

And God Laughs...

The Arthur Jones Autobiography

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“Men occasionally stumble over truth, but most of them pick themselves up and hurry off as if nothing happened.”

Winston Churchill

I started trying to improve barbell exercises in 1939, having started training with weights a year earlier. I built a prototype exercise machine in 1948, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and later built dozens of other prototype machines all over the world, in attempts to solve problems that I was aware of but did not then understand. The first breakthrough to understanding occurred in Rhodesia in 1968; and the first successful model of what eventually evolved into the Nautilus line of exercise machines was produced in Lake Helen, Florida, later that same year.

The first production model of a Nautilus machine was picked up by a customer on November 30, 1970; and from that point on the business expanded very rapidly, sometimes too rapidly. I was then publishing at least thirty long articles in various magazines and journals every year, and usually was a speaker during at least fifty meetings of medical professionals every year. We got a lot of generally favorable publicity in the media, both in print and on television; feature articles appeared in Time, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, The Wall Street Journal and many other publications, and in 1984 Forbes financial magazine rated me among the wealthiest 400 people in this country, albeit at the bottom of that list with an estimated net worth of \$125,000,000.00.

Time magazine estimated my annual net profit at \$300,000,000.00, which was utterly ridiculous; but the profits were quite high for many years; almost all of which profits were immediately invested in medical research in order to avoid giving it to the IRS.

Fourteen different teams of highly qualified people worked continuously for years in attempts to develop meaningful tools that would be capable of providing specific and accurate measurements of human functional ability, strength, ranges of movement and muscular endurance. Tools for those purposes did not exist when we initiated our research in January of 1972, and still did not exist more than fourteen years later in spite of our efforts to develop them; thus it was literally impossible to evaluate the results of the protocols of treatment that were being used by medical professionals for the purpose of rehabilitation. Just what had changed, and the degree of change, was impossible to determine; thus you could not evaluate your rehabilitation protocols. The unavoidable result being that many treatment protocols were being used with millions of injured patients that were utterly worthless, and some that were worse than worthless, even dangerous.

While we continued for years with our research, and continued to fail to produce acceptable tools for our intended purposes, several other companies rushed into the medical marketplace with a variety of machines that were simply ridiculous, that provided none of the actual requirements for meaningful testing procedures and thus were worse than worthless; worse because their test results were misleading, and because their suggested protocols were dangerous.

Nevertheless, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of such worthless and dangerous machines were sold to medical professionals, and most of them are still in use today; and, once having been stupid enough to buy such a machine, most people could never bring themselves to the point of admitting that the purchase had been a mistake. It is highly likely that these worthless and dangerous tools will still be in common use a century from now. One current result of this continuing medical stupidity being the fact that at least \$80,000,000,000.00 is now being wasted in this country every year; which works out to about \$10,000,000.00 an hour, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year, a sum equal to about one-fourth of our annual military budget, or about nine percent of all costs for health care in this country today.

In the meantime about 400,000 surgical procedures are conducted in this country every year for lower-back pain; generally with very poor results. Which is a rate that is four times the current rate in England, and with worse overall outcome results. Most current lower-back patients in England have to wait for surgery; and most that do have to wait

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then find that surgery is not required, that within a relatively short time their pain will go away without surgery. Given proper rehabilitative protocols of treatment their pain will usually go away a lot faster, and normally will not return later.

Medical professionals now treating patients with chronic spinal pathology with our machines, MedX Medical Testing and Rehabilitative Exercise Machines, are now producing outstanding results with hundreds of thousands of chronic patients who have previously tried everything else available in the way of treatment without any slightest improvement in their condition. But in the meantime millions of other patients are still being provided utterly worthless, even dangerous, treatment protocols by medical professionals who simply do not know just what the Hell they are doing. The current situation is nothing short of a major outrage.

You cannot evaluate anything until you can measure it accurately and specifically, but most medical professionals today are not even aware of the requirements for meaningful testing procedures, and seldom can understand them regardless of just how simply they are explained and demonstrated. Someday, perhaps, as Max Planck said, most of them will understand; but in the meantime millions of patients will continue to suffer because of their ignorance. And, in general, these are the supposed 'experts' in the field of spinal rehabilitation, the people who are supposedly teaching the rest of the medical community just what is right and what is wrong. Hundreds of supposedly scientific articles are published in medical journals every month that are simply ridiculous, utterly stupid; published by supposed experts who are not even aware of many simple laws of basic physics and thus continue to ignore things like gravity, friction, stored energy and impact forces that are unavoidably produced by sudden movement of any kind.

