



Things that could only
happen to Peck.

When Cognac Died

Confessions of a Grave Digger

My wife Lee Ann was in a terrible car accident and she crushed her ankle so bad that she had to have an ankle replacement. After the accident she ended up having three more surgeries on her ankle. During one particular time when she was in a wheelchair, our Maltese dog Cognac got sick. I took him to a veterinarian, who was a golfing buddy, and he recommended that I leave Cognac there overnight.

The next day I had to make sales calls in Baton Rouge, and after that I called the veterinarian to see how Cognac was doing. The doctor said, "I'm sorry Jim, but the dog didn't make it through the night, he died." I asked, "What do we do now, cremate the dog?" He told me that Lee Ann had already picked up the Cognac. I'm thinking, "This is not good." Knowing that I would find Lee Ann devastated, on the drive back to New Orleans I made a detailed plan to bury the dog in the backyard, complete with ceremony, in an attempt to mitigate her pain.

When I got home, I found Lee Ann crying profusely in her wheelchair with the dead dog in her lap as stiff as a board. I told her, "I've thought about this all the way back from Baton Rouge, and I have a plan to bury cognac in the backyard beneath that tree that he likes so much. We will wrap him in his favorite blanket and say a prayer over his grave." She whimpered with a shaky voice, "OK."

I went outside and hastily put this coffin together with leftover cedar fence wood. Then I dug the hole as fast as possible. I went and got the dog and Lee Ann rolled her wheelchair to the hole that I had dug. I put Cognac in the casket and used my drill to screw the top on. When I placed the casket in the hole it wouldn't fit so I took my foot to push it down into the hole. I hated the next sound: 'CRAAAACK.' DAMMIT, I had broken the coffin, and pushed my foot through. I'm thinking, "Not good. I've got to make another casket. And quick. This is not going as planned."

As I was starting to wrestle the box out of the hole, Lee Ann spoke up sobbing, "That's okay, (sob, sob) you can cover him up." Thank God! I threw the dirt on top of the casket as fast as possible and we said a prayer during the ceremony, and that was the end of Cognac.

People will say don't get another dog until you are finished mourning over the deceased dog. Lee Ann was crying continuously for three days and it was so bad that I went and found another Maltese and we called him Mardi.

All of a sudden, all was good again in our home.