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Recording Number Two on Peep Holes

- Michael: So, how old were you guys?
- Jeff: We were in high school.
- Michael: And, where were you guys living?
- Jeff: Vallejo, California.
- Michael: Is your brother older than you or younger?
- Jeff: No, he’s 17 months younger.
- Michael: And, how old are you guys?
- Jeff: I am now 48 so he would 46. He’ll be 47 in August.
- Michael: He said, “Jeff, let’s go out and let’s start doing some address numbers.”
- Jeff: Yes.
- Michael: Did you use the stencils?
- Jeff: We did. We used the metal stencils
- Michael: What would you do? Would you canvas the neighborhood first?
- Jeff: We would. We would just pick a neighborhood, and we’d go door to door and start knocking.
- Michael: What would you say? Who did the talking you or him?
- Jeff: Well, actually we split up so that we were able to cover twice as many homes.
- Michael: Did you have a sales pitch down?
- Jeff: It was, “We’re in the neighborhood painting numbers onto the curb so that it’s easier for people to find your home. Would you be interested in it?”
- Michael: And what were you guys charging back then 30 years ago?

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Jeff: Back then it seems like it was between three and four dollars, and we offered, I can't remember right away, at some point my brother read about or came up with the idea of – or someone had given us somehow some beads, some luminous beads, but we would offer those like for a dollar extra we'd sprinkle the luminous beads over the numbers so they would shine and light up with headlights.

Michael: That's a great idea.

Jeff: Actually, most of the people, if my memory serves me right, most of the people took advantage of that.

Michael: Now, did you start raising the prices as you were going on.

Jeff: I think at one point I don't think ever went more than five dollars. Five dollars was the highest that we would go.

Michael: How many summers did you do this? Just one summer?

Jeff: No two summers we did.

Michael: You were making good money for a couple of kids.

Jeff: Yeah, we were actually making good money, far more money than working for McDonalds or something like that.

Michael: Did you both then find a job?

Jeff: My brother did. I worked near the racetrack on the Late Sprint cars and Modified cars on Fridays and Saturday evenings, and so actually all my brothers and I all worked there. We'd sell coke in the stands and peanuts and caramel corn, and then we moved inside to the actual concession stand. So, that went from like April to October and so that's pretty much what I would do. My younger brother actually worked at a McDonalds for a while.

Michael: Now, did you guys ever do peep holes?

Jeff: We did actually. We did peep holes. There's no logical reason as why we didn't do it any longer than we did, but we would go out in the evenings. The numbers we also did in the daytime. Of course, we found far fewer people home during the daytime, but it was still worth our while. What would happen with the numbers is when we got a bug in there, we wanted to buy a model airplane or if there was something that we wanted, we'd go out and we'd paint enough

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house numbers until we raised the capital we needed for our goal, and then we retire and buy our toy and play with it. With the peep holes, we would go out in the evening and we target areas, usually the older areas and there’s a lot of those in Vallejo, and we would just again knock on the door, and ask people if they were interested in doing it. Again, I believe that my brother Craig’s the one who had the idea, and we would go to – I can’t remember where – but, we bought the nicer peep hole, and so we were able to sell that higher quality and it was very simple. We would just say, “Would you like to have a peep hole installed on your door?”

Michael: It was an easy sale.

Jeff: It was

Michael: And, all you’ve got to do is go out and find the houses and hustle. At a time when I had no money, it was a great resource to make instant cash.

Jeff: That’s exactly right. We could’ve been a little bit more diligent, but more and more the homes were having the metal doors installed and it’s still possible, but the chance of messing up a metal door is so much greater than a wooden door.

Michael: It was always quite nerve-wracking when you get a sale and you’ve got to drill the whole through the door.

Jeff: It was, and so that was something that we enjoyed doing, but we were older than. Actually, we were college age when we were doing that, and from that I expanded that to installing dead bolt locks.

Michael: Oh, tell me about that.

Jeff: I can’t remember again if my brother had the idea or I did or whether or not someone at the door asked if we could do that, and so I went ahead and bought a Milwaukee drill-bit, and did some of those. It took longer, and I can not remember the prices, but there was again far more per hour than I would’ve made. In fact, when I first started as a lawyer, I was making about ten bucks an hour, and I was making more than ten bucks an hour putting peep holes in the door.

