

# Soda Machines

Soda machines.

If strategically tilted at a 45 degree angle will surely cough up all of its sugary contents.

Glass shattering

falling like small sharp shards of ice.

Slicing through my right arm with scalpel like precision

splitting

skin open

exposing inner parts to the outside.

Onlookers stood surprised deep stares with intensified wide eyes.

It wasn't until then when I learned of my injury.

Thick fragments of thirty year old glass raced down towards me

ripping through fifty percent of my bicep

cutting into fifty percent of my brachialis.

All over something so childish!

Soda machines.

It's no small feat tilting one either! It takes an abundance of muscle to move around 400 to 900 pounds of dead weight.

Luckily, I had the muscle! Not physically, well partially physically, but more so literally.

You see,

I played football, running back to be exact, and before you wonder I was pretty decent.

The offensive line was the muscle that we usually used to move those huge beverage holding cubes.

This particular afternoon

as day shifted to evening after a long work out.

I suggested "hey guys let's go to 7-11, I'll buy us all a Slurpee no doubt."

We all decided we would tilt the soda machine instead,

why go through the hassle of driving to 7-11 and wasting gas?

Now the trick to tilting a soda machine you have to have someone small enough to get behind it and push, while the big boys pull, and hold it steady at the proper angle.

As you can tell from my extensive knowledge on the subject matter we have obviously done this 10's maybe even 100's of times with never a thought of the danger.

However this particular day was different.

It was if the universe wanted to teach me a lesson.

I positioned

myself like usual behind the soda machine which was placed up against three 20ft by 10ft glass windows.

My butt pressed up against the middle pane, I used the glass to support my back,

just as I went to push on the soda machine I heard a loud crack, followed by the sharp sound of crashing glass.

I jumped from behind the machine unaware I was even hit.

I turned to my lineman like "Yo Y'all don't say nothing, cause I am not trying to pay for this shit"

I was expecting them all to agree with me but was met with wide eyes painted on faces with the look of horror.

How am I going to pay for this? Was the only thought racing through my head.

It was at that point I felt something warm and wet running down my arm and my leg.

I looked down.

"OH SHIT, OH SHIT, OH SHIT!"

I scream as I grabbed my right arm totally alarmed, doing the high knee karaoke in place, looking around frantically seeing nothing but fear on my teammates faces not knowing what to do.

The glass had sliced my arm clean like a razor blade on soft flesh. The pressure caused by me grabbing it with my left hand caused vital fluids to squirt out like a super soaker.

It was everywhere!

I was in full out panic mode heart racing

I'm pacing

my vein's liquid trailing and tracing

abstract paintings on the granite canvas from the blood spatter.

I was frantic, yet remember everything, even the very thought that went through my head calming me down enough to allow the shock set in.

A funny thought:

"Boy you better calm your ass down before you pass out and die like those white people in movies"

No lie, or as we say today, No Cap! Those exact words.

From then on I didn't say a word, in my mind I was praying

almost as if I was praying to whatever or wherever that thought in my head had come from.

Back then I called him Jesus and begged him not to let me die.

Paramedics arrive and cut off the make shift tourniquet. My teammates were thoughtful enough to try and help stop the bleeding.

They hooked up IV's and coated my arm with some sort of sanitary sleeve made of medical rags and gauze.

Tons of gauze!

Wrapping my arm tight like a gift, a present, given to me by the universe to remind me of the effect my actions have caused

Paramedics were trying to ask me questions like,

"Do you have insurance" or "What's your name" It was all white noise to my brain my only focus was praying,

wondering where did that voice or thought come from.

It was so clear to me.

It is funny how God works or what we consider divine intervention

I knew at that moment that if he never had it before he now had my full attention.

Not to mention the ambulance passed up a closer by hospital named Hampton General, took me all the way to Riverview Hospital in Newport News.

It made for a way longer cruise.

I didn't understand why at the time.

You see I was expecting a three to five minute drive but it's been nearly 25 minutes I thought surely I was going to die.

I arrived at Riverview

They rolled me in on the stretcher down dimly lit hallways filled with sharp right and left turns I was dropped off like lost luggage in the corner of a room somewhere secluded.

Soda Machines.

Stood big and bold outside the room nestled conspicuously for me to see. It was taunting me with big bright letters "Coca Cola" protruded from its chest scolding me calling- me stupid.

A couple of nurses came in took off the gauze and cleaned me off.

I got a glimpse of my mangled arm. It looked completely different from before.

The nurses just left me there for not one hour, not two hours, not three, but four!

My blood had seeped through the gauze, leaked through the sheets, soaked through the mattress and was now dripping onto the floor.

My only focus the whole time was don't fall asleep but it was like each blood drop made a noise like a faucet with a leak dripping into a bucket of water.

Each drip became nails on a chalk board reminding me I was losing blood.

I was in a four hour battle with sandman and refused to give in to defeat but at this point I was beginning to feel extremely weak and could no longer fight sleep.

A tear rolled down my cheek just as I was closing my eyes for I was sure it was the end of me.

Then suddenly, I hear an angelic voice familiar and sweet, it said:

"Oh my God It's You"

Mrs. Parker? I thought to myself, I opened my eyes, and saw it to be true.

Talk about happy? You have no clue!

You see her son Chris and I shared the same dorm room. Out of all the hospitals she just so happens to work as a nurse at the one they brought me to?

You see how God works?

At that moment she stood up for me as if she carried me herself nine months in her womb.

This small frail white lady going to war for this silent muscular black kid. It was a site to behold!

I believe the sight of my blood dripping onto the floor triggered something in her. I had known her three years and never known her to curse.

Today, she didn't play!

"Hell no! Awe hell no!" She barked aloud angrily snatching back my curtain revealing the blood bath. They could no longer ignore for it was now exposed to the entire hospital staff.

"This is Tony Wells!" The way she said it was as if she believed I was the president or someone on a higher level, her voice had a deep down conviction as if to say "he is someone special."

"This is Tony Wells he plays running back for Hampton with my son Chris, He's fucking bleeding how can you all leave him here bleeding this?" She questioned.

Within seconds

it was as if the whole hospital was at my assistance

I no longer seemed like a burden.

Thirty minutes later I was on the operating table with the Eastern Seaboard's best plastic surgeon.

God was working!

77 butterfly stitches on my right arm, another 7 stitches on my right wrist, the doctor looked me dead in my eyes and told me I'd never play football again.

I just smiled and took it with a grin, because just as he said it, I heard that thought again and it told me: "don't believe him!"

Funny thing-

is through it all, I felt no pain.

I eventually made it back out on the field after missing only 3 games. Refounded my success but something had changed.

I had lost my love for the game!

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