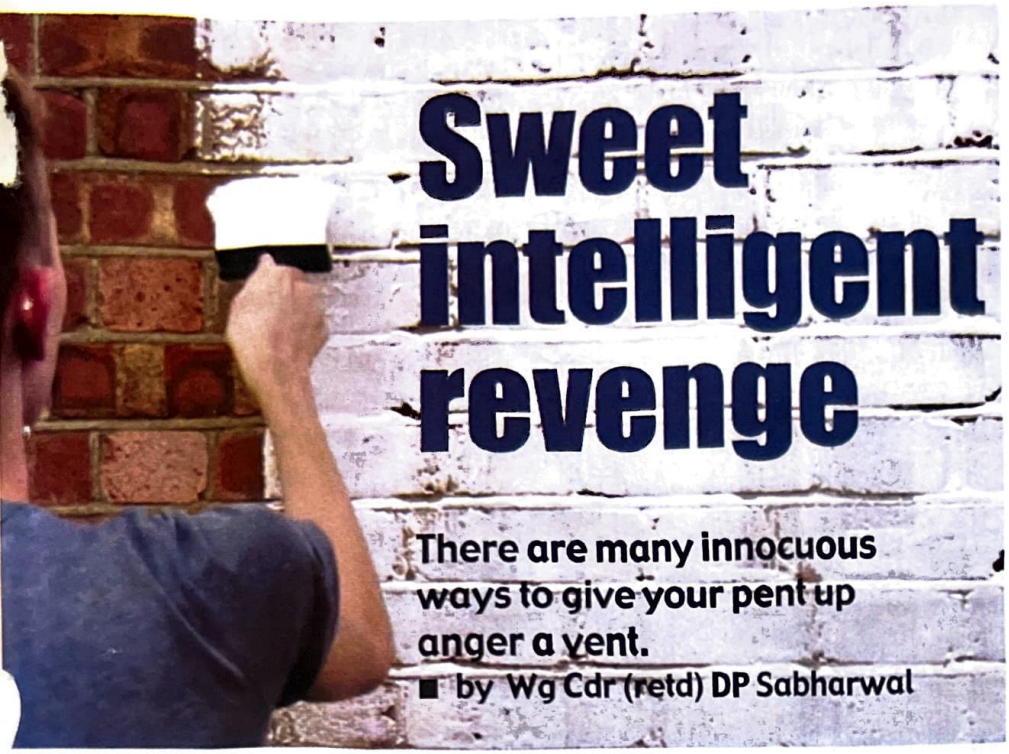


Sweet intelligent revenge

There are many innocuous ways to give your pent up anger a vent.

■ by Wg Cdr (retd) DP Sabharwal

A recent news read; 'Upset with the British Board of Film Classification's fees for certifying films, which is more than $1,400 for an average film; freelance journalist and film-maker Charlie Lyne launched a 'Kickstarter' campaign to make the longest and most boring film possible. He raised $8,522 through donations and then produced and submitted a 607 minutes (yes, more than 10 hours) long film. The film was *'Paint Drying'* which showed just that; white paint drying on a brick wall. Two of the censor board's viewers had to watch the film over two days before awarding it 'U' certificate.'

It was a novel and innovative protest, which has been termed as 'sweet revenge' by most of the press in UK and USA.

Censor boards the world over have been facing protests from producers and directors. In India too the innovative, creative and fearless directors have to often bear the ruthless cuts due to the dictums, dictates and dictatorial behaviour of the Censor Board's appointees who watch and certify the films.

I wonder as to why none of them has, as yet, thought of something as novel as Charlie Lyne, because there is no dearth of subjects in our country to shoot extremely long films and that too without any effort whatsoever, such as:

- Footage from a traffic camera showing traffic jams on Delhi roads.
- Filming of filth and garbage on the streets and roads of Bengaluru.
- Video-clips about the polluted skyline of Mumbai.
- Slow-motion picture of dirty Ghats of Varanasi.
- Humans defecating along the great Indian Railways' tracks.

