

The Shoreline

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Holiday Harbor-Wilmington

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Hello all,

Do you remember when we learned in school about "Perception Expectancy?" It influences our behavior all the time. The best example of "perception expectancy" and one used often in school goes like this. It's dark and you're driving down a winding road. Suddenly, your eyes fix on an object on the side of the road and you see a shadowy object lying there. In an instant your mind tells you it's a person. A mil-second thereafter you realize it's a piece of rolled up discarded carpeting.

That being said, I want to share with you another story where "perception expectancy" came close to getting my friends and I in big trouble. We were in Columbia, not the safest country around. We were to meet a pilot at a small private field who was supposed to fly us into an area off the beaten path. We waited all day only to learn the pilot and aircraft were no longer available. We were told "not to worry," A boat, the Bomba Charger, is available to transport us to a location where we will meet a driver to transport us the remainder of our journey. We made our way to the harbor and awaited the arrival of the "Bomba Charger." Approximately, eight hours later, resting on our baggage in jungle heat, and of course drinking hot beer we saw our transport. It was a 70' rusted scowl loaded with goats and approximately 20 people. We knew it was ours as we could clearly see the name "Bomba Charger." Right about now the monsoon started. We talked of aborting, but were unsure of how we could turn around now. The captain yelled to us to throw our belongings on board and jump from the pier onto the vessel's deck - there was no boarding ladder. It's raining like crazy and this scowl is spewing diesel smoke like nothing you'd believe....we jumped. The captain said it would take about one hour - four hours later we were still beating seas and spewing an ungodly amount of diesel smoke. The crazy thing was everyone on board was happy. They were eating, drinking and tending to the animals. Incidentally, only the locals were given a place to stand out of the rain.

Well, we finally arrived and met our driver, Clarence. He helped load our things onto his stake bed truck and off we went down an over grown jungle road. After quite a long time we called out to Clarence to stop the truck. Clarence, I said "Are you sure this is the way to the Holiday Inn?" He assured me it was and off we went. At this point, my buds are starting to think we've been kidnapped and will end up beheaded. We agreed that if we don't arrive in another 30 minutes we're going to have Clarence stop the truck and turn around with or without his approval. Well, you guessed it, 30 minutes passed and we got Clarence to stop the truck.

We were in the middle of the jungle and my friends were ready to commandeer the truck and drive back to town. It wasn't easy, but Clarence convinced them we were only minutes away. We had one of our guys sit in the front with Clarence and off we went. Within minutes we turned into a clearing. We were hardly able to see the large wooden gates through the over grown vegetation, but after a few minutes the gates open and out comes Terry, a British native doing business in Columbia (those damn British, they're everywhere). Once inside we discovered paradise within the jungle and believe it or not, it was a Holiday Inn. Terry had beer on ice, wine, fresh fruit, cheese and cracker, even ice cream.

It was "perception expectancy" that had us doubting our safety and moments away from absconding with Clarence and heading home.

Until next time,
Jerry, HHW Marina Manager