no value. So, instead, they seek the mysterious, the unknowable, the paradise known only to their guru.

Thus religion, thus politics, thus the law; none of which have anything in common with either intelligence or justice. Somebody recently said . . . "The Criminal Justice System? The very name is an oxymoron; in no sense of the word is it a system, it has absolutely nothing to do with justice, but it certainly is criminal."

The legal system in this country has now degenerated to the point of outright extortion and theft. We should follow Shakespeare's advice . . . "The first thing we must do is kill all the lawyers."

Most of the people in this country live out their lives without ever becoming aware of just how they are effected by lawyers; but they are paying the costs nevertheless, even if they never meet a lawyer. The cost of everything you buy has been inflated far beyond its real value by the actions of lawyers; we have about four percent of the world's total population in this country, but more than ninety percent of the world's litigation. The most common form of litigation in this country, the so-called 'contingency' suit, where the lawyer takes a large part of the award, is illegal throughout most of the rest of the world. In England, if it comes to the attention of the court that a lawyer stands to either gain or lose as a result of a lawsuit with which he is involved, the lawyer will be disbarred for life and go to the penitentiary for a felony.

"Oh!", the lawyers say, "Without such suits the poor people would have no legal representation."

Several previously-major industries in this country have been driven out of business by lawsuits instigated by lawyers for no reason apart from a desire to steal. Piper Aircraft Corporation, once a major industrial power in this country, was forced out of business by lawsuits that had no slightest validity. Just before they closed their doors for the last time, thirty-five percent of the selling price of a Piper airplane was a result of the cost of Piper's product-liability insurance. If you paid \$1,000,000.00 for a Piper airplane, \$350,000.00 of that was required to cover Piper's liability insurance costs; thus the price of the plane was inflated by more than fifty percent.

Airplanes that sold for less than \$7,000.00 about forty years ago now cost more than \$350,000.00. Yes, inflation has contributed to this rise in cost; and, yes, the airplanes have been improved somewhat in the meantime; but by far the greatest factor responsible for this insane increase in the selling price has been a result of litigation instigated for no purpose apart from an attempt to make a lot of lawyers very rich.

When the Boeing 707 was introduced as the first practical jet transport, they sold for about \$6,000,000.00, which was considered a very high price at that time; today, a new airplane with equal, or very slightly improved, capability, sells for about fifteen times that much.

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Most people, of course, never ever consider the price of an airplane, but they do have to deal with the cost of just about everything else, food, housing, transportation and medical care.

As somebody once said (Churchill?) . . . “Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Since the majority of both houses of the congress are lawyers, and since the bureaucracy is controlled by lawyers, it is not surprising that the laws have been designed to be favorable for lawyers.

About 1820, when railroads were introduced in England, one member of the House of Lords had this to say on the subject . . . “I’m against it; because it will encourage the common people to travel, to no good purpose.”

Now the situation is much worse: a large part of the world is addicted to the automobile, cannot afford the total costs of owning a car but could not survive without one. As recently as the end of the Second World War, public transportation in Los Angeles was very good, was fast, convenient and relatively cheap. Today, denied cars, Los Angeles would come to a halt within a matter of hours. The world’s reserve of oil is finite, and is rapidly being exhausted, and it is highly unlikely that an alternative source of fuel will ever be discovered. “Oh, but the experts say . . . “ Sure. Be good enough, if you can, to give me one example of when the experts were right about anything.

Having spent about two years in Panama, from 1912 until 1914, my father then went to Bolivia, where they were building a railroad from the headwaters of the Amazon to the gold fields in the interior. Years later he told me that the situation in Bolivia was much worse than it was in Panama, people died by the thousands. And while the things that occurred in Panama are rather well known, I have never been able to find out anything about the problems in Bolivia apart from what my father told me.

When he returned to this country he married, went back to Arkansas, and built a small hospital; only to learn the hard way that you cannot support a hospital on an income consisting of a few eggs, an occasional chicken, ears of corn and other vegetables. The Great Depression supposedly started on Black Friday, in October of 1929; but in fact a large part of the country was in serious trouble long before that.

My father’s first wife, together with the child, died during a third birth; and the hospital failed. Then he married my mother and two more children were born, an older sister and myself; by which point the situation in Arkansas was nothing short of desperate. So, in 1926, he moved to Seminole, Oklahoma; because, while times were hard in a large part of the country, there was money in Seminole.

For one of the few times in the history of the world, the ‘experts’ were in total agreement: the Seminole oil field was so vast, they believed, that it could easily supply the needs of the entire world forever. Sure. But they believed it, and the result was that the price of oil dropped to ten cents a barrel; at one point they couldn’t even give it away, so millions of barrels were pumped out of wells only to be allowed to seep back into the ground, while millions of cubic miles of natural gas were simply burned, flared away. Years later, you could still read a newspaper during the middle of the night as a result of light produced by burning natural gas.

