

Great Pranks

continued from page 45

Splish splash

At dusk on a warm spring evening in 1956, I was visiting a friend on the fourth floor, north wing, of the "new men's dorm" (Martin Hall), in a room that faced the grassy area to the rear of the dormitory. When I happened to look out of the window, I spied two members of the football team, Weldon Holley and Henry Talamantez, preparing to sleep out under the stars on mattresses they had taken from their rooms. They were nearly ready to turn in, with sheets and pillows neatly arranged. The prospects for a serene journey to Nod City must have seemed quite pleasant. However, they would soon be spoiled.

On a dare, I filled a large plastic bag full of water and, leaning out of a nearby men's room window, released my water bomb. It dropped straight to the target, hitting one of the mattresses dead center, splattering water over everything, and, of course, dousing the once-happy campers, Weldon and Henry. I paused just long enough to marvel over my magnificent, perfectly executed delivery—a pause dangerously long in that indeed it could have cost me full enjoyment of the rest of my adult life with all limbs intact.

The victims' reaction was instantaneous. Glancing up at a face with glasses peering from the men's room window, the two star running backs made a dash for the stairwell leading to the fourth floor. Be assured, Baylor track fans, that I set a new interplanetary record racing desperately to the opposite wing of the floor, making it around the corner and to the safety of my own room with only seconds to spare. And to avoid identification, for a week or more I stumbled through the dormitory halls without benefit of my glasses.

Through the ensuing decades I have not had one iota of remorse—only a sense of triumph and awe at the daring of it all and the wondrous execution of my surprise bombing. However, should either of the two whose anticipated evening repose was shattered by the sudden arrival of a big wet gallon of water desire some sort of compensation, I am prepared to offer the very best: if they happen to be in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where I live, it's my treat—world-class green-chili enchiladas at Josie's restaurant, followed by homemade chocolate mocha cake or some other dessert of their choice. It's on me.

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