

This article is written by [Don Melton](#) on his [blog](#). You can view original article [here](#).

I see many links of the articles that I liked are broken. I did not what that to happen to this beautiful memories that Don had with Steve Jobs. I want others also to cherish these in coming days. So, I made a PDF of it.

Best, Chandra

Memories of Steve by Don Melon

Thursday, April 10, 2014

I have no plans to watch that new movie about Steve Jobs. As I have no plans to read Walter Isaacson's biography of him.

It's not because I think those efforts are somehow not worthy of his memory. It's just that I have my own recollections of the man. And I'm very jealous in guarding them. I don't want those few and fleeting memories fractured and confused by other people's interpretations.

Consider that a fair warning, because I'd like to recount a few of my own stories about Steve here. Not only for you, but for myself. Because maybe in the process I can remember him better.

Let me be up front saying that I did not know Steve well, but I had the opportunity to be around him on occasion. Mostly during design reviews of applications for which I was responsible. There were certainly other meetings, but I never visited his home and very rarely spent time with him unless others were part of the conversation.

And I was certainly not some kind of confidant. In fact, he probably always thought of me as the "Safari Guy." Which is fine by me since there were worse ways for Steve Jobs to think of you.

Of course, Steve could recall my real name, too. Anyone at Apple or Pixar—both large organizations—will tell you that Steve knowing your name was an honor. But also occasionally a terrifying responsibility. That was the bargain.

I was privileged to work at Apple during its Renaissance. I thank Scott Forstall for that. For hiring me. And for introducing me to Steve.

But the first time I met Steve Jobs—actually just saw him in person—wasn't at Apple. It was at the developer rollout of the original NeXT computer and its software, NeXTSTEP. Software which would eventually become Mac OS X. This was an all-day conference—I forget exactly where—probably during 1988.

Steve was supposed to address us potential NeXT developers at lunch. When the noon hour rolled around, I remember being very hungry and wanting to quickly find a quiet place in the oddly-shaped dining hall to eat my meal. I picked what I thought would be a remote table. Turns out it was right next to where a lectern would soon be placed, followed shortly by the honored speaker.

Steve walked out from some side door and up to the podium. Close enough for me to stand up, walk two steps and shake his hand. Not that I was stupid enough to try that.

He was dressed in a suit. Apparently he did that a lot in those days before he rediscovered jeans. Very professional looking. Almost too serious. Matching the intensity of his bearing and gaze. Obviously Steve intended to tell us all something very important.

And we were all still eating. Some of us hadn't even started. It was an ungrateful din of crackling sandwich paper, clanging forks, slurping straws, gnashing teeth.

Obviously he wanted us to quiet down. You could tell because he paused several times for us to hush ourselves. And out of respect, awe, and probably some fear, we all tried our best to do so. But, dammit, the room was now packed and that many people just swallowing food makes a lot of noise. Sitting so close, I felt especially self-conscious.

Who the hell scheduled him to speak at that time? Knucklehead. It's entirely possible that person was taken out later and shot.

Anyway, I do remember Steve's seriousness and apparent impatience that day. But not a thing he said.

After I started at Apple in June of 2001, I saw Steve at a few on-campus events, company meetings, walking between buildings and such. You could also see Steve sometimes in the company cafeteria, Caffè Macs. He ate there just like the rest of us. Often sitting with Jony Ive.

I'm not sure whether this incident happened just before or after Apple announced the original iPod, but it was a fine Autumn day in Cupertino and I was eating lunch with Ken Kocienda and Richard Williamson, the first two engineers on my Safari team.

We were sitting at a table just outside one of the double doors to Caffè Macs. I can't remember exactly what we were talking about. If we ever discussed "the project"—as we would sometimes refer to it when not in our offices—it was always in quiet tones and extremely obtuse language since [Safari was still double secret](#) and known to only a handful.

Anyway, while we were all munching on sandwiches and salads, Ken noticed a familiar face looking for an open table near the other end of the long patio curving around the front of the cafeteria. It was Bud Tribble.

Among many other achievements, Bud was famous for running the original Macintosh software team and being a co-founder at NeXT, where Richard had worked years earlier. Bud had also hired me at the now defunct Eazel which Ken and I had both worked just prior to joining Apple. Bud, in fact, helped me get the interview at Apple with Scott Forstall.

So all three of us knew him well.

Bud finally sat down with someone else whose back was turned away from us, six or seven tables away. Ken said something like, "Hey, that's Bud over there! Did you guys see him? What's he doing here?"

Ken and I hadn't seen Bud in months, not since Eazel shut down, so we were all making guesses about the reason for his visit. Tiring of the conjecture, I finally just stood up, cupped my hands and called out to him.

