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Bills day

By: Action Trim

On September 1, 2022, at approximately 5:06pm I pulled over to take pics at a vehicle pullout in Grand Teton national forest near the Jackson Lake overlook in Wyoming. Minding my own business, I had no idea that I was about to have a staring contest with Bill Gates.

I was there and taking pictures for approximately 60 seconds before another vehicle pulled over behind us. From my peripherals, I noticed them get out and start taking pictures too. What I saw from the corner of my eyes was just another tourist driving a regular car. It was a mid-2010’s Ford Taurus sedan. Regular car and a regular looking guy and gal. Nothing out of the ordinary yet. Looking back, I probably had sniper scope trained on me from a mile away.

There I was, scanning the horizon with my phone. Slightly out of camera view was this couple doing the same thing as me. I was turning from left to right snapping pictures and enjoying the scenery. The late summer sun was low across the horizon, it was at its warmest point of the day. The trees were changing colors. There were clusters of quaking aspens scattered throughout a mainly deciduous forest. They acted like natural open-air plazas in the dense timber. The visibility beyond the perimeter never exceeded 60 yards. The forest was thick and only the strongest of the saplings could ever reach maturity. Most would have their daylight robbed by the broad canopy the old trees had created. Any amount of wandering from the hiking route would be dangerous. So, there we were taking pictures, me and Melinda. Bill standing between us. Somewhere out there (Mel’s phone) are pictures that corroborate my story. Unfortunately, I didn’t get any actual pics of them, just the time stamped picture of the scenery and a memory of our date.

As I finished snapping pictures and began turning to depart, I casually thought about glancing in his direction. He shifted to grab my attention, and was waiting for me to acknowledge his presence, or to see if he had caught my attention by accident or on purpose. When I did see him, his eyes followed mine until they met. We stayed locked in battle from 20 feet apart for .85 seconds. It was long enough that I remember the face but too short to have recognized him as the events transpired. I don’t sleep with a picture of Bill Gates so pardon me for not recognizing him instantly. Regardless, in the .85 seconds that he spent making eye contact with me, he told me everything. We never exchanged a word, but he made one thing clear. He was nervous. I smelled fear. But why? .85 seconds and then his body shifted, and his eyes followed. He broke and looked down. I won, I thought to myself… I turned the rest of the way and hopped into the passenger seat.

I began traveling. I was still pondering that suspiciously long eye contact from that odd man with fear in his eyes. Who was he and why was he afraid? He looked at me like I was supposed to recognize him. That's when it dawned on me! My mind alerted me that he IS familiar. From a deep subconscious level my facial recognition software had done its job. The rest quickly made sense, The nervousness. The tension. Body language. Facial expressions. The staring contest and the .10 seconds over the .75 second national average score. He wasn't challenging me. He was afraid of me. He wasn’t a tourist. He was a gazelle. A very rich gazelle, frozen in fear that he had been spotted by a potentially hungry predator. He had been spotted. Spotted alone in the wild with his mate. Crickey!

The last look on his face was of shock because I had not recognized him yet. I did not. Instead, I got into the truck and left the scene and was clueless for about 30 seconds. By the time I realized, I was too far down the road to care. Part of me smiles thinking about that. Part of me looks back and wonders what would've happened if I had recognized him sooner. What would his eyes have said if I had stared for .10 seconds longer? One thing is certain, I should’ve invited him and Melinda out to dinner. I would NOT have pitched him my website [www.trimcarpentry.com](http://www.trimcarpentry.com/)!