

Would-I and the Remarkable Stink



First of all, at the risk of being sexist, I want to give any woman reading this fair warning: The following story involves that male fascination with flatulence that most women find offensive. So if you tend to wrinkle your nose and make the "euw" sound when the topic turns to human bodily functions you may want to give this story a pass. While this may not be a reaction exclusive to the female gender, it has been my experience that most women fail to see the humour potential of gaseous emissions. Most men do and if you want historical evidence, just look at what Michelangelo painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and imagine God saying, "Hey Adam, pull my finger." As I have said, fart humour is likely a guy thing and this brings me to my story of Would-I and the remarkable stink.

It happened years ago back in the 1970's at Salmond's Hunt Camp up in eastern Ontario. It was the year of the big fire. Someone had set fire to the bush during the middle of the first week of deer season and a bunch of the guys from camp decided to drive up to the hydro line for a night time view of the blaze. It was quite a sight. Over 4000 hectares of forest were ablaze and the view at night was quite the thing. Fingers of flame stretched across the mountain side, occasionally hitting a juniper which would flare up into a very pleasing fireworks display. There were six of us in my red Ford van to enjoy the show. Among us was a fellow cut up named Woody who we always called "Would-I" playing on his name and his legendary desire to do nearly anything you could imagine a creature doing. (Hey Wood-I, would you like to see if there is a bear in that cave? "Would I!!!") Would-I set behind me on the first bench seat.

About ten minutes into the show, Would-I cut loose with a sphincteric report that rattled the windows, slowly filling the van with an expanding cloud of invisible stench and Would-I's soul with laughter. Even forewarned we were not ready for what followed. Jim was the first to fall.

Uttering a few, totally necessary expletives, Jim grabbed the handle to the passenger door and bolted out of the van, gagging and trying, without success, to keep the his recent dinner contained behind his teeth. One by one the other passengers joined him followed by me. Each of us had the same gut churning reaction. It was an ugly scene but Would-I was proud of his effort and celebrated our antics with a rolling belly laugh that increased as we each made our escape. He was quite pleased with himself and enjoyed our reactions, laughing more hysterically with each exit and retch. Then it hit him.

His own stench: Born of cabbages, beer and a faulty digestive track. It was fermented in the bowels of an abused stomach and filtered through a lower intestine that had never experience anything that wasn't made of meat, grease or alcohol. It was toxic and likely outlawed by the Geneva convention. He stopped mid-laugh. His face became pale while his eyes filled with water and bulged. With one hand clamped tight over his mouth, he tumbled from the van to join his buddies in revisiting his dinner. You had to be there...Or maybe not.

Years later, on a fishing trip to Quebec, my wife and I took our neighbour's son Steven along for the adventure. My buddy Jim was with us and to pass the 17 hours on the road we told Steve some tales from our past hunting and fishing trips. Of course he had to hear about Would-I's memorable effort.

After a week in the bush we were headed home. It was late at night and I was driving while my wife, Jim and Steve were snoring in their seats. All was quiet and I felt nature's prodding to relieve some bodily pressure. I looked in the rear view at the guys and at my wife in the passenger's seat. All soundly asleep. It seemed safe. No one awake, no one to notice. I let go. A moment passed. From the back seat I heard the sound of a window cracking open. A second later Steve whispered, "Eat your heart out Would-I. Eat your heart out!"