

A Scientific Discovery

My dad had a quick temper and a large waist. He wore a narrow leather belt and dress slacks every day. The discipline in his own growing years was most likely a good switching behind the barn or to bed without supper. Ours was a spanking with the belt. He did not adhere to any American way of democracy his judgement was “guilty until proven innocent.” Don’t get me wrong, though, my father was not harsh. He just believed in swift punishment when he saw fit. I suppose many kids growing up when I did had similar discipline.

Our Christmas tree that year was decorated with the typical glass balls of various colors and then draped across the branches were gobs of icicles. The icicles were made of narrow strands of metallic covered plastic. They could hold a shocking amount of static electricity when you approached the tree and touched the icicles. You would think we would learn from the experience not to drag our feet as kids often do.

One day Ricky and I were hanging out in the living room most likely checking to see if there were any new gifts under the tree with our name on it when one of us picked up an icicle. During the course of our chatting one of us was unconsciously stroking the strand of icicle between two fingers and the silver metallic had been rubbed off. It produced a clear strand much like Easter grass. You know how one thing leads to another. We ended up in the bathroom where a large mirror covered the wall over the sink and counter. It was soon discovered that the static strand would stick to the mirror. The reflection of the long strand looked just like a huge crack in the mirror.

Now, I don’t recall just whose idea it was, but my guess would be my prankster brother Ricky. My dad was watching television and I soon hollered in a tattle tell voice that Ricky had broken the mirror. Daddy quickly jumped to his feet to inspect the damage and upon seeing it instantly began removing that long, narrow belt around his waist. No questions asked, why should there be, the evidence was in plain sight? Before he could inflict his discipline on Ricky we pulled the icicle strand from the mirror and began to laugh.

You may be wondering what happened next. You may have even formed a quick opinion of what you would have done if you were my dad when his kids indirectly made fun and took advantage of his quick tempered personality and pulled such a prank. He didn’t do anything. He couldn’t laugh, that would have been approval of the malicious prank and he couldn’t spank us, we hadn’t done anything wrong...had we?