

15. *Diamond Jack*

December 02, 2020

Was writing a Christmas note to a friend of mine, Jack, and it went like this:

“Was going to call you Diamond Jack after one of the more colorful personalities in my Gentleman’s Drinking Club of Oakland County back in the ‘80s and ‘90s. [But I doubt you’re feeling like much more than an ordinary stone w/ the modern medicine-man treatments. (My friend, ‘Author’ Jack, has been taking radiation treatments.)]

“His real name was Jack <strong Irish surname>. I could write a long short story on this neon guy w/a heart of gold—even a novelette.

“He played the ponies. Michigan doesn’t have full horse-racing but does have a harness track in Northville, about four miles from me.

“So happens Jack was friends with my soon-to-be lady-boss’s boyfriend, and the couples—Jack and his wife, Clark and my soon-to-be-boss Cathy—were at the this Northville Downs that Jack and Clark liked to frequent. I had told Jack one night over at our club (EG Nicks of West Bloomfield) that my GM-EDS documentation group had just given me the bum’s rush outbound on a contract.

“Well, Cathy happened to be head of documentation for a an EDI (electronic data interchange—paperless business transactions software—which was just coming into its own in the early ‘90s) firm in Livonia... and the rest is history. Next week I’m working for her at \$30/hour, a good rate at that time for technical writers.”

“Jack had represented me as literally the ‘best techwriter in history.’

“Jack wore more gold bracelets and necklaces than Vegas’ Elvis, whom he idolized... and actually resembled. He pounded his vodkas on the rocks like orange juice, and died a few years after I got the job—in his 50s as I recall. Apparently dead broke.

“He went out with a bang and always had a kind word for everyone.”

So much for the facsimile of the cheery Christmas card to my friend, ‘Author’ Jack. Let me end now with a bit more reflecting on the life of Jack de Diamond.

Unavoidably I need to set up the larger context of the bar; being a key part of it is not something I’m particularly proud of. I was totally ‘in my mind’ in those days,<sup>1</sup> meaning channeling behavior between work and the liberty cause on one hand, and personal life and fashionable addictions on the other. I *was* forceful—at least gave the illusion of it—while at the same time being genuinely outgoing and friendly. Within an ice cube of being the perfect alcoholic. A leader in the pack.

In fact, in many ways, a lot like Jack without the bling and Tony Soprano patois.

And Jack had pretty much hardwired the switch for him to be going out in flames. Oh, he didn’t smoke! One of *my* favorite cohabits. [Believe it or not, bar flies had the freedom back then to light up while getting lit; nothing like an 80-proof Stoli on the rocks pulsing down the gullet interspersed with Marlboro-Man draws on a Camel.]

Jack had a code. And he’d voice it. “That good, and this bad.” He’d be judgmental at an emotional level, like “Fry OJ.” But he’d cry tears at Elvis’s “In the Ghetto.”

He’d ask how you were doing and actually listen to your story. More attentive in the first 20 minutes on the martini curve. He always had to go somewhere, the track, with his wife to a movie or concert, in and out, flambo man on mission. *Sui generis*, they threw away the mold. Antidote to the memory ward.

Salud for all that, Jack.



<sup>1</sup> Stonebeams 7, 9, and 10 discuss ‘mind’ and give you the background of where I’ve come to lately, though I wish I had cast the Grand Solution more positively e.g. ‘finding quiet-mind’ than ‘ending noise-mind.’