

Clifford's pain had turned to pride in his new plaster cast. He had been little more than a slave in his father's domain. Now he had a brand new, beautiful broken arm, with a big white cast on it. And it was clean as a whistle. We could touch it as long as our hands were clean. They could keep their truck, Clifford had his cast. And nobody could take that away from him.

Clinton was burning up with envy. Clifford was commanding all the attention now. But Clinton had one advantage over we of lesser rank. He invited Clifford into the truck with him, and then he locked the doors. He had Clifford and his brand new cast all to himself.

Clifford's condition led to all types of attempted fraud. My next siblings, and most trusted buddies, Carmel and Leonard, in association with me, divested our younger sister and brother of all constitutional rights, and involved them in experiments that would probably be illegal today. We led the guinea pigs down the merry road to cast building. But they seemed to enjoy the experience. We were determined to have casts of our very own, unbroken arms notwithstanding. We tried everything from bark peeled from hemlock, to flour mixed with water, to blue clay. Nothing worked. We gave up after a while.

Clifford's condition was loaded with perks. No broken arm was ever enjoyed so much.

The perks ranged from sitting around watching the rest of us work, to riding around the farm in the new truck, to smoking "Tailor-made" cigarettes. After all, not many guys can roll a cigarette while sporting a broken arm. He was allowed Coke now, while we of lesser fame drank pure, wholesome, awful spring water.

Yes, we had Coke way back then, and I loved the stuff. Even when I burped and recycled the strong tingling gas through my nose. I've stood trembling in anticipation as four or five of us shared



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one bottle. After all, it cost a whole nickel to buy one.

The budget had to be stretched now to supply Clifford with "Tailor-mades". I think this was the perk that Clifford enjoyed most. In those days, the only people who could afford to buy tailor-mades were visitors from the city, or locals who were making good money, maybe even as much as a dollar a day. Or perhaps get your employer to break your arm.

A pack of five tailor-mades cost five cents then, a sum that took some penny pinching, unless one was fortunate enough to come across Father's open pouch on his stand. So you can understand why everyone who had a pack of tailor-mades kept them well hidden. The trick was to save an empty package, and put one cigarette in it. Now, who's going to bum a man's last cigarette?

Most guys saved their pennies to buy tailor-mades for Saturday night parties, or to whip out any place that girls might be watching. At a time like that, rolling your own marked you as a yokel for sure, especially if all you had was shag tobacco, and brownpaper to roll it in. Shag was a dried leaf tobacco that came in small bales. I advise all smokers to get it and smoke it. It is guaranteed to kill you quicker, and get you and we non-smokers out of our misery that much sooner. We rather enjoyed being called yokels. It seemed to be a grade

up from the term "hick" as the city visitors called us.

"Like father, like son," they used to say. Some wit had christened the would-be truckers, the "Bobbys Twins". The resemblance between father and son was striking, and of course, Clinton was proud to be compared to his daddy, as any noble son would be.

The pair eventually gained some control over the truck. The renegade seemed to settle down at times, and go where the drivers wanted it to go. Although I don't think the partners ever did completely overcome their fear of the monster.

It had to come sooner or later. Neighbours and the wood dealer were beginning to ask questions. The truck should have been on the highway days ago, hauling wood to the mills. The wood dealer, who was also the local truck dealer, was probably worried that the truck would be wrecked before the first payment was made. So the truckers took the truck on the road. They should have "stood in bed". Things went downhill from there.

Clinton had already designated the truck a recreational vehicle, and proceeded to use it as such. He was now calling the truck his truck, with alarming frequency. I say alarming, because I could see that Father was struggling desperately to assert his sovereignty over the situation. Clinton seemed to be gaining ground. When Father said "my truck", Clinton was quick to cover that with "my truck". Father was fortunate to have his Model T to help him over these rough spots, and to go looking for his partner when his absences were particularly long, in the hope that they could get together and put the truck to work.

The truck no sooner hit the highway than it started doing the damndest things. Like tipping over, stalling on railroad crossings, and even setting itself on fire. It did everything but head back to the factory.