

The Attack Mercedes

My little diesel VW Rabbit had served me well thru the financially lean four years of med school and five of residency and I could finally afford a cool car...used, but showroom condition MB 560 SEC. Never let it stay dirty over 24 hours. Always parked in the most remote part of the staff lot. Loved it but didn't lose perspective...it was a car, not a kid.

But, I had a colleague, Dr. W, who was the ultimate conspicuous consumer and fanatic materialist. He had custom-ordered a really fancy BMW, top-of-the-line SUV with a \$6K Bose stereo system, custom tinted windows, 20 inch wheels, sport-package drive train, luxury trim, etc., etc.

I arrived early for my day in the OR, and found his SUV in the most remote, safest parking spot in the lot...my usual spot...but directly across from his car was a nice safe slot also and I took it, noticing in my rear view mirror that Dr. W was locking up his Beemer and gently wiping off the door handle. (It was only a week old).

A short time later, a security officer clad in a sterile "bunny suit" cracked open the OR door and asked me while I was in a lull in the surgery case: "Doc...do you have a 2-door bieve Mercedes in the staff lot?"

Fearing the worst, I resignedly admitted "Yup...that's mine...somebody run into it?" "No...ughhh...looks like it rolled back and ran into another vehicle."

"Ah S---T!! No way! The key to my Merc can't be removed unless the car is in 'Park!' No possible way it could "roll" anywhere!"

As soon as I finished my case in the OR, I hustled out to the parking lot and discovered that somehow my Benz had indeed rolled back across the very slightly inclined parking lot row and dented in the driver side doors on Dr W's Beemer! My Benz? NOT A SINGLE VISIBLE SCRAPE OR SCRATCH ON THE REAR BUMPER! NOT ONE! By noon, Dr. W (also a surgeon) had finished his first case and had been informed by security of the disaster. I approached him in the surgeon's lounge to assure him that insurance would cover repairs and that this would come under the heading of "an act of God" since German engineering had adequately designed my Benz to prevent such an occurrence.

Before I could say a word, Dr. W erupted from his chair, screaming "THAT WAS MY F%*=&G DREAM CAR...A ONE-OF-A-KIND F%*=&G DREAM CAR"

He was pulling his hair...spittle flying from his lips as he shouted...his eyes bulging and his face a congested crimson as his obscenity filled rant continued.

Well, I am a former Big 10 football player...6'-4", 240#, pretty docile by nature and not easily intimidated or excitable...a member of the National Football Foundation Hall of Fame...a trauma surgeon who's seen it all. I stood calmly, taking in this remarkable performance and when Dr. W finally paused enough to catch his breath, I calmly said:

"Dude...your Beemer can be fixed. But you need to put things in perspective. I think you ought to head into the TV lounge and check out the news." The date was 9-11-01 and the twin towers were crumbling and people were jumping out of the flames 90 stories to their deaths. We were being attacked and demons were on the loose.

Dr. W didn't speak to me for a couple months. His BMW was restored to its virginal luster. He was eventually excused from employment at our huge clinic due to 'personality problems" but before he left, he sought me out and apologized for our run-in. I still have absolutely no explanation as to how my Benz was able to roll into his F#/\$*÷!G dream car, but I am pretty sure it was Divine Intervention and I hope allowed Dr. W to, in fact, put things into proper perspective.

(names have been edited.)

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