

Chapter Ten

Mayberry, The Minors, and Dinner Theater

On Halloween in 1991 I left South Orange, New Jersey in my Ford Escort for Rockett Burkhead Lewis & Winslow in Raleigh, North Carolina. Raleigh is ranked high in various “quality of life” polls and surveys. It’s a great place to live and work, or start a business. I was convinced that any area, such as the Triangle (which includes Raleigh, Chapel Hill and Durham) which boasts the highest per capita presence of Ph.D.’s couldn’t be all bad.

Here was a great opportunity to leave the mainstream and see if I could find happiness outside big time major metro and at a non-mega advertising agency. At the time, It felt like I was on a one-man mission to the moon. I was to start as soon as I could get settled in my interim housing at the Residence Inn in Raleigh. I left Lynn and the kids Trick-or-Treating. (No kidding, I left on Halloween night.) They needed to finish the school year. Lynn covered a thousand details related to packing and moving. (Not the first or the last time I left moving logistics to Lynn.) We would be together again by Christmas.

I was certain that the quality of life would improve but I was worried about how my family would adjust. I also was terrified that I may be compromising my future. Going to a smaller, independent agency in the South. I felt like that actor who decides to take a break from being in feature films to fine-tune his craft in “dinner theater.” Like that actor, I might be lying to myself. Did I really have talent? Was I really accepting defeat? Was I letting this “quality of life” notion distort my judgment? Was I committing career suicide? Could I really have a rewarding career in Mayberry? Well Sure.

Like the professional baseball player, I was afraid that a trip to the minor leagues could be career suicide. But like that ball player, I thought it was worth the effort. It’s what I do.



Raleigh, North Carolina 1992