While pondering over this question, I went into the past and recollected many incidents of so called 'sweet revenge' taken by individuals. It was a big surprise to note that in all of them, the central character had been a child.

I am sure each of these movies could be shot for as much as 30-40 hours and would not elicit any cut from the censor board. The question however is: Would the censor board watch these films, and goes through the 'same boring footage' without having to exercise their brains as to what to cut and then give a certificate for 'Universal' screening?

While pondering over this question, I went into the past and recollected many incidents of so called 'sweet revenge' taken by individuals. It was a big surprise to note that in all of them, the central character had been a child. No wonder, Charlie Lyne too is a youngster, just 25 years of age, born in 1991.

The missing shoe

'Look NUK, shoe is gone,' is what I vividly remember even today, though the sentence was spoken to me exactly 33 years back by a friend of mine, repeating what his four years old son had told him the previous evening. NUK, which stands for the initials of my friend, was called so by his wife and the same name had been picked-up by his son as well; had taken his son to the market to get him a new pair of shoes.

At the shop, the child tried many shoes and took fancy for a particular pair, which as per NUK, was definitely oversize. Thus what the child got was not of his choice. When the child had objected and thrown tantrums at the shop, NUK had rebuked him and told him to just shut up.

With the new shoes on the child's feet, NUK and his wife headed home on his motorcycle. The child was seated in mother's lap. It was on reaching home, when he was parking his bike when the child lifted his left leg and showing the foot had said, "Look NUK, shoe is gone." When asked, how and when it happened, he said, "Over there on the road, I pushed it out of my feet."

This incident was discussed a lot in our friend's circle since children of that age, way back in 1983, were not considered to be as bold as today's kids. The child's action was considered to be an act of smartness, intelligence, arrogance and the like but honestly it was never thought to be an act of 'sweet revenge.' It is only now that I think the words to be the most appropriate for the incident.

The godly affair

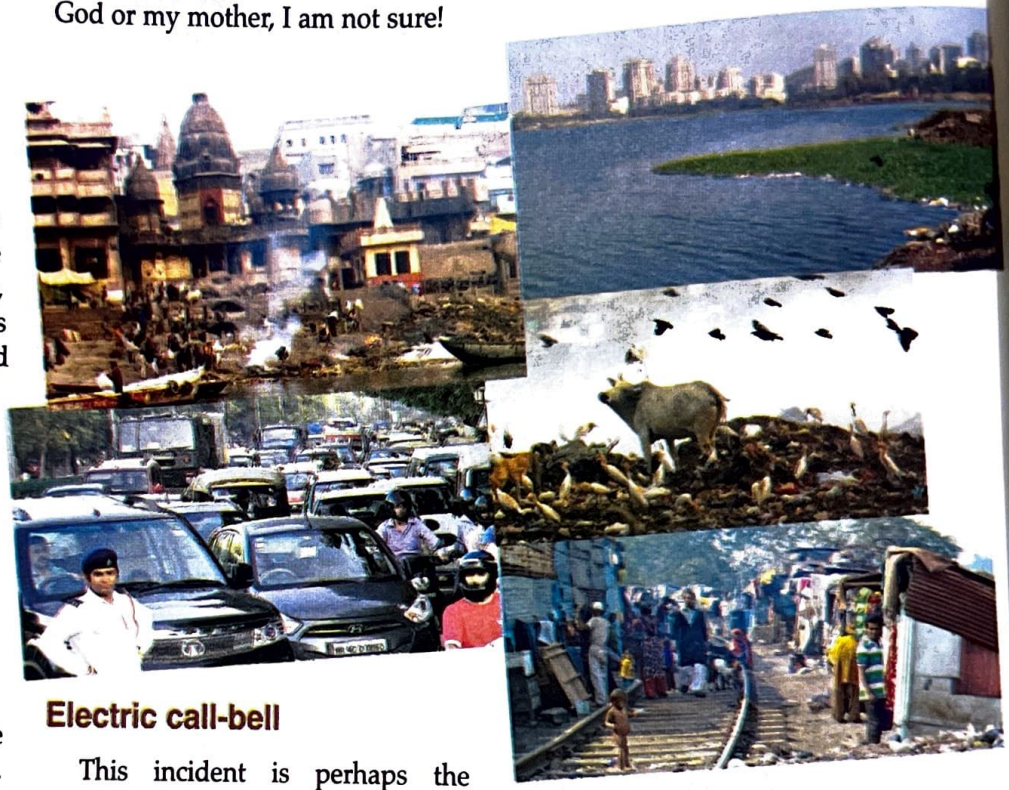
I was in class six or seven and my sister was two years elder to me. We had a small room in our house, on the first floor that had been converted into a 'puja room' and was termed as 'mandir' (temple).' The first meal of the day, the breakfast, was taken in a plate to the mandir as an offering to the gods, before it could be served to anyone.

