

Atticus Steven Hensley

One weekend when I was maybe five Steve had had enough of me saying that I wanted a BB gun. He was very patient and always tried to get me what I wanted, but this was a big deal wielding the power to kill and all. So Steve says that today we are going to get the BB gun. As usual I thought this would turn into an all day adventure of going from one location to another, swapping cars, meeting contacts, doing favors... the favor today was hauling a load of garbage in an old pick-up. We would do this after visiting a strange woman, going to a garage sale (to get a BB gun) and making other stops along the way. Steve had a true talent for "playing it by ear". He ALWAYS came through on every promise he made to me as a child, but the route from point A to point B somehow always included stops at C and D. Usually C and D meant the airport (Johnson City in those days) or *Bud's Gip Joint* (a true house of wonders) or the river or a pool or someone's garage to borrow/lend a tool, part or vehicle.

On this day I am sure we made several stops. I remember the strange woman. She had a headache. I do not remember her feeling very well. Steve was very interested in all that she was saying. This was of no concern to me though because I was waiting on the BB gun. Later we finally made it to the garage sale. There we found a broken model of a Republic P-47 and the BB gun. The P-47 would get repainted years later and get a new prop borrowed from a C-47. I still have a picture of it.

The BB gun was the true treasure though. I could not wait to get home and start blasting away at nature! Of course we had to stop and get BB's. And we had to stop and get the trash. I think it came from Robie's, but I could be wrong. Any way, Steve thought that this would be a good time to demonstrate the dangers of mishandling the BB gun. After a long talk sitting on the tailgate of the truck he took a burnt out light bulb from the trash pile and set it on the top of the pile in the bed of the truck. Standing behind the truck he stood aiming at the light bulb explaining how dangerous a BB gun could be. Then he fired. The BB ricocheted off the light bulb and shattered the rear window of the truck and Steve just started to laugh. I was shocked because this was neither the demonstration nor the reaction that I had expected. I fired the BB gun a few times and we took the trash.

Years later I found out that the strange woman had been a fortuneteller. She had predicted Steve and Judy's divorce, talked about Steve's past and many other things. But Steve had been skeptical when she asked about the pick-up with the shattered window...