

*Some Friend*

*by Frederick Wickert*

I was in the hospital in Albany, New York, waiting to get Plavix out of my system. Being a blood thinner, it could not be in my system when they begin my bypass surgery. It could cause excessive bleeding.

In addition, I had gotten a staph infection in my right hand and forearm, which also had to be gone prior to the surgery. They had to pump antibiotics in me every four hours for the remainder of the time I was in the hospital.

I was attached to a metal IV stand on which was an electric pump for pumping the antibiotics in me. The pump was battery operated and needed to be plugged in to the wall outlet to recharge the battery.

My friend Randy had come to visit me while in the hospital, spending gas money to come a distance, which he really could not afford. He was very good to me. I had gone to the hospital expecting to come home the following day, so I had taken only one change of underwear. Randy went to WallMart and purchased a week supply and brought it to me together with a case of bottled water because I won't drink chlorinated water.

During Randy's visit, I needed to go to the bathroom. Doing so was a difficult affair, as I had to unplug the cord to the IV stand, wrap it into a loop on the stand, and wheel the stand with me to the bathroom, as I was connected to it. When finished in the bathroom, I then had to wheel the stand back to the side of the bed and plug the cable back into the wall socket.

In the evenings, there was a pretty young nurse assigned to me. I had been talking to her and trying to make friends. Her name was Jacquelyn, but was called Jackie by the other nursing staff. I learned that she was single, loved her job, did not have a car and walked five minutes to work as she lived near the hospital. She had a girlfriend with a car who worked in another hospital in the area. They had just had a couple of days off at the same time and had traveled in the girlfriend's car to Massachusetts and New Hampshire on a sight seeing trip, which she enjoyed very much.

That evening while my friend Randy was visiting me, I went to the bathroom and left Randy in the room alone. While I was in the bathroom, nurse Jackie entered the hospital room looking for me. It was time to do something with me. Probably give me another dose of antibiotic.

When I came out of the bathroom, nurse Jackie was standing with her back to me. My friend Randy was telling the nurse that she should be very careful around me. He told her that I had been in mental institutions before, even escaping from one once. He warned her that I had violent tendencies sometimes, erupting without warning. Randy was telling her all of this with a very straight face.

Hearing all of this when I came out of the bathroom, I told Randy, "With friends like you, I don't need any enemies." Jackie turned around and laughed a little. Randy laughed a lot. Nurse Jackie tended to the chore she came to do and left to attend other business, still smiling. Fortunately, she had not believed a word of it and my new friend was still friendly.