

"JAPA"

Those who were privileged to have worked with him consider themselves to be fortunate. A tough boss, but someone you could learn many lessons from.

He always used to tell me he would write a book entitled "Honderd Jaar Bestuursambtenaar". (One Hundred Years Government Official) His father and grandfather before him had all worked for government in positions of authority.

His father had been Lt. Governor of the Windward Islands (Richard Johannes "Hensi" Beaujone 1923-1927), and later in charge of one of the districts on Curacao (Districtmeester) as well as Waterworks. His grandfather had been an important government official as well.

The Beaujon family came to the Netherlands Antilles via St. Eustatius. They were part of the Huguenot diaspora who fled France after the night of the long knives. They first settled in the Netherlands and then followed the Dutch and helped them to establish colonies around the world.

Among the Huguenot families who established themselves on St. Eustatius were, besides the Beaujons, Cuvelje, de Geneste, Lespier, Pompier, Lamont, Markoe etc.

I have a copy of an old claim entered on March 22nd, 1782 against Admiral George Rodney. The claim is to the Government of the City of Amsterdam. Visiting that city from St. Eustatius to make their claim via a Notary were Anthoine Beaujon and Jan Jacob Beaujon representing the firm on St. Eustatius known as Beaujon and Son. They entered a very detailed list of merchandise stolen from them on February 3rd 1781 by Admiral George Rodney.

From the list it is obvious that the store was a dry-goods store. The claim was for f.49.350.--, a fortune back then.

Japa had already joined his ancestors when I got that document from Jackie Voges so I could not find out if Rodney had ever paid up. I doubt it though. But Jan being a good banker might know if he paid or not.

"Japa" (Jan Jacob Beaujon) became Lt. Governor of the Windward Islands in the latter part of 1959. Just a few months later while on a regular visit to Saba, he met me on the road to English Quarter. He asked me if I was the boy with the MULO diploma. He invited me to come to St. Maarten to work in the Postoffice. Somehow that diploma appealed to him more than any other. Later on when he would scold me, he would remind me that after all I should know better as I had a MULO diploma.

When he threatened to fire me because of dancing with HRH Princess Irene at the Pasangrahan Hotel, the MULO diploma came up, "Its a pity I have to fire you, with a MULO diploma and all of that."

Douglas, Tony Velasquez and I had been selected by Mr. Beaujon to present lobsters in Simpsonbay to Princesses Margariet and Irene (1964?). I had to deliver a small speech in Dutch and they knew that this was no Simpsonbay fisherman.

That night decked down in a red sports coat (on loan from Scout Thirkield), as one of the few government officials, I was in attendance at the reception at the Pasangrahan. I was a "Saga Boy" at the time mind you. And if I must say so myself, not a bad looking one either.

Anyway Princess Irene saw her Simpsonbay Fisherman at the bar and later gave me a second look. When Governor Beaujon went to dance with Princess Margariet, I had

enough rum up and the coast was clear to ask Princess Irene to dance. She asked me how the fishing was going and I tell she" Girl I just now throwing out me line."
Japa saw me on the floor under the grape trees, full moon, and the soft waves lapping the Great Bay Beach. I could see he was trying to get my attention. But when he turn right, I turn left and so on. Enough points scored there to be fired already. But what really got his goat was that I stayed on the dance floor for a second round. By then I realized that this was going in the direction of police work, so I dropped the Princess back off at the Governors table.

The next morning when I got to work at the Court House, the message had already arrived that I should report to Governor Beaujon "immediately if not before."

MULO diploma could not save me this time I realized. But being a West Indian there is always a way out. Long story short, I told the Governor that the Princess had asked me to dance. What did protocol have to say about that one? And Mr. Beaujon if you doubt me, you could ask she. Now you know he was not going to do that.

Twenty five years later inside the Shell refinery on Curacao, Mr. Beaujon and I were awaiting the arrival of Preisdent Jaime Lusinchi of Venezuela. Japa was there to show him the original grave of Admiral Louis Brion. He pulled out a little black book from his shirt pocket and said:" I did not get a chance to call you but happy belated birthday." He had my birthday recorded in his little black book. And I thought the time ripe, being a Senator and all, to confess to him that the Princess had not really asked me to dance. He said: " You think you had fooled me?" You did not. What saved you was that I did not want to waste a good MULO diploma." Being a West Indian himself Mr. Beaujon had recognized a good "story" and had accepted it.

