



Bill Stringfellow, also known as “**Strange**”; which is the moniker that I use, for perhaps my best friend in the Navy. Our friendship spanned the years hit or miss. We would reach out to each other and “touch base” when the spirit moved us, or when there was a change, that the other should know. On November 13th 2012, I got a phone call; with a change, of immense proportions. It was Bill letting me know he was terminal with stage 4 lung cancer. I was devastated. Shown here is the FaceBook post of the entry I made that evening, after wrestling all day with the news received in his call that morning. I wrote it because I knew he would see it – without naming him and drawing the attention he would not want. I hoped he would see it and sense that he would not be alone. All those that knew me, would be there for him, his able crew.



Pete Neild

November 13, 2012 at 7:51 PM · 🌐 📌

I got the first hint behind this post on FB, so I'll put this on FB. If it's good for the trivial, it's good for the serious as well. What this is about is very personal and private to a very good friend. So I ask you to respect that. But also know that he needs support, as he is facing a huge challenge. To all of my friends and family here on FB, please "Like" this to let one of my greatest friends ever know that he has all kinds of support, from people that know him and people that don't. He has always sailed the proper course, and now he needs "Room at the mark." Remind him that friends support friends, and that includes friends of friends; as he has always demonstrated by being there right along side me ready to befriend any friend of mine, anywhere and anytime. In Subic, in Yokosuka, in Pearl, San Diego and San Jose, Rotten Groton, Norfolk, Charleston, and Italy - everywhere on half the globe you kicked ass there; and it's no time to pinch now. Sail your proper course, you have a good lay line. Hit this with the same relentlessness that you have done in everything else you have ever confronted. And finally today when I told you I love you. I meant it. Now then with that said YOU don't "comment" on this - keep your eye on the mark.

There are countless stories of our time together that are a constant source of material for the conversations that continue to this day with his loving wife, Sandy. There is just one re: Calypso.

His tie-in to CALYPSO came during his final days, and that is the story that I am putting here. We started to talk in a pattern that eventually led to almost daily calls. During those calls, the tone of them always started to slide towards the dismal, which was totally out of character for Bill. Bill always had a (pardon the expression) never-say-die attitude towards almost everything, and there are stories that back that up. But in this case, it being literal and at hand – it was difficult to keep our mutual spirits up. I started to scramble to bring up topics that were not related to the 900lb gorilla in the room.

Around Christmas time, I had learned of the future C7 Corvette, and knowing Bill's love of sports cars that seemed like a suitable tangent to take. Now while Bill had a love for Ferraris, he also appreciated “others”. So I started to talk about the changes that were obvious and evolving as stories leaked out. The C7 started to dominate our conversations, although the holidays also crept in on occasion. In January, literally days before he passed, I was on a rant about something in the Hard-top Vs. Convert angle that I was struggling with to the level of “should I or shouldn't I”. I was very happy with my C5 and

there was no real reason to make the move to the C7. But in the context of our conversations it was a constant, thought train of “would ah, could ah, should ah” thing. Finally the moment came that I have talked about several times in the Pod-Casts on my Pod-cast Page and other conversations.

Bill said, “**Pete, just buy the god-damned thing!**”

To which I responded, “**Why?** “

And the infamous come-back, “**Because you’re gonna spend a long time dead.**”

That closing line to that conversation, started to build in significance and poignancy, like a cresting wave of realization. The peak was the day he died. Sandy called to inform me of his passing. And we both began the grieving process, obviously mine to a lesser degree. But never-the-less that statement became synonymous with what I now believe were his final words to me. Obviously, they were not, there were other conversations. But in retrospect – they were his final words of advice and counsel. Without a doubt, or a moment’s hesitation. I can honestly say that if there was a Eureka Moment about the purchase of what has become Calypso, that was it. I bought the god-damned thing.