

DIVINE APPOINTMENTS

Pasadena City College
Pasadena, California
May 2009

It was a sunny California day! I was volunteering at my second Justice For All Exhibit. I was excited!

I've seen the impact the JFA program has on people's lives – especially mine! God has used it in my life to witness to others.

I was standing behind the barricades which surround the exhibit when I saw a woman approach, shouting, actually screaming:

"This is ridiculous. How dare you people come out here [with this Exhibit]!"

The whole time of her outburst she was walking directly toward me! She came up about 10 feet to my left still screaming and shouting and now shaking the barricade around the Exhibit.

She then came toward me and started yelling:

"What do you people think you are doing? This [Exhibit] is disgusting."

As she shouted this, she forcefully *shoved* me in the chest with both hands. It was the first time I had ever been touched by someone who disagreed with the JFA Exhibit.

Sometimes there is shouting, but people always calm down as JFA staff and volunteers listen to their concerns and try to have a peaceful conversation. See that she was overwhelmed with emotion, I responded per my training,

"I agree. This [Exhibit] is disgusting."

Instead of settling into a conversation, she threw her arms up in the air, yelled at me again, turned and stomped away.

A JFA staff member approached, saying:

"We've called the police. We can't tolerate people assaulting you [like she did]."

The police arrived to question me. A short time after they left, someone from the college told us the woman who had assaulted me was a professor at the college (I'll call her Carol). I couldn't believe it!

As I waited for the police to question Carol, I started thinking about what might have happened if it had been my pregnant wife that she had pushed. This made me understand the severity of her actions.

When the police came back, I told them,

"I'm not here to cause trouble, but she assaulted me and I'd like her to apologize for her actions."

They quickly responded,

"Well, there's no way we're going to put you two in a room together. The only thing you can do at this point is press formal charges against her."

They suggested that I could formally (in writing) ask the school to provide her with the opportunity to apologize.

So I wrote a formal statement of the events of the incident to give to the Dean. In it I said that if Carol were to apologize, I would stop all legal action.

I walked into the building and down the hallway to hand my written statement to the Dean of the college. Initially no one was in the hall but me. Then low and behold, who should come walking around the corner of a hall that I was approaching?

Carol.

I had been hesitant about turning my statement in because I didn't want to damage Carol's position at the college. I was there to be an advocate for the unborn and an ambassador for Christ to the lost, not start a legal fight.



We were walking nearly side by side in the same direction! Almost without thinking I turned and said *"Carol, we need to talk."*

"Talk about what? You've already called the police on me," she fired back.

Carol kept on walking and picked up the pace. I too sped up and said,

"Carol, we really need to talk or I will have to go to the next level."

She stopped in her tracks. *"Are you threatening me?"*

“Well, if by threatening you mean ‘Will I pursue legal action if we can’t work this out?’ Absolutely, that is what I’m saying. But I’m not comfortable talking with you alone. I’d some witnesses.”

I followed her into an office area where she got together a few coworkers and we went into a small conference room nearby.

Carol said, *“Now tell these people what you told me outside.”*

To which I responded,

“Carol, I don’t want any money from you. I don’t want you to lose your job. I just think when we do something wrong, especially when we get physically violent, there are consequences.

Your actions set a bad precedence for everybody else because you’re somebody important here. As a professor, students look up to you. You may not realize you pushed me in the heat of the moment, but you did.”

Her face dropped, *“I didn’t intend to push you, but I know I did and I’m sorry.”*

I quickly responded, *“I forgive you.”*

She was visibly astonished. *“What do you mean?”*

Holding out my statement I explained: *“Here’s my written statement to the Dean. It says that if you apologize to me, then the conflict is resolved as far as I’m concerned.*

So, we’re done here. You’ve faced up to your actions; you’ve done your part.”

“This is it?” she asked.

“Yeah!” I said. *“We can leave now if you want. However I would love to talk with you if you’re willing.*

I want to know if I’m doing the right thing by advocating against abortion in this way and I think you could help me understand a different perspective. Carol, would you tell me why the JFA Exhibit bothered you so much?”

Without hesitation she responded, *“It’s disgusting, and it desensitizes people.”*

I didn’t hesitate either. *“I agree that it is disgusting. It’s because abortion is one of the most awful things.*

Carol, I don’t know if something has been conveyed to you through this. I want you to un-

derstand one of the reasons I volunteer with this exhibit. I love human beings, and because you’re a human being, I love you.”

I didn’t know if that was the right thing to say at the time, because she broke down crying. Tears streamed from her eyes down her face.

She managed to squeak out, *“Thank you”* through her tears.”

I then asked her, *“Who is really your boss out here? Do you think it was only by chance we met?”*

A faint smile. *“I think I have a pretty good idea who your boss is,”* she said. Pointing upward, she added, *“He is my boss, too.”*

I told Carol that I would pray for her. I gave her my business card and asked her to contact me if she ever wanted to talk further.



When we rose to leave and I asked, *“Carol, can I give you a hug?”*

“Absolutely,” she said.

We hugged. We were both crying at this point. Then we parted ways.

I’m just a simple carpenter; there’s nothing fancy about me.

I figured I would just be talking to students about abortion that day on campus, but I ended up having the opportunity to share the love of Christ with a professor.

That day God showed me it is truly possible to move the issue of abortion from violence to dialogue that displays the love and compassion of Jesus.

I believe that if we submit ourselves to the Lord, He will use us in ways we can’t imagine.

I’m living proof!