"Hey, Bud! Come over and see your old pals when you're done talking to *that* guy." Bud looked up—slight pause—and "that guy" turned around to stare at me.

It was Steve Jobs. Of course.

I will forever remember his look—a slightly lopsided and tight-lipped half-smile, eyebrows narrowed as if to say, "I don't know who you are but I won't forget that."

Gulp.

When I sat back down at least I didn't say something smartass like, "I am so fired," in front of my two engineers. Although that's what I thought at the time.

Ken and Richard thought it was pretty funny once Steve turned back around. Until he did, I think they were holding their breath, too.

Spoiler alert: I did not get fired.

And about nine or ten months into the Safari project, Scott Forstall figured we should start preparing to review its features, user interface and various behaviors with Steve. This would have been during the late Spring of 2002.

By that time Safari was a for-real application which could actually browse the Web. But it wasn't called Safari yet. [That christening wouldn't happen until December](#), later that year.

Scott briefed me on what to expect and essentially how to behave during my first meeting with Steve and the subsequent reviews. And it was clear I would *not* be at a second meeting with Steve if I fucked up during the first one.

So I listened to Scott very carefully and took his most excellent advice. In retrospect, it should have been obvious. At least the general guidelines. But there were a few particulars I never would have thought of ahead of time.

Let me be clear. Steve was not some mercurial ogre or cartoon autocrat. He was just very, very busy. He didn't have time for "yes men," the easily frightened, or those who didn't know what the fuck they were doing or talking about.

In that way, he wasn't different from any other executive. At least those with good sense.

Steve expected excellence. Which is why he so often got it.

He knew when something was right, but he didn't always tell you what he wanted when it wasn't. And he was very clear when he didn't like it. Some misinterpreted this behavior as being overly critical, but it was actually time-saving clarity, albeit uncomfortable on occasion.

Design was an iterative process with Steve. Which meant that it could take several sessions with him to complete that cycle. So patience was not just a virtue.

When Steve asked you a question? You didn't ramble and, whatever you did, you didn't make up an answer. If you didn't know, you just said that you didn't know. But then you told him when you'd have an answer. Again, this was just good advice to anyone "managing up," as they say.

When demoing something to Steve, you had to pace yourself. If Steve said, "Stop," you fucking stopped. Hands down and waited. And you didn't jiggle the cursor while he was looking at the screen. Certain death.

If he wanted to drive the demo machine then, by God, you let him drive.

And if your software crashed, you didn't make excuses. You just made damn sure that particular scenario didn't happen again. Ever.

Most of all, you remained calm. Because that was so easy. Oh, yeah.

Anyway, the other thing Scott warned me about was that Steve might test me. Meaning that he might push me a bit to see what I would do. Sort of like a pitcher brushing back a batter with the high hard one. Fun.

I don't actually remember much about that first meeting with Steve. Sorry, folks. Probably nothing to do with nervousness, I'm sure. But I was invited back. So I must not have screwed it up too badly. No doubt because not much actually happened.

At one of those subsequent reviews—it might have been the second meeting—Steve did put me on the spot. With a direct in-your-face question. In fact, I think it was the first thing he ever asked me.

We were reviewing the bookmarks user interface in the yet-to-be-released Safari. At that time, all bookmarks were contained in a single, separate modeless window. It was homely but easy to implement.

And Steve didn't like it. Probably because he didn't want the complication of switching between windows. We started looking at how other Mac browsers did it. He didn't like those solutions either.

So he turned directly to me, leaned forward with that laser-like focus of his and asked, "What would you do?"

Considering that what we just demoed was what I *had* done—or, technically, what my engineers had done—I was screwed. Everything else in the world seemed to fade away in a blur around Steve's face, and for a moment I couldn't think. But I didn't panic. Or soil myself.

After a beat I said, "I actually like what Internet Explorer for Windows does, with the bookmarks in the same window as the Web content. I just don't like how it puts them in a sidebar. There's got to be a better solution than a sidebar, but I don't know what that is yet."

And instead of being annoyed at my lame-ass answer, Steve said, "Show me what that looks like."

Of course, he put me on the spot again because we didn't have any machine running Windows handy. Which shouldn't be surprising. But I dodged another fastball by finding a screenshot online with Safari itself. Score!

I was in the major leagues now.

One great take away from working with Steve is that there's not much anyone can do to intimidate me now. So, bonus.

After a few reviews with Steve, I was allowed to do the live application demos of Safari sitting right next to him.

Normally someone from the design team demoed screenshots or non-code prototypes in Macromedia Director. And many times they