One day, my mother asked me to do the rituals, which I did. The next day, my sister was asked to do the same, but she refused saying something to the effect: "Ma, you say God is everywhere, so why to take the plate there. He can be offered from here itself."

In today's time the parents would appreciate the logic of the child, but it wasn't so in those days. Thus, my sister got a rebuke and was asked to take the plate to the mandir; else it would be reported to our father that she had refused to obey, a serious 'offense' those days. Grudgingly, she did as told and proceeded towards the room on the first floor. I too followed her after some time to see how does she 'offer' the food to the gods.

To my horror I saw her standing halfway in the stairs and eating a small morsel out of the plate. She wasn't shocked or even surprised seeing me there. Instead she said, *"Jao bata do apne bhagwan ko, maine bhojan jootha kar diya hai"* (Go and tell your God that I have eaten the food first before offering Him).

I did what I could. I couldn't tell the happening to the God but narrated it to my mother, who in turn told my father. He didn't rebuke her. Instead he said, "Don't make her do what she does not like." That was the end of the matter then, but it is still alive in our minds and we often talk about the incident whenever we siblings meet. However, now onwards, I shall start describing it as a sweet revenge my sister had taken. Well, on God or my mother, I am not sure!



Electric call-bell

This incident is perhaps the smartest and the most intelligent one. It again pertains to my school days when I was even younger than the earlier episode, maybe in class four. All except one house in the street belonged to businessmen, only our next door neighbour was a bank manager.

One fine morning, we found an electric bell installed on his house door, a rare thing in those days. One had to use the fists or the knuckles to knock at any house-door, at times many times as the inmates used to be busy in daily chores and the hustle-bustle in the house did not allow them to listen to the knock on the doors. But the new device was really amazing.

We, the children used to see the elders press the bell knob, a tiny black dot on a round plate fixed on the wall, and the shrill sound would bring one of the inmates to the door in no time to open it. I had the privilege of pressing the bell once when my elder brother lifted me and allowed me to operate it.

One day, a friend of mine desired that he too must experience the thrill of pressing the bell as he was the only one in the group who had not done so, simply because he did not have any elder brother or sister and asking his father to allow him to do so was entirely out of question. Therefore he said that the tallest boy from our group should lift him to enable him to press the bell.

Initially, no one was keen on the proposal because of the fear of being caught and then punished. However, after thinking for many days, the plan evolved that immediately after pressing the bell, both would run and hide before any member of the house could come and open the door.

Next day the plan was implemented and it succeeded. No one was caught and from our hiding places, we could see the amazed look on the face of the lady of the house as she could not find any one at the door!

Emboldened by our successful adventure, we decided to repeat the feat, which was done next day and once again it went off beautifully. We, the children were elated. It was fun and so we decided to repeat it yet again the next day. Alas, our luck had run-out. As one of the boys pressed the bell, someone from the street spoke out in a loud voice that had nothing to do with what we were doing.