Michael: Absolutely. Knowing what I know now about marketing, if I was to do it today, I would get a slab of wood, maybe about three inches

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wide and about two feet long, and I would have installed your little cheap peep hole, and then the more expensive, and then the more expensive. I’d have dead bolts in there. I’d have window locks. You just carry around this piece of wood and call yourself “The Lock Man”. I’d do address numbers. You give them a choice like three or four locks for a certain amount of money. You can go make a fortune.

Jeff: That’s very true. You can even in addition to the dead bolt locks, you can learn how to for the sliding doors install those little pin locks that people put in the doors. For a lot of people, it’s something they’d like to do. What kind of shook me on the going door to door with the dead bolts is I knocked on somebody’s door and they answered. They were very, very cordial, and, he said, “Do you have a sales permit to do this?” I said, “No, I didn’t think one was necessary.” And, he said, “Why don’t you come in for a second?” And, he said, “I’m the chief of police here.” The guy, I kid you not, he called the station and told them to send a squad car to pick me up. He was going to have me arrested.

Michael: Really?

Jeff: I’m very serious, but we were sitting there chatting, and I told him that I was a college student, and was just doing this stuff and I had no idea that a license was necessary. So, he went over and picked-up the phone and cancel the squad car and said, “Well, if you want to do anymore, you need to go ahead and get a license.” It kind of shook me up a little bit. So, I didn’t follow up. So, that would be one other thing is to make sure that you have the individual checks the local regulations.

Michael: That was 30 years ago. I think it can still be done today definitely, but there’s a lot more vigilance with people’s homes and stuff with all the media about kids getting kidnapped and stuff, but it can be done.

Jeff: That is true and again, they would need to focus on the older areas because it seems to me like our home is 15 years old. It had a dead bolt that came with it and a peep hole, and so I think if they focus on older neighborhoods and those areas that there still would be good opportunities here.

Michael: Let me tell you how you can leverage this whole thing really quick. Do you live in a home or an apartment?

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Jeff: A home.

Michael: Do you know when you get fliers on your door from landscaping companies and pizza companies? Well, there’s services in every city, every town, every neighborhood who go out and place these fliers and distribute these fliers on people’s doors, and you can contact them and you can get an 8 ½ by 11 flier printed up and you can have all the different items like you do address numbers on the curbs, peep holes, dead bolts, window locks, and you can have a little catalogue sheet of all the things you do, and you put that in a number ten envelope, a white number ten envelope and you seal it, and then you pay these people to distribute the fliers. The cost of the printing and getting them in the envelopes, the envelopes sealed and the distribution will cost you about a hundred bucks per thousand or ten cents a piece, and then guys will target certain neighborhoods. You pick a neighborhood and you pay them to distribute a thousand of these envelopes, and you take the blank white envelopes and have them place it right on the front door. Now, what would happen? Have you ever gotten a blank white envelope on your front door?

Jeff: Yes.

Michael: You have?

Jeff: No, not a completely blank.

Michael: But, if you got one, would you be tempted to open it?

Jeff: Absolutely.

Michael: You open it, and then what you do is people see what you do and you tell them to circle the items that they’re interested in and stick it with tape in the front window, and then in the next couple of days, you drive around the neighborhood and you look for the fliers that are in the windows, and then you go do the jobs or you set up a time, which is a lot easier than knocking on all the doors.

Jeff: That’s true.

Michael: For a lot less money, and it just allows you to leverage your time, and then you’re only dealing with the people who are the most interested.

Jeff: That’s a great idea.

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Michael: Because I remember back then if I didn't have to knock on the doors, this thing would be great. I was always limited by my time.

Jeff: That's very true.

Michael: The sun would be going down and you'd be like, “Man, I wish I had more time to knock on more doors.” If anyone needs a quick way to earn some money, it's a great little money maker.

Jeff: That's true.

Michael: Thanks for sharing that with us.

I want to thank you for listening to Hardtofindseminars.com. If you want to get in touch with any of the people that we interview please contact Michael@hardtofindseminars.com by email, or you can call 858-274-7851.

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