Now that I am busy cleaning up my office at home (making war preparations), I am coming across all kinds of correspondence from old friends. I want to share with my readers one from Korsou 28.5.85, written in the Dutch language.

Dear Will,

Thanks for your letter of the 20th inst. and the information mentioned therein. I am aware of these historical facts and next week I will give you some more information on these matters.

For now briefly:

Lucas Percival is the great grandfather of O.R.A. Beaujons, former Lt. Governor of Curacao, Prime Minister, Chairman of Parliament etc. Member of the DP party and who died this year.

I am enclosing a family tree of the Beaujons updated to 1940 and a review in red. Also the Thielen who appears on these pages was Act. Lt. Governor on St.Maarten. Remember always that the matriarch (stammoeder) of the Beaujons was a Heilliger from St. Eustatius.

Lucas was therefore not a direct ancestor of mine, but I am however his cousin by marriage in the sixth degree. I was a cousin in the 7th degree with Rudi Beaujon (Max Pandt,former Lt. Governor was a first cousin of Rudi.Ed.)

Rudi's grandfather and my great-grandfather were brothers. Nice puzzle to do research on.

I have always said that my ancestors were from the Windward Islands, and because my father and mother (sister of the great Henny Eman) were full blooded Arubans, and I was born on Curacao as a son of the District Master, learned to walk on Bonaire while father

was Lt. Governor there, to speak on St.Maarten (English) when father was Lt. Governor there, and descended from a matriarch on St.Eustatius, while as a child I lived for a year on Saba(when father was building the Public School 1925/1926), I always tell people that I am "Groot Antilliaan (full Antillean). Later on it will be different with the five islands.

I have the "Memories" of Waymouth as well as Kruythoff.

Do you know that Lucas Perrcival receieved honourable mention from King Louis of Holland? I will look up the book for you. He went from Dutch St.Maarten to Fort Louis (Marigot) and captured the Fort from the English with Dutch troops..

Will send you that story later on.

My book is not progressing well due to my many other commitments. I am now Chairman of the Committee celebrating 350 years of Protestantism on Curacao (read Antilles).

Until another letter, with greetings from home to home,

Your friend

Japa.

In my career I have worked with many Lt. Governors. Mr. Beaujon was the best. The discipline he put on himself he put on others. And I never call the man anything else but Mr. Beaujon mind you!

I worked for f.192.50 per month back then. After room and board I had f.27.50 left over. I measured cost of living by the price of a glass of rum and a carton of cigarettes back then. At Carty's grocery a carton of Camels were f.2.50. Whiskey was f.0.05 a large shot, but if Clem or Claude were at the Lido we snuggled up to their table and as Joe Richardson would say "You done know". Taxpayers buy we rum back then.

Although I worked for the Central Government Mr. Beaujon would send the policeman to pick me up in my free time (usually officer Jacobs) to spend several hours at his home office typing letters. I can hear Jacobs now walking into the beach bar at Pasangrahan and I just getting ready for my first Heineken, "Don't touch that beer Johnson, the Governor sent me to bring you to his office." Man that hurt. End of the month no change in my envelope. f.192.50 year after year. When I got married in 1973 I had only then reached the f.300.-- Good friends Like Lil Dan Beuperthuy and Mr. da Silva kept me in pocket change.I was their "bush lawyer" on tax related issues.

There are so many fond memories of Governor J.J.Beaujon that I could write a book about him. Perhaps I will have to finish the book which he had started.

Or better yet. Perhaps his boyhood friend Boeli van Leeuwen can get one last spurt of energy and write a book about Japa and him wandering in the "kunuku" (countryside) long ago and far away.

Mr. Beaujon kept busy up to his last days. I regret that I could not attend his funeral. Duties at home and a sense of responsibility which he had forced on me, obliged me to stay here at the time.

But he will always be remembered by me and I can speak as well for many of those who worked closely with him and who were impressed by his leadership.

AYO JAPA.

Will Johnson