Pointing out their simple mistakes to such people, if they will even bother to listen, is usually an exercise in futility; I frequently have a strong desire to strangle them when faced with their obvious stupidity. Ignorance, a lack of knowledge, can sometimes be corrected; but, as they say . . . "Stupidity goes clear to the bone." And cannot be corrected.

In 1985, then being wrongly convinced that we were about to produce the medical breakthrough that we had been working on continuously for more than thirteen years, having already designed, built and rejected more than 3,000 prototype machines and invested more than \$40,000,000.00 in continuous research, I decided that I needed to start trying to market our medical machines even though we still had not solved all of the related problems; but I then believed that the remaining problems would be solved within a few months at most. But I was wrong again, as usual: the remaining problems were not solved until about two years later.

Thus the first successful medical testing tool in the history of the world was not offered for sale to the medical community until October of 1987; was first exhibited at a medical meeting in New York City called The Challenge of the Lumbar Spine, a meeting attended by hundreds of doctors. During that meeting I published two-page advertisements in The Wall Street Journal, U.S.A. Today and the Washington Post. Ads entitled . . . "A partial solution to an annual \$80,000,000,000.00 Medical Problem." Ads that were illustrated with dozens of dramatic illustrations of the test results produced by research at the School of Medicine of the University of Florida, Gainesville. Later that same year I published similar but one-page ads in the same newspapers; and these ads provided us with thousands of inquires from both medical professionals and chronic spinal patients all over the world. Most of these patients being nothing short of desperate in their efforts to find a solution to their problems; having previously tried everything else with nothing in the way of help. One doctor in California even sent his wife here for treatment of her chronic spinal pain.

But just how did most of the supposed experts in this field respond? Generally by simply continuing to ignore what we were offering, usually being unwilling to even discuss it. Which is a typical response by almost any supposed expert in any field when presented with anything relatively new that was not his idea. The NIH factor: Not Invented Here, and thus of no slightest value.

But, in 1985, wrongly convinced that our machines would soon be ready to market, I started conducting daily medical seminars in a huge auditorium that I built on my farm north of Ocala, Florida. Using a fleet of multi-engined, jet-powered airplanes that I then owned, several planes would pick up groups of medical professionals all over the country early every morning, seven days a week, fly them to the big airport I had built on my farm for a day-long medical seminar and then take them back home late that evening. Tens of thousands of medical professionals attended

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these seminars; over a period of more than eight months, during the latter part of 1985 and the first part of 1986, we conducted more than 250 of these seminars, with a different audience every day. And we solicited orders for what we believed to be our soon to be forthcoming medical testing machines.

Solicited orders in spite of the fact that acceptable models of such machines still did not exist. So we could not show the machines we were offering for sale, could not provide a picture or even an artist's perception of just what they would actually look like. How big are they? . . . "Not too big." What do they look like? . . . "They are beautiful." How well do they work? . . . "Perfectly." All we could provide these potential medical customers with was a name and a price; but could not tell them when the machines would be available for delivery to a customer, could only say . . . "Someday. Soon, hopefully."

Nevertheless, we got orders for millions of dollars worth of these supposedly soon to be forthcoming machines. I eventually halted these daily seminars not because they were unsuccessful but because they were too successful; I began to suspect that we might create more enemies than friends if the machines were not ready for delivery soon. Secondly, these seminars were taking about fourteen hours a day of my time, seven days a week, and our prototype research was suffering as a consequence of my lack of attention; I usually flew over to Lake Helen late every night in order to evaluate any results that had been produced in our prototype shops there during that day, but really found it impossible to devote as much time to our prototype-designing attempts as was really required.

Even working a total of nearly twenty hours a day, seven days a week, was not enough to accomplish everything that I needed to do; so I halted the daily seminars, then intending to start them again about three months later, again on a daily basis. But they were never started again on a daily basis; because I then made another of the biggest mistakes of my life: I sold Nautilus to a man from Dallas, Texas, named Travis Ward; a man who was an industrial criminal.

He visited me in Florida in an attempt to get me to sell him the distribution rights for Nautilus machines for the states of Texas and Louisiana; but I tried to discourage his interest by telling him that I was not interested because I planned to sell Nautilus, which was not true, was instead just an effort on my part to get rid of him.

Whereupon he said . . . "How much do you want for the company?" And I simply jerked a figure out of the air, expecting to cause him to lose interest; but, instead, he said . . . "I'll take it." So then just what the Hell was I supposed to say? And having thought about it a bit, I said to myself . . . "Why not? It will give me both the time and money needed to finish the development of the medical machines that we have been working on for the last fourteen years; then I can start a new company."

