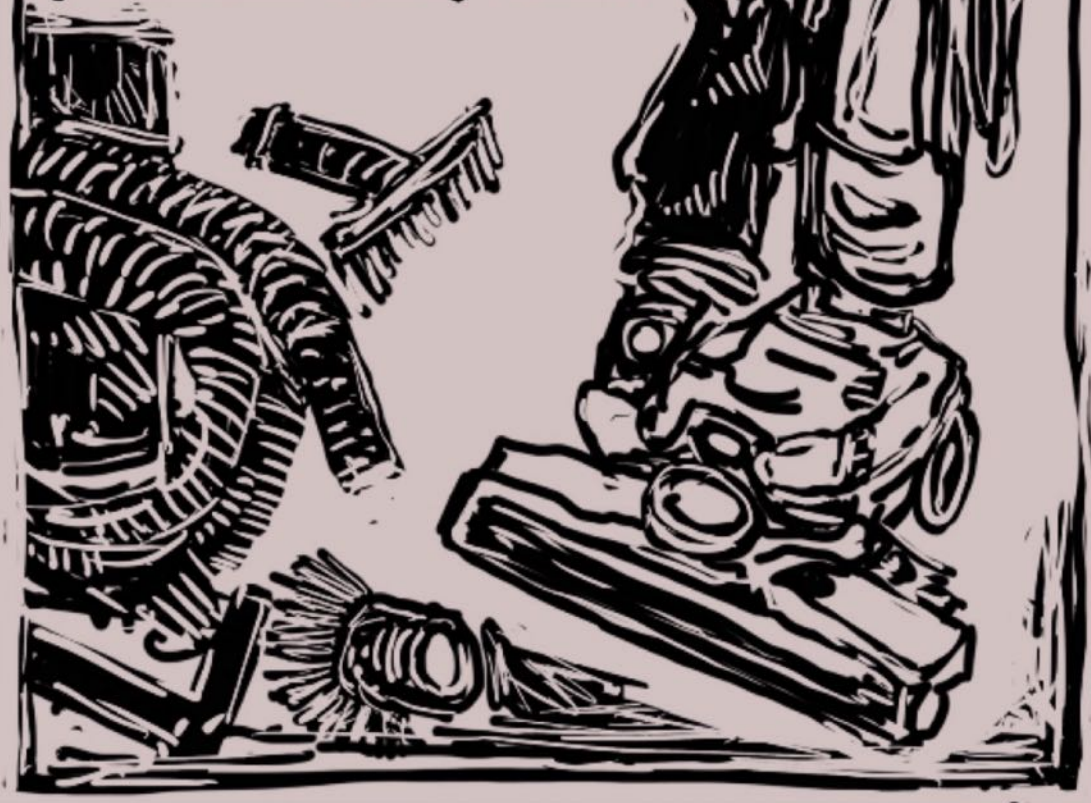


# THE VACUUM CLEANER SALESMAN

A TRUE STORY

by Randall Colley 2022c





## The Vacuum Cleaner Salesman

By S. Randall Colley 2022 c

When I was in my 20s in 1973, I worked two jobs during the summer college break.

In the day time, I worked at a small airport. I fueled airplanes and pulled planes in and out of their hangars for the pilots. At night, I worked as a bartender at a bar called the Hideaway, mainly so I could drink beer for free.

I worked for a man we called "Herman the German", a big eccentric German, from Corpus Cristi, Texas.

It was about 10 o'clock on a Saturday morning. He came to the hangar door and told me to get down to the bar double quick. He said, Tom the bartender had called and there was a salesman trying to sell him a \$400 Kirby vacuum cleaner.



Herman owned both the airport business and the bar. He was afraid that Tom would get pressured into buying something that he did not need.

When I got to the bar, I saw a roofing truck in the parking lot. It usually takes a minute or two to adjust your eyes to the darkness of the barroom, when you're coming in from the bright sunlight.

I could see there were three men at the far end of the bar, who I assumed would be the roofers. There was a big burly older gray-haired man, a wiry skinny middle-age man, and a dark haired man that looked like a small body builder.

I knew him by name, Rick Gates, the owner of the roofing company. He was known to have what we called, "a little big man complex."

The first thing you do when you enter a bar like the Hideaway, is to look around and see if there's anyone in the bar that can potentially beat your ass.

Then, you look to see if there are any women in the bar. Yes... it was 10 o'clock in the morning, but you never know.

I saw the two regulars at the other end of the bar, Pops and Pappy, they were waiting for Tom to bring them their morning beer.

Tom was over at the corner of the bar with the Kirby vacuum cleaner salesman. There were hoses, and adapters, and various vacuum cleaner parts spread out all over the floor.

I think that is part of the sales tactic. Standing in the middle of all of those parts was a redheaded, overly enthusiastic salesman.

He was dressed more like a disco dancer than a salesman. He was wearing a long-sleeved blue silk shirt, pale blue bell-bottom pants, and two-tone square toed leather shoes, with 3 inch heels. Did I mention it was the 70's?

He quickly fired out a handshake, "I'm Rusty Watson, I want to show you the best damn vacuum cleaner on the market."

Tom chimed in with the same enthusiasm, and informed me that this model had an attachment that would even spray paint the walls.

