



THE POINT OF NO RETURN

Celebrating our 20 Years in Business | 20 Years of Stories

20
years

To celebrate our 20 Years in Business, I have been retelling some of our most memorable times that make up those 20 years. It has been a lot of fun thinking back how many times we just had to laugh at ourselves and others. But, this story takes a different tone...as it has only happened once in 20 years.

I'm not sure what year this all occurred, but I do remember this - it all started with one of our first internet leads...more specifically, my first internet lead. I received an email from someone wanting me to come out and look at a farm they were going to sell; so the two of us emailed back and forth a few times and agreed on a day and time to meet.

I think, because I worked with my husband and father, we were always cautious to go to listings together - plus, we felt we better served our clients by giving all of our opinions and letting potential clients meet all three of us. So, this listing was going to be just like any other listing where we all went.

I can distinctly remember the day like it was yesterday because that's what happens when something memorable or strange happens, you remember details. I remember the day as being overcast, just a darker, moodier day than usual as we drove what seemed like a long time and eventually onto several connecting county roads. I know most areas pretty well, but this was out of our usual areas and seemed to be getting more desolate as we drove. When we finally found the address down a long stretch of overgrown woods on both sides of the road, the mailbox already told us this farm had seen better days. The lane heading back through the woods to the farmhouse was so overgrown and squeezed us tighter and tighter as we drove. Little gravel or even tire ruts were on the weed covered lane.

We stopped when we reached a cattle gate just ahead. Beyond that was an old barn - probably built from the generation prior - and a matching farmhouse to our left. It was intriguing because as my dad always

says... it's LAND! I can't remember the acreage, but it was sizable and certainly enough where there were no neighbors within an earshot.

When dad put the truck in park, an older, weathered looking man with overalls that hung down and boots freshly pulled up came out of the barn and walked towards us. As he approached the gate, holding us from moving forward to greet him, he seemed to get more and more irritated. I remember thinking, we must be at the wrong farm.

He approached with a snarling voice and asked what we wanted. Not "How are you?" or "Good morning."...but, a disapproving tone that let us know we were the trespassers...the ones in the wrong place.

So, there we were standing with a man that certainly didn't live in this decade, and we had driven there putting us face-to-face with him. Dad spoke up and told him who we were and the farm we were looking for. We told him the last name and address, but he still seemed confused as he confirmed both. He seemed to just pass over any other information about what brought us there, on that particular day, at that specific time. He opened the gate and reluctantly said he had been thinking about selling as he ushered us towards the barn to start our tour. It was strange, I felt strange and remember thinking...I wonder what Dad and Scott are thinking right about now?

In our office, we had always been so careful about knowing where everyone was - carrying mace, reporting back after appointments - we even had a code word we could call into the office alerting them we were in danger. All of that was talked about at staff meetings but thankfully never used. Right about here, I was thinking, "Code Word! Code Word!" What we didn't have was a code word to say secretly in a sentence, when we were all together, to let each other know we were sensing danger. I tried to look at Dad and then Scott, but couldn't quite tell if they felt it too.

We walked back towards our truck, thinking this strange tour was ending, when he motioned towards the house and told us to go inside. I looked at Dad, Dad looked at me and we both looked at Scott. No one knew what to say and this is where...if you watch Dateline...WE - ALL - KNEW - BETTER! Dad was being polite, he had taught me to be polite and Scott is just polite by nature...so...WE ALL WENT IN!

Oh my...the ceiling was no taller than our heads, and I think Scott even ducked in a few places. There was stuff everywhere. I mean everywhere!

It felt like a cellar because we entered through a front basement area. I gotta tell you, I was scared...but were they?

We weaved our way, following like perfect little lambs in a row, as we got in deeper and deeper. All their stuff was from the floor to the ceiling with barely a path. I didn't even know what our final destination was or where we were going... but the hair was starting to stand up on the back of my neck. When we reached what seemed like the end of this maze, there it was...the answer!

Sitting along the back wall, in the far back bedroom, was a huge figure sitting behind three computer screens. This 20-something barely looked up, but for a mere second and made eye contact with me. This was it. This was the one who brought us here. This was the one who created this meeting. The old man introduced him as his son and the son looked down, looking disappointed that maybe all three of us came and that he had been caught at something. I was scared to death! I don't remember who said what, or who turned around first, but somehow we got turned around just like that and Dad said (what we all were thinking)... "We need to leave now." From that point to getting in the truck - I don't even remember - not at all.

As we were backing out, we could not talk fast enough about what had just happened. Our adrenaline was as high as it could get and my heart, well, I could feel it beating up into my face. No wonder the older man was puzzled when we showed up to list his farm. We now know who made the listing appointment.

On the way out, we were all discussing why didn't someone say something before entering the house. Scott said he was waiting for Dad to say something, but Dad said he was waiting on Scott to say something...and I was just waiting on someone to say something. I had never seen my father as - to the point - when he said to me, "Kris, if you would have come here alone, we never would have seen you again." That's how scary it was. That's how serious we all three took it.

I have thought about this often over the years. I know we were close to that area a few years back and we even looked for the mailbox and the small lane...but we never found it. Maybe it's just grown shut with the owners locked in the crumpling past.