

## The Rest of the Story

(One of Grandpa's stories that may even be true!)

**Golf** is my religion. At least that's what I tell people rude enough to ask about my religion. Whether or not this story has a religious slant you will have to judge for yourself. It certainly has some bizarre twists.

I was at the practice range of my home course in Albuquerque warming up and trying to decide whether or not to play eighteen holes there or to drive over to the University of New Mexico North Course. UNM North used to be a fine eighteen hole championship course until the UNM Law School and other university buildings squeezed it down to nine holes. The newer UNM South is now the school's glory course. But many of us love what is left of the old course and play there because the atmosphere is relaxed, cordial and focused on having fun. And the remaining nine holes still offer a challenge.

As I picked a ball out of the bucket of practice balls and turned it over, I saw it had a UNM logo and said to myself, *That's it! It's a sign! I'll go over to the North course.* After all, golfers are a superstitious lot.

As I entered the pro shop at the North course, I saw a poster advertising a raffle for a full set of Ping irons, the new (at that time) "square groove" clubs. A voice in my head said *Those are your clubs.* I do not lie. Besides, I did not in those days easily part with five bucks for raffle ticket without what I then took for angelic guidance.

I told a young man behind the counter I wanted to buy a raffle ticket. He fumbled through the chaos of papers on his desk for what seemed an interminable time and found what turned out to be the last raffle ticket they had at the North Course. I paid for the ticket and my greens fees and headed for the first tee confident I would soon replace my old junker irons with the latest technology. I don't remember what I shot that day.

The next day as my friend Bobby (not his real name) and I were taking our lunch break from work, I told him I bought the raffle ticket. But before I could tell him the rest of the story he interrupted, "And you won!" Bobby interrupts a lot.

Not yet, I explained, but I was *going* to win. I told him about the voice. Bobby was skeptical but demonstrated an open mind by promising to transport to the South UNM course for the club fitting if and when the time came. The time came only a couple of days later when I received a call at work from the UNM South pro shop. Come get your clubs was the message. Bobby was now not only convinced, he was more excited than I was. He drove us to the course where I was fitted with a new set of square groove Ping irons (black dot), two iron through wedge.

As it turned out, I couldn't hit those clubs worth a hoot. In fact, I didn't hit them as well as the old clunkers they replaced. A man at a local golf equipment store told me I needed irons that were "head heavy" and that my new Pings were "head light." I tried his relatively inexpensive house brand (a knock-off of a popular more expensive brand) and

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liked them better than the Pings. So, I decided to sell the Pings to pay for the clubs I liked better. I figured the Pings would sell quickly because square grooves were the rage at the time as well as being at the center of a golfing world controversy. I told Bobby about my plan.

I should mention Bobby used to manage a pro shop on an Indian reservation golf course and when the company that operated the pro shop for the tribe went bankrupt while owing Bobby some back pay, he received some of what he was owed in the form of shop merchandise, notably clubs. Not only that, Bobby collected clubs the way the grooves of my seven iron collect dirt from bad lies in the nethergloom out beyond the golf course grass, which is to say often and a lot. This was a man with a garage full of fine golf clubs.

Even so, he would not hear of me selling my Ping irons to anyone but him.

I argued that he didn't need my Pings because he already had a set of older Ping irons and woods in his garage, compliments of his gifted garage sale shopper wife, Janet (not her real name, either). Janet is *really* good. She frequently added to Bobby's supply of seldom-used clubs from sales at other people's garages.

Nevertheless, Bobby insisted on buying my Pings.

Being a shrewd bargainer for garage sale golf clubs himself, Bobby declared he would not pay what I was asking for the Pings because, he said, he knew what I had paid for them, namely five bucks! But after what seemed endless dickering he finally agreed to pay the price of the house brand irons I wanted. A good deal for Bobby. And I'm still happy with those irons, although I've spent a good chunk of my children's inheritance on various new drivers over recent years. Most golfers are always looking for "just a few more yards" off the tee. I'm no exception. And, like most *duffers*, I seldom get what I hope for. But that's another story.

Now, all this makes a for good golf story which I have told more than a couple of times. I told it again (well, a shorter version of it), as Bobby, his son-in-law, Sam (ditto on the fake name), and some other golfers sat around a golf course snack bar table after a tournament enjoying some refreshments. When I finished, Sam told me I did not know the rest of the story. What, pray tell, could top my tale, I asked.

Sam enlightened me.

One day while Bobby was out playing golf, Janet held a garage sale of her own. Some shrewd (and rude) bargain hunter went into the back of Bobby and Janet's garage where Bobby kept his personal sets of clubs—which were *not* part of garage sales *ever*. When Bobby got home from his round of golf that evening, Janet proudly told her husband she had sold three bags of golf clubs that day for \$25 each. Bobby's quick inventory showed the bags sold contained an almost new set of Cleveland irons, the older complete set of

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Pings Janet had gotten for Bobby, and the new set of Ping irons Bobby had bought from me. Now, Bobby is a man who is still madly in love with wife after almost five decades of marriage. So, he swallowed hard and said, "Thank you, dear."

Someday, I expect to fill out a foursome somewhere and meet a man with some square groove Ping irons who will brag, "You won't believe what I paid for these!"

But he will be wrong.

*The end.*