While Rusty was explaining how this high powered, multi-brush, water retention gizmo, could also be used to clean and wax your car. One of the roofers at the bar, let it be known that he did not give a damn about what that vacuum cleaner could do, unless it could get him three more beers.

Rusty told Tom to give them a bottle of wine and he would pay for it.

Tom opened a bottle of wine and took it over to the roofers along with three glasses. For whatever reason, we don't know, maybe he didn't like the disco clothes or the red hair, or maybe some people are just plain assholes.

But Roofer Rick, took the wine bottle, and walked over to the salesman, who was down on one knee, putting attachments together, and began pouring the wine over his red hair.

The salesman, now with red wine running down his face and blue silk shirt, looked over at Tom the bartender.

Tom was standing just as stunned as the rest of us in the bar, staring in total disbelief at what was happening.

The vacuum cleaner salesman calmly said, "Bartender you need to take care of this."

The old burly roofer still sitting at the bar, yelled out, "Why don't you take care of it yourself Kirby boy."

This brought the same enthusiastic smile that he wore when he was demonstrating his wares.

He looked over at us, almost as if he was asking for permission, then he grinned and said, "Let's go boys."

I was next to the front door and I quickly opened it, thank God all this was going outside and not in the middle of the bar. Paps and Pappy hurried out the door.

The Kirby salesman came out next with the three roofers following behind him, in single file, like ducks behind their mother.



Just as soon as the first man, who happened to be the wiry skinny dude, stepped out the doorway, the Kirby man turned and with an overhand right hit him on the left side of his face.

As the wiry dude was falling to his knees, Rusty kicked him in the head, before he fell face first, unconscious into the weeds next to the sidewalk.

The Kirby man, quickly moved to the driveway on the side of the building to give himself more room, where he waited for the other two.

He began fighting with the big burly man, the asshole in the tank top, who was the biggest man in the group.

While the Kirby man was fighting the big guy, Rick the body builder jumped on his back from behind, making it two against one.

A young guy who was on his way fishing, and just stopped at the bar for a six pack to go, did not think it was a fair fight with two against one.

So he grabbed Rick around his neck from behind and pulled him off Rusty's back, but his sense of fairness was almost a fatal mistake.

Rick got to his feet and pulled a fruit knife out of his back pocket. The kind of knife that fruit inspectors use to cut large grapefruits in half.

The kid saw the 7 inch silver knife blade and took off running for his life.

Rick took off after him, running only a few inches behind, flailing that long blade, trying as hard as he could to cut that boy, if he could catch him.

Rick was in a rage and out for blood, but he was a body builder and was not as fast as the kid. Plus, the kid's will to live had a way of putting his adrenaline in high gear.

After about 50 yards of hard running, Rick stopped chasing the kid and started back to the bar.

I looked back to the fight just in time to see the Kirby salesman lifting the 220 pound big man over his head by his crotch and his neck.

Just like the wrestlers on TV, he dropped him to the ground, slamming his head and shoulder onto the clay parking lot.

The fact that his neck bent to one side when his head hit the ground, probably kept his spine from snapping.

Rusty grabbed the man's limp wrist, gave his arm a yank and then at the same time, kicked him in the balls. The big burly man was out cold.

The salesman was finished with the big man, he turned just in time to see Rick coming at him with his knife.

He quickly grabbed a wine bottle from the trash can and broke it on the edge of the building. Unfortunately, it broke at the neck leaving only an inch of the bottle sticking out.

Much to my relief, roofer Rick said, "I don't need this knife to beat your ass," then he folded the blade and put the knife back in his pocket.

The moment that he put the knife in his pocket, the Kirby salesman knocked him out, with the fastest, hardest punch I had ever seen, Rusty had enough and he was mad.

He came to sell a vacuum cleaner and had a bottle of wine poured on his head and had to fight three asshole roofers.

While Rick lay on the ground, just for good measure, he kicked him in the head three times with his square toed disco shoe.

I was close enough to see the man's eyes roll back in his head. I thought he might be dead.

He was still unconscious, when the Kirby man got into his car to leave. As he was backing out, he told Tom, "I got to go now, I am on probation."

He said, he would be back later to finish demonstrating the vacuum cleaner, and that he would be amazed at what it could do.



The Kirby vacuum cleaner salesman knocked out 3 grown men in less than 5 minutes. I had never seen a man use his hands and feet like that.

The first man in the bushes finally came to, he was walking around dazed and confused. The left side of his face was a huge puffed up red and purple mess, and his left eye was swollen completely shut.

Some of the patrons helped carry the big burly man to the roofing truck. You could tell that his arm was broken by the way it dangled. Later, we found out that his leg was also broken.

The patrons cheered as the three roofers, who just got their asses handed to them by a Kirby vacuum cleaner salesman, drove out of the parking lot.

Rick and the wiry skinny dude came back to the bar a few days later looking for the Kirby salesman, we figured they probably had a gun.

Pops and Pappy said it the best, over and over for the rest of the night and to this day, if they are still alive, "That vacuum cleaner salesman, was one hell of a man."

Did we talk Herman into buying that \$400 Kirby vacuum cleaner, what do you think?

The End.

MAKE A POEM  
WRITE A STORY  
MAKE A DRAWING  
MAKE A ZINE  
EVERYDAY

