

## **Part 4**

### **The third stage of my life as business consultant (6-Story 14)**

#### **Meeting with venture business father and son First and last fell down at Kennedy's assassination site**

The taxi I picked at the Dallas airport, Texas, was a Bangladesh immigrant owner operator. He complained that his income had been decreased by 30 per cent because of the recession even with no reach to the minimum wage. He studied construction at college in his home country. No wonder, I thought, the way he talked was intelligent. He even asked me to find a way for him to work in Japan. The cab driver is always my interviewee.

In the hotel, I made a reservation for the sight seeing bus the following morning, but I missed the time to be left. So, I called a man I met in the convention in Florida. A young businessperson of Safety Systems, Inc., Dallas, Calvin Sulak was his name. The first time we met in the convention, we never talked about his company but about the NAFTA problem. I was not well versed in the matter but did enjoy the talk at that time. When I called him, he was in the office. When I asked if he could join me for the supper in the night, he oked in an instant. Within five minutes, he called me back asking me if I do not mind him bringing his boss, the president. The date with the three was made ok in the hotel restaurant in the night.

I switched myself for the daytime schedule immediately by calling Ajis, the taxi, to move to the nearest truck stop for driver interviews. Asking him to come four hours later, I went into the restaurant to see if I could find someone to talk.

It took no time to catch a man. He looked so shy, different type I ever met. Barry Sturgell was his name. He never opened his mouth until I ask him something. When I say, let me take a picture, he said oh, no. He shrugged his shoulders bashfully. After all, I was with him for a couple of hours. His choice of being the owner operator was simply he likes it and no need to take care to anybody.

He opened a many-folded paper with phone numbers of his customers, saying, "Why not visit this company? I could make an appointment for you." He called the company named Pacer, with my business card in his hand, he explained what I am doing so that they could see me. The company OKed.

As a token of my thanks, I told Barry the treat was on me. He said "Oh, no!", but I dashed to the register to pay. When we departed, his back looked so warm with his wonderful personality. I said to myself, he was the first and

the last owner operator for the day.

After departed from him, I saw a police man walking around the shop, whom I tried to speak. When I told him about my interviewing the owner operators, he surprised me by saying he himself used to be the one for three years. He expressed his willingness of talking with me when his off duty time comes soon. However, the reserved taxi came so that I missed the chance to talk to any more after all.

The next schedule was to visit Pacer which Barry made the arrangement for me with the simple map he made for me. When we reached the company, the key person was still in the meeting so that we had to wait more. The taxi driver was with me together as if he was my secretary.

The person in charge came out saying, "I'm so sorry for making you wait so long." We were invited to come into the room. The business card he gave writes, Pacer---a Southern Pacific Company, Vice President & General Manager, R. C. Moore.

This company with such a big mother company has not a single company truck, purely specialized with contracted owner operators. The bulletins for recruiting for owner operators looked so positive and sincere with twelve items such as, for instance, we offer the possibility of the minimum amount of opening business, everyday cash payment of the freight charges, no compulsory dispatching, and lastly no competitors, meaning no company owned trucks to compete with.

It is common that the top management tries to make the both, the company trucks and the contract trucks, compete with each other so that the company could keep the lower cost. This company seems to be inviting the contractors with no worry of their being placed in competition. I found it very unique way of capturing better and more contractors for more sales.

That night as scheduled, we three, Calrin and his boss the president of Safety Systems, Inc., Charles E. Frame, got together and had a dinner with lots of talks. The next morning, they invited me to their company for some interesting inventions, which is under construction in secrecy.

Most of the story begins after I returned Japan. I would like to write about the whole story here from what I saw there and what happened after I returned.

When I visited some part of the company installation and devices and its market, the young owner president, Charles, hesitated to show or tell the whole thing about the device they were developing in secret lest the information should be exposed to the competitor in any way no matter I am from far away country. I could understand his thought and situation

because I myself had experience of developing inventions for the patent.

He said I was the only Japanese ever visited his company. All he introduced the device was something like “computer controlled device”. He said to me in honest tone, “When the time comes, I want you to become the Japanese agency.” I made some sharp questions to press for his answer to catch the outline, such as, “Is it something that links to the breaking system, or to some other mechanisms, or to do something to the drivers?” To each question, he answered in vague with yes and no, asking me no more question.

It was not until they wrote to me that it became clear that the device was the safety device called “the fifth axis” that connects the tractor and trailer. It is the prevention device for the trailer and tractor being separated by mischief.

After coming back to Japan, in fact, I brought and introduced this business to a certain Japanese maker, and the specialist came to me for more information. Charles was almost supposed to come to Japan, but thing happened to the company to end the story. When I visited the company and talked about the device and the profit expected out of it, I told Charles to be careful about shareholding. He was busy collecting more money needed for the development of the device. Besides, he established a used truck shop and engine mechanical factory, which required him to collect more money for new investment.

My warning came to be true when his company was taken over by a man who invested more than Charles and his partner investors. That was the end of the whole story.

I gave Charles a special warning because he and his son seemed too good-natured persons brought up from the mechanics with less sense of self-protection. I wrote him not to hesitate to write me if he needs me. However, there came no news ever since, for which I was very sorry for them.

The story goes back and forth, I visited the site where John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963. I went into the building of Texas school textbook storage, the sixth floor where Oswald was said to hide himself to shoot the President. The building had turned to be the local administration building.

The sixth floor has been preserved as the exhibition room, which is said to be taken 75-minute to go around with good watching. The room is prohibited for taking pictures. I saw many papers and photos, while listening the record of the radio announcement at the time of the assassination. I vividly remembered the report.

I was in the car driving in the town, while listening to the radio of AFRS, Armed forces radio service, as usual for my

English listening practice. Suddenly, the program stopped and came a special newscast. The first word spoken by the newscaster was something like, “Our President has been assassinated...” I those days I did not know the term “assassinate” Judging from the tone of the reporter, I knew something bad happened to the President. A moment later, there came out the term “killed”. The sad tone music followed as the new information coming. I was in fact, rare Japanese who ever happened to listen to the assassination report in English.

Little did I dream that, thirty years after the incident in 1993, I happened to hear the voice of the tragedy on the air.

A big and the only one time happening occurred when I approached the front door to go out. My right foot caught the mat to slip and I fell down forward with my hands on the floor preventing me from totally collapsing. The daily physical exercising made it possible, I thought. If I had not that physical exercise in daily lives, my body was not soft enough to bend that much of falling down forward to support with both arms on the ground not hit my face or head.

As earlier mentioned, during my trip in the States, I made up my mind not use the walking cane, and I have been successful. This happening was the first and the last I ever had in the rest of trip, for which I could say with good memory. However, after at the age of over seventy, the walking cane has been the necessity for me to walk and stand.