Before the oil strike, Seminole was a rather small, sleepy town; afterwards, it was chaos. People moved there in their thousands; most of them looking for work, but a lot of them seeking easy money. For awhile, Seminole had most of the gunfighters, gamblers, thieves and whores in the country. Even after the repeal of prohibition, Oklahoma was a ‘dry’ state; in theory. In practice, bootleg liquor was sold by the thousands of gallons.

A total of thirty-two oil refineries were built by several large oil companies, and thousands of men were needed to operate these plants, but the town of Seminole could provide neither housing nor much in the way of anything else required to maintain these people; so dozens of company towns were constructed in the area. Small wooden shacks for housing and cafeterias to provide food.

When my father first arrived in Seminole, he lived in his office; and since it was almost impossible to get anything to eat in town, his food was cooked in Arkansas and mailed to him. Which was easier said than done; because the post office consisted of a large barn where the incoming mail was piled on the floor and you had to search through thousands of letters and packages in order to find your own mail. On one occasion, a cooked turkey was mailed from Arkansas; but by the time he found it, it was rotten.

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Later, when we joined him in Seminole, the only place we could find to live was a very small shack located behind another, larger house. A total of seven people were crowded into an area about the size of an average bedroom today. Space that was eventually enlarged by building another room onto one end of the house. For the first few years, the problem of feeding the family was solved by buying our meals in an oil company cafeteria outside of town.

The main street of the town was not paved, was usually so muddy that it was all but impossible to use; later, when it finally was paved with bricks, a large truck that had sunk so far into the mud that it could not be removed was simply covered over.

The distance from Morrilton, Arkansas, where I was born, to Seminole was about 300 miles; the roads were not paved, maps did not exist and most of the people living along the way could tell you nothing about the road ahead, so we usually got lost at least once while attempting that trip. If we departed at 4:00 O'clock in the morning, we might complete the trip by midnight, twenty hours later; flat tires and blowouts occurred on every trip and it was difficult to find anyplace to buy gas. Several such trips were made back and forth during the first few years, and my job during these trips was to watch the trunk; then, when the trunk broke loose and fell off, I was supposed to inform the driver. Not 'if' but 'when,' because the trunk was attached to the car by leather straps that seldom lasted throughout such a trip.

The main street of Seminole was only four blocks long and the buildings on both sides of the street were never more than two stories tall, and most of them were single-storied. My father's office was located at the front of the second story above a store, and practically every other second floor in town was occupied by whorehouses. The one exception being a pool hall and beer parlor.

Since the town jail was far too small to house all of the prisoners, they drove pieces of pipe into the ground and chained most of the prisoners to this pipe. Considering the number of people in town, the crime rate was actually quite low; primarily because serious attention was given towards attempts to control crime. Years later, when he died, a rather well-known guard at the state penitentiary in McCallister was remembered primarily for the fact that he killed fourteen prisoners while using a shovel as a weapon; the paper did not mention the total number he had killed. Executions were frequent and the capital cases did not drag out in the courts for years.

Sixty-three years ago, less than eighteen months after the stock market crash, I made the paper for the first time: when he finished cutting my hair, I asked the barber to brush the loose hair off my neck, but he ignored my request, walked out of the shop, leaned up against a telephone pole and lit a cigarette. So I got out of the chair, walked up to him and again asked him to brush my neck; whereupon he slapped me in the face, hard. So I kicked him in the shin and ran off down the street; if he followed me, he did not catch me. I did not report this to my father, but somebody did; the result being a fist fight in the street that cost my father a large part of one of his ears, the barber bit it off.

The barber, who turned out to be a paroled convict, was dragged off to jail, beaten half to death and run out of town.

So far as I know, that was the only violent occurrence in my father's life; but only the first of many in mine. For awhile, somebody tried to steal drugs by calling a doctor in the middle of the night and telling him that an explosion and fire had occurred in one of the many oil refineries in the area, and such explosions did occur rather frequently; the idea being that a doctor summoned to such a disaster would take morphine with him, the plan then being to waylay the doctor on some back road and rob him. Several local doctors were robbed in this fashion, and attempts were made to rob my father. Fortunately, he always drove a fast car and was able to outrun them.

So the local chief of police, Jake Sims, gave my father a gun that he had taken from some hoodlum, a double-barreled, 10 gauge shotgun with both the shoulder stock and the barrels shortened; in effect, it was a hand cannon. The chief told my father . . . "The next time it happens, run, but don't run so fast; let them come up alongside your car, then lay this gun on the window and give them both barrels, which will clean out the front seat." It would have, too; and while my father carried that gun for the rest of his life, he never had to use it.

When I was fourteen, shortly before I left home for good, the chief called and asked me to come to the police station. When I got there he asked me if I had a pistol; when I said that I did, he handed me a permit to carry a concealed weapon, and said . . . "I figgered you did; and sooner or later you will have to use it, and it will be better if it is legal."