However, it ruffled the two boys engaged in the 'naughty act" and the one who was lifting the other boy on his shoulders fell on the ground, and before he could get-up and run-away, the door opened and the 'burly bank uncle" caught him. Our friend was given a sharp slap and that wasn't the only punishment he got. Since the matter was reported to his parents, his father too gave him a good thrashing.

Revenge taken

Nothing happened for a week, but then one day coming back from the school, one of our colleagues said that we must do something to teach lesson to the 'bank uncle' for what he had done to one of us. Everyone agreed and the little brains got working, and a sound and workable plan emerged.

Sometime later during the day, while hiding in suitable places, we heard the call-bell ringing continuously and saw an astonished 'bank uncle wali aunty' looking for the stupid person who was not removing the finger from the bell button. Well, there was none. While she was still figuring out as to what was happening, the bell stopped ringing.

Well, there was no mystery nor was it an act of any ghost. The bell had stopped ringing on its own because its element had got burnt due to constant contact. And it was 'a ball of wet mud' on the bell button that was the cause of bell ringing. Needless to say the ball of wet mud was pasted over there by one of us, from the naughty brigade of youngsters... Just to take sweet revenge!' ■



MY PET PEEVE

Western culture has strong influence on Indian youth. Even the youth from conservative families blindly ape everything western. Youths are the nation-builders of future. The cause for changing the minds of modern youth is fashion which is highly contagious. I am deeply peeved at "spoilt brat" culture running deeply in the cities and towns which not only kills the ambition of those who want to follow the traditional ways of living but also undermines our culture.

— R. Srinivasan

My peeve is against celebrities who feel that they can speak whatever they want caring a damn about hurting the sensibilities of innocent people or even downright insulting them. A stand-up comedian recently mocked two of India's most revered icons Lata Mangeshkar and Sachin Tendulkar. It was all supposed to be in jest but this kind of humour rarely raises any laughs as it is intended only to insult and defame the famous personalities. Recently the film actor Salman Khan compared his arduous shooting schedule for his latest film feeling like a woman who had been raped. He could not walk properly, he commented and his speech drew cheers from a crowd of journalists who were covering the event. Misogynic attitudes such as these are highly condemnable and the sooner the celebrities realise that their flaw, the better. Quite often politicians also make indecent remarks against women and get away with it thanks to their clout. Women voters should not favour such people and teach them a lesson.

— Vijayalakshmi A.

My peeve is against political parties that shamelessly field moneybags for Rajya Sabha seats overlooking the claims of their loyal party workers who have toiled for decades to build up their parties. These rich and other well-heeled men and women who seek to enter the Upper House have neither the sincerity nor the commitment to add any value to the deliberations in the House. Why do political parties favour these worthy? In the recent elections to the Rajya Sabha in Karnataka sting operations revealed that there were a number of independent MLAs who were eager to accept crores of rupees as illegal gratification in exchange for their votes which only shows the moral decline of politicians.

— C V Aravind

My peeve is against the modern transport system that is causing lot of troubles to the common man. It is disquieting to note that the prices of petrol and diesel are going up. Hence the comfort and benefit we get from these fuels to run motor vehicles are offset by the high cost. The elite can afford these vehicles, but the common man cannot. Since the common men constitute majority of population, transport should switch over to the use of bicycles, rickshaws for short commuting.

— Bh Indu Sekhar

My grouse is against those so-called sophisticated people who do not have time to look after their ageing parents. Time they spend with their parents is getting shorter and shorter. Their joy knows no bounds when their own children find time to speak with them, share their experiences and confide with them even the mundane family matters. But the ultra-modern sons and daughters-in-law do not care to spend some of their valuable time for these hackneyed people.

— Jyotiranjan Biswal

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