



Things that could only happen to Peck.

How I Met Jackie Sherrill

It was 2003 when I first met Jackie Sherrill, and it was not a happy meeting. I was with 11 other golfers who were in Mississippi playing what is known to be the best course in Mississippi, Old Waverley.

Our last night we all went to the closest town West Point, Mississippi to have dinner at a steakhouse. We were seated at the center of the restaurant and all of the other tables were full. I was sitting next to a guy I'll call Bob. When Bob wasn't drinking he was the kind of guy that everybody would vote for as class president. When Bob was drinking he was a complete jerk. To illustrate, only a couple of weeks before this trip, Bob, a local golf pro, and I were in the French Quarter and we decided to look for a place to play pool. Well, thanks to a drunk, obnoxious Bob, we got thrown out of three bars in the French Quarter that night. A new record for me.

The restaurant in West Point did not serve liquor, so Bob went down to a store on the corner to buy a fifth of Wild Turkey. We were all laughing and having fun when somebody said that Jackie Sherrill, the Mississippi State football coach, was at the corner table. Bob had moved around to the end of our table to talk to some other golfers when Jackie Sherrill, his daughter, and her boyfriend were getting up to leave the restaurant.

I saw Bob stand up and stop Jackie and they exchanged words. It looked like the conversation was not going well, as Jackie turned and started walking towards the front door. He got halfway to the door and stopped; then turned around and gave Bob a dirty look.

After that, I went to the end of the table and asked some of the guys what Bob said to Jackie Sherrill. Bob said, "Hi Coach, we are from Louisiana here playing golf." Smiling, Jackie Sherrill said, "That's good because Mac McClendon, the LSU coach, is a very good friend of mine." Someone heard Bob say, "You don't hold a candle to Mac McClendon," and that's when Jackie Sherrill started for the front door. As he was going out, Bob said, "You got the best team money can buy." Bob was talking about when Jackie Sherrill had gotten in trouble at another school for giving gifts to players and potential players.

Bob came back to sit down beside me as one of the guys in the group came back from the bathroom in the back of the restaurant, and said to Bob, "Jackie Sherrill wants you to come outside. He's waiting in the alley." "Hell no," said Bob, "I'm not going out there."

Five minutes later Jackie Sherrill was standing behind us and his hands never came out of his leather jacket. "I don't appreciate what you said in front of my daughter and her boyfriend," he snarled at Bob, "And if you don't come outside you are a yellow coward." Bob said, "You can't handle the truth and I am not coming outside."

Jackie Sherrill left, but someone noticed that he was waiting in front of the restaurant. I thought to myself that I

needed to do something to put this fire out, so I went outside to talk to Coach Sherrill. I explained to him that Bob is a complete jerk when he is drinking, and that he should not waste his time fooling with this jerk. Jackie Sherrill said, "Nobody comes to this town and talks to me like that. I'm waiting here until he comes out." This was NOT going well. I went back inside to the bathroom and as I was standing at the urinal, I was thinking about what a jerk Bob is. We were all having a great fun trip and as usual, Bob is trying to ruin it. I was mad.

As I returned to our table and sat down beside Bob, I told him that he started all this crap and it's up to him to finish it. I told him, "When you have a problem with somebody in Mississippi you go outside and do whatever it takes to straighten it out. Now, you go outside and straighten this out with Sherrill, and I'll stay at the front door of the restaurant to make sure it is just you and him."

Bob said, "Okay, I'll go out there, but you make sure that nobody else comes through the door." So, Bob goes outside to meet Jackie and I stand guard at the front door. I was in the middle of saying to the bewildered and astonished crowd, "All right, nobody goes outside," when I saw a very large black guy, the size of a mountain, coming out of the kitchen, a frown on his face, and tearing his apron off as he walked towards me and the front door. This guy looked like a linebacker for Mississippi State, so I stepped aside as he rushed past me. Now I'm thinking, "This is not going like I planned." So, with few options, I went outside following this huge man. Bob turned around and saw the linebacker guy and saw me behind him, and he gave me a very dirty look.

Bob and Jackie were face-to-face, and I heard Bob say that he was not going to apologize. By then, they started pushing each other back and forth. I grabbed Bob, and the linebacker grabbed Jackie to stop any kind of fight. The owner of the restaurant came out during the pushing and shoving, and yelled, "Y'all better get out of West Point right now because I've called the cops, and if you stay here you may not get out of West Point for several days." We paid our tab and returned to the golf course Condo.

Bob was mad at us because we didn't back him up. We were mad at him because he spoiled our trip and almost got us arrested. So, we didn't talk much on the trip back to Louisiana, and I didn't see much of Bob anymore after that.

But that's how I met Jackie Sherrill.