Shortly before that more than \$5,000,000.00 had suddenly disappeared from the Virginia plant then being directed by Dan Baldwin and I had fired him; so that provided me with another incentive to sell the company since I was getting a bit tired of people stealing and wasting money on such a massive scale; but being unable to be in several places at the same time I was never seemingly able to control these problems. I was, quite simply, disgusted with the way things had been going recently; wanted to start over on a much smaller scale, without having to try to deal with all of the problems provided by hundreds of employees.

Then, having become too anxious to sell the company, I failed to perform my so-called 'Due Diligence' properly; did not investigate Travis Ward to the extent that I should have. I did not like him personally, but he did initially appear to be what he represented himself to be; but in fact he was an outright criminal, had no slightest intention of ever paying me the full price that he offered for my company.

Without my knowledge he was already under indictment by a Federal prosecutor named James Tucker in Jackson, Mississippi, for having bribed two utilities executives employed by the state of Mississippi; bribed them in a massive fraud that involved the theft of hundreds of millions of dollars, which, as I learned far too late, was the manner in which Ward managed all of his affairs.

So, because of my stupidity, a contract for the sale of Nautilus was signed with Ward on June 11, 1986; he gave us an initial token down payment in cash at the time the contract was signed, and was supposed to pay the balance in full at a closing of the sale then scheduled for a couple of months later, in August of 1986. A closing that did not in fact occur until more than eight months after the scheduled date, in April of 1987; and even then, he did not pay the

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contracted price in full, cheated us out of many millions of dollars by making utterly false charges of fraud on my part. Claimed that the assets of the company were far below the stated assets at the time the contract of sale was signed; and made that false claim in spite of the fact that the contract clearly stated . . . “This purchase price agreed to here by both parties applies to all of the assets of the Nautilus company, assets and liabilities, both known and unknown, both suspected and unsuspected by either party.” In effect he had agreed to pay a stated price regardless of what he learned later, even if I had overstated the assets or understated the liabilities of the company.

Neither of which I had done; his own lawyers and accountants spent weeks going over all of the records of the company before the sales contract was signed; and, additionally, a long and very expensive audit of the company had just been completed by one of the seven largest accounting firms in the world, a certified audit that made the accounting firm responsible for any mistakes in their figures. So Ward knew everything about both the assets and liabilities of the company before our contract was ever signed. He did do his Due Diligence, although I failed to.

When you thus put yourself in a position of agreeing to a sale without getting all of the money up front you then find yourself in an utterly impossible position; when it comes time for them to pay you in the agreed manner, and at the stated time provided by the terms of the contract, rather than paying you they file a law suit against you claiming fraud; after which you are in the hands of the lawyers and will be damned lucky if you ever see a cent of the money actually due to you, and then only after years in court.

In this case it did not help my situation much when my lawyer, a man who previously had apparently done a good if not cheap job for me in two other cases, sold out to Travis Ward; his actions making it obvious that he was then working against me in support of Ward rather than for me.

So again I got cheated out of many millions of dollars; ended up owning a large farm with a beautiful mansion, a huge auditorium, the world's largest privately-owned airport, the largest collection of exotic animals in the world, more than \$10,000,000.00 worth of jet-powered airplanes and all of the rights to the still forthcoming medical machines, plus the promise of several million dollars to be paid later; but with nothing close to the amount of cash I had been promised. Additionally, delays caused by Ward resulted in me having to pay far more in the way of taxes than would have been required if Ward had lived up to the terms of the contract.

Later, I cooperated with the Mississippi Federal prosecutor, James Tucker, and with the FBI Special Agent in charge of investigating the case, Glen Breedlove, in an attempt to get Ward's ass tossed into a Federal prison for the rest of his life; in other trials, the two men that Ward bribed were both convicted and sent to Federal prisons, but in two later trials Ward bribed some of the jurors and managed to get a hung jury in both cases, with the clear majority of jurors voting for his conviction but with a few that he had bribed refusing to convict him. After two failed trials, the Justice Department in Washington refused to try him for a third time; so he got away with a major crime again. Although his personal assistant did go to a Federal prison for a related bank fraud that Ward was also directly involved in.

Then, later, having looted the Nautilus company of every cent he could, Ward filed bankruptcy, and the promised millions to be paid later were never in fact forthcoming. Dan Baldwin then managed to briefly get control of the company using money provided by a young Chinese man, but was unable to manage it successfully and eventually the company ended up in the hands of its fourth owner; who apparently do not know how to run it either, and now appear to be failing, which is not surprising since it is a very specialized business in a field where they have no experience. It is usually hard to build a successful business, but very easy to destroy one.