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Untitled photo

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Ironically, it was a doctor on his way to an emergency who ran me down.

He'd been called from Butterworth Hospital, only two blocks from the theater, to rush over to St. Mary's to save some poor devil's gall bladder or something, and I just kind of got in his way. When he hit me, I just flew through the air for a short distance, and then kind of rolled for twenty or thirty blocks. It was a novel experience, though not one I'm in any hurry to repeat. The doctor took real good care of me until the ambulance arrived, which seemed like three days later. If you're going to get hit by a truck, pick one that's been driven by a doctor—preferably one whose insurance is a little shaky. If his insurance is too good he might just let you take your chances, thinking "Hell, nothing to get excited about. . . I'm covered."

This one had doctor's hands, the kind that seem to know your body better than you do, like maybe they sneak around you while you're sleeping, checking you out. He also had a doctor's voice that eased my fears and kept me calm. It kept saying, "Take it easy buddy, just take it easy. Everything's going to be okay. I'm sorry, I'm **really** sorry. I just didn't see you what with the dark and the rain, and that camouflage coat you're wearing. I'm really sorry. What were you doing out on a god-forsaken night like this anyway?"

"I was on my way to a play you mother."

"What was that? Well, no matter. How do you feel? Can you move your arms and legs? How's your head? Any pain in your back or neck? How many dollar bills am I holding up?"

That last statement really gave him away. He was checking out all the major sueable areas. Boy am I lucky, I thought. His insurance must be **real** shaky. I could hear the sweat in his voice.

The ride to the hospital was expensive but uneventful. I figure it cost me about \$63.50 a block. I wanted to walk, but the doctor with the shaky insurance wouldn't hear of it. When I finally got to the emergency room, I had to sit around waiting for my turn to be tested, poked, prodded, and X-rayed to within an inch of my life, because there were other more needy people ahead of me.

"What we got here, a kid hit by a truck?"

"I was on my way to a play," I muttered.

Some one in white came breezing into the room. "Hit by a truck on his way to a play? Let him wait. Bring me that guy with the hangnail."

I wasn't hurt too badly. A little banged up maybe; a few scrapes and bruises. I could

look forward to being sorer than a masochist's butt for a couple of weeks, but not killed or anything. Funny enough, sitting there in the hospital, I was more worried about the state of my underwear than anything else. My grandma always warns me about wearing clean underwear, just in case you get hit by a truck or something. At least I was **wearing** underwear, but the \$64,000 question was whether or not they were clean. **Dirty** underwear is worse than no underwear at all. It didn't bode well that my boots were off and everyone in the examining room could see that my tube socks didn't match. One was kind of yellowish-white with three red stripes, and the other? I don't even want to go into it.

As my jeans were painfully peeled off, I felt like a virus under a microscope. Would my underwear pass muster or not? Everyone sucked in their breath as the unveiling began. The tension was like an expanding gas, almost crowding everyone out of the room.

No sweat. All my worrying had been for nothing—they were semi-clean.

Since that night, I have made a few additions to my list of rules to live by: IT IS BETTER TO GIVE ULCERS THAN TO RECEIVE THEM, NEVER PISS-OFF YOUR ENGLISH TEACHER IF IT IS AT ALL AVOIDABLE, DO NOT WEAR CAMOUFLAGE WHILE CROSSING BOSTWICK STREET, and ALWAYS WEAR AT LEAST SEMI-CLEAN UNDERWEAR JUST IN CASE YOU GET HIT BY A TRUCK OR SOMETHING, even if you're only on your way to a stinking play.

Words to live by.



Untitled photo, by David Darling