

Excerpt #1 - Harry Davis, the Mischievous Mechanical Marvel

Harry Davis, a ruggedly attractive guy, is a Seattle-bred automotive mechanic and design engineering genius. He saw wonderment and opportunity everywhere. It was the late 1960s. Shortly after graduating from high school, Harry noticed that he had to pay many times more than the scrap metal price to purchase a Danforth Anchor for the family boat. Harry was well aware of scrap metal prices as he used to steal the city's manhole covers, load them in the trunk of his car until the back-end dragged, and turned them into cash at his friendly smelter in Tacoma. Upon calculating scrap metal prices, Harry reckoned that Puget Sound boaters were paying way too much for anchors. Aha, a business in the making!

At this time, Harry's entire net worth was wrapped up in his car, a nice leather jacket, and a few stolen manhole covers. Nonetheless, Harry began his research. He discovered that Danforth was the most prominent anchor manufacturer in the country, with manufacturing in Rhode Island, the state that could be wall-to-wall carpeted. No wonder the anchors were so expensive on the West Coast. The shipping costs were tremendous. Just as Johnny Cash wore black, a trip east was in order. The next month, after financing expenses via many manhole maneuvers, heavy-handed Harry set out for Rhode Island with a whole new reason to live. None of that bothersome, time-consuming, work-your-way-to-the-top for hell-raising Harry. He found his way to the Danforth factory and waited until lunch hour. Harry entered the factory, clad in overalls, hardhat, with clipboard in hand. He walked around, visited with workers, jotting down equipment numbers, and taking notes on the anchor manufacturing process. While chitchatting in the shipping department, Harry obtained the customer list. Harry returned to Seattle and made a deal with the friendly Tacoma smelter. The well-known Davis Anchor was born. Harry became a millionaire from the very popular and less-costly Davis Anchor. No more ordering Dom De Louise Champagne. Several years later, Harry was attending a boat manufacturers' trade show and walked past the Danforth booth. Oops! The Danforth representative spotted Harry and said, "Hold it right there. I remember you." Harry wanted to bolt but thought better of it. Harry would have moonwalked out of the building, but Michael Jackson hadn't created it yet. The representative was the former factory supervisor who inadvertently let Harry into the facilities years before. As it turned out, Danforth wasn't too unhappy to lose their marginally profitable West Coast business. That caused Danforth to focus their marine manufacturing into other areas, such as their very successful and profitable marine toilets. [Readers: Please insert your own boat toilet war story here.] Can we please have a standing ovation for haggling, hardworking Harry? Thank you.

As a little Karma PS, one day Harry was riding his motorcycle years after launching the Davis Anchor. He hit a huge hole at sixty-five miles per hour where a manhole cover was missing. That catapulted him into the hospital for weeks. After the outrageous success of the Davis Anchor, Harry began manufacturing the Davis Yacht, taking over the Chris Craft facility in Taiwan. The Davis Yachts were fifty-seven, sixty-seven, and seventy-seven feet long, complete with uniquely designed luxury amenities. Harry became a multimillionaire. Now Harry could order Dom Perignon Champagne, and everyone would smile and nod. Harry told a story of when he was in the process of divorce. He said he was married by a judge but should have opted for a jury. Harry was living on one of his sales model yachts on Lake Union, the lake bordering downtown Seattle.

Happy-go-lucky Harry was well known for running off any customer who was a lawyer. He absolutely refused to sell to lawyers or to engage in any civilized conversation with a lawyer. Harry would point out to customers that he had a short, no-nonsense sales contract. “No lawyer fee padding and foot-dragging here. The Japanese Empire surrendered with a one page document that took five minutes,” boasted Harry. After berating two lawyers who had the audacity to want to view his model yacht (even though the quarter page advertisement was in the newspaper), Harry was at a waterfront bar discussing his total lack of respect for the legal community. One cocktail waitress agreed with every comment and made a date with Harry for later that evening. Not Mr. Right, but Mr. Right Now. Harry recalled that they had a wonderful evening cruising the waterways and whatever, leaving no time for sleep. Harry had an early appointment with his divorce lawyer. Hungover Harry was still a little groggy. So groggy that he forgot he docked the yacht on the starboard side of the boat slip as opposed to the usual port mooring. Yep, bleary-eyed Harry stepped off the yacht, in his suit, with briefcase in hand, right into Lake Union. Harry was struggling to stay buoyant at 7:00 a.m., trying to retrieve his briefcase on one of the few days he donned a suit. The suit was for a court hearing later that morning. Sometimes, you just know you’re going to have a bad day.

Harry was so angered by the divorce, and the lawyers, that he closed the Taiwan yacht plant and moved to Ellensburg, Washington. Harry Davis bought a farm, not “bought the farm” as were the many rumors purposely spread by coerced friends to insure Harry’s treasured solitude. Harry enrolled in a cooking class to “meet babes.” Harry was one of the funniest men to ever drop in at cocktail hour. He reflected the “bon vivant” essence in us all. Follow your dreams while you can. Someday, we all may be selling office products. The last time I saw Harry was at his son’s funeral. While we were all sadly gathered at the cemetery, Harry noted that his divorce lawyer was buried there. I looked around and saw Harry scurrying toward the lawyer’s gravesite. Yep, Harry relieved himself on the lawyer’s headstone. He really, really hated lawyers.