

I Hate When That Happens

by Kevin Wade

Think you've had a bad day? Well, then, read on. But be forewarned, you might not feel any better afterward. It had been a great weekend. The Washington Bottle Collector's Association's May show had moved to a new venue in Kent, thanks to the major efforts of club members Niel and Ellen Smith. It turned out to be a popular decision, there were lots of new faces and traffic for most of the sellers. I was tired but happy when I made it home Saturday night.

We settled in for the evening to watch TV and eat dinner. My wife headed upstairs to bed, but I wanted one last look on the internet before I turned in. I got on eBay and started poking around. A search I run for whiskey items brought up an unusual looking bottle, it had just been listed in the pressed glass category. I stared at the thumbnail picture. It was a cabin shaped bottle, the title said American Life Bitters Brown Glass Bottle PEILER MANUFACTURER OMAHA. Now, I am not a figural bitters collector, for the most obvious reasons, \$!, \$\$!, and \$\$\$!, but I have drooled over plenty of auction catalogs. That's a semi-cabin, right? Something told me it should be Ohio, not Nebraska. I glanced at the price, a \$250 buy it now. What's wrong with it? Is it a repro? The description said the condition was good, that a note in the neck said "This log cabin bottle washed down in Republican River flood 1935. Little Phil Ruplinger found it near Orleans, Nebraska". The applied top was obvious in the pictures, and aside from some dullness looked perfect. What was I doing? I better jump before someone else does. Taking a deep breath, I punched the BUY button, and then PAY NOW to seal the deal.

Once payment had been made, I started looking for information about my find. I must have seen the Ohio bottle at some time or other. The Omaha variant is more scarce, (4-5 known), with price in the range of \$3500-\$4000. YES!!! I leapt the stairs to the bedroom and flipped on the light. "What are you doing, turn that off!" "I just bought a \$3,000+ bottle!" "That's nice, now come to bed".

Even as I lay there, too excited to sleep, I heard a little voice. Don't count your chickens, a bird in the hand, etc. Sometimes premonitions come true. I was on a field trip in high school, sitting next to a classmate on the bus. I watched as the driver struggled to get everyone seated, red faced and out of breath. I said, without thinking, and to no one in particular, "That guy's gonna have a heart attack". On the return trip, we headed for our seats. One of the teachers stood outside, waiting for us. "Everyone get onto that bus!" "What happened to ours?" "The bus driver had a heart attack." The girl who I had sat next to moved away from me. She didn't talk to me for weeks. I vowed to email the seller first thing in the morning.

"Hi, please pack well, and can you include the note that

was in the bottle if you still have it?"

There! That's all I can do, just wait for the mailman to show up. I put it out of my mind for the rest of the day. That evening I logged in and checked my messages. Oh, good, looks like I have a reply, the seller is probably going to tell me when to expect delivery.

"Hi, I apologize but it's necessary for me to refund your payment. While my daughter was packaging my items her 13 month old son pulled a box over and broke 4 pieces, including the bitters bottle that you already purchased. Obviously a refund is the only thing I can do at this point besides say I am sorry again and know that I personally want to thump my daughter for letting a \$250 bottle break."

What?! What am I going to do? I didn't think I was into conspiracy theories. At least, not until this happened..... Sunday morning. Smartphones all over America illuminate as their owners peer at them for the first time, checking messages and alerts. "What did eBay send me? A cabin bitters for a \$250 buy it now? Damn, it sold already, quick, get me the sellers contact info. Has that shipped yet? No? I can do better than \$250, say x times \$1,000. I couldn't accept that it was broken, I had to see the body. "That's okay, send me the pieces." I waited for a reply. Nothing. What was going on? After a day's wait, and making a complete ass of myself, I decided that it was, indeed, gone, thrown out, and nothing more to do. It had survived Indian Wars, a flood, and 140 plus years, only to be destroyed in an instant by a toddler.

So, all I have left is a question: Do I have bragging rights? Can I still say I owned a rare, high end figural bitters, even though I never saw it in person? Judges.....?

American Life Bitters Brown Glass Bottle PEILER

Item condition: --

Ended: May 20, 2012 00:10:01 PDT

Sold for: **US \$250.00**

[1 bid]

Shipping: Calculate

Item location: **Anchorage, Alaska, United States**

Ships to: **United States**

Delivery: **Varies**

Payments: **PayPal** | See details

Returns: **No returns or exchanges, but item is covered by Protection.**



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