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If there was a house in town that did not have at least a few guns I was not aware of it; we had about a dozen and I started shooting when I was six years old; hunted rabbits, squirrels, frogs, ducks and quail. My father loved to hunt but seldom had the time after we left Arkansas in 1926; part of my later interest in animals resulted from reading hunting and fishing magazines in my father's office. Years later, I found a picture of my father that was taken in either Panama or Bolivia; he and another man, both wearing pistols, were standing next to a tree where several jaguar hides were displayed.

A local men's store, Hammons, had a large variety of mounted wild animals on display; including the skin of a large python.

Unfortunately, there was then very little in the way of remaining wildlife around Seminole; most of the county had been utterly devastated by the oil boom, the streams were pure salt water with a sludge of oil several inches deep on the surface. So I had to go elsewhere to hunt.

One of my uncles, Clyde Fish, lived in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and he loved to hunt and fish; so I usually spent at least a few weeks with him every year, time devoted primarily to hunting and fishing. His wife, Atha Lee, my mother's sister, was one of the finest rifle shots I have ever seen. Atha Lee had a rather bad limp that resulted from a broken ankle; a pet squirrel jumped off the roof of her house onto her shoulder while she was climbing the steps to her back porch, it surprised her, she slapped at the squirrel, and it bit her on the neck, she fell and broke her ankle.

Later, at the swimming pool in Seminole, a much older boy told me that the foot bath at the entrance to the locker room contained chemicals intended to prevent athlete's foot; whereupon I told him . . . "Oh, I know what causes that: squirrel bite."

When I moved back to this country from Central Africa in 1968, the government of what was then Rhodesia seized all of my possessions that I did not take with me, literally millions of dollars worth of equipment that was supposed to be sent here by ship; among other things, I had a large collection of family photographs going back nearly to the Civil War, together with family records covering a period of about 100 years. All of which pictures and records were stolen, even though they were of no slightest use or interest to anybody else.

I will return to the subject of my experiences in Africa later, but for the moment will mention only a few pictures that were lost. Among these pictures were some that showed my father's car literally covered with ducks, hundreds of ducks. Together with my siblings, I was seated on the roof of the car, was then about three years old. At that time, the so-called Mississippi Flyway, during the hunting season, had literally millions of ducks; on some days the sky was dark with ducks flying south. The daily limit for each hunter was twenty ducks, but after the first few days of the hunting season it was legal to have as many as sixty ducks in your possession, the limit for three days. So my father and three other men would start early in the morning, kill a total of several hundred ducks within a matter of a few hours, and then on the way back home they would give away most of the day's kill so that they had a total of only 240 ducks remaining when they got back to town. So I know how many ducks were still hanging on the car in the pictures.

If, in his entire life, my father ever performed another illegal act, it never came to my attention. Instead, he worked like a dog for fifty-three years and was probably never paid for ninety percent of his work; supported his own family and put three members of the family through medical school, and contributed a large part of their support to a large number of relatives. In every sense of the word, he was by far the best man I ever met. But did I understand or appreciate his efforts at the time? Of course not; but I do now, much too late to express my appreciation. As somebody once said . . . "Why do we get so soon old, and so late smart?"

While my mother and two of my siblings did go to medical school, together with one uncle and several cousins (all at my father's expense), no pressure was ever exerted upon me to follow a similar path; although it was made very clear to me that I had the opportunity if I chose to pursue it. But, in addition to going with my father on hundreds of house calls, I also watched hundreds of surgical procedures and waited in a nearby room during the birth of hundreds of babies. And I read my father's rather extensive medical library at least twice, hundreds of volumes in both English and German; while most of these books were stolen in Africa, I still have several of them, and some of them contain medical illustrations that were produced in Germany around the turn of the century that are far superior to most of the illustrations being produced today.

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In 1935, a friend of my father's, a man named Potter, was shot in the leg at point blank range with a shotgun; was shot by a dog; he put the gun on the floor of the back seat of his car and then ran a dog in on top of it; the dog stuck his foot through the trigger guard and his dew claw pushed the gun's safety to the 'off' position; then, when the dog tried to jerk his foot out of the trigger guard, the gun fired. If Potter had been even a few inches farther away, his leg would have been removed at the knee; as it was, his lower leg was still attached by about as much tissue as you have in your little finger, the knee itself was gone. He was carried into our house, into my room, placed in my bed, and my father operated on him then and there; it was, by far, the most radical surgical procedure that I have ever seen performed on a leg, but the lower leg was saved. His leg remained stiff at the knee for the rest of his life, but at least he still had a lower leg.

In 1918, using whatever tools he had with him, operating on a rough wooden table in the kitchen of a farm house, with the light provided by a kerosene lantern, my father replaced the penis and testicles of a farmer that had been removed in an accident with some sort of farm machinery. I never learned whether these parts worked afterwards, or even if they stayed on, but at least they were reattached. So Bobbitt was not the first man to have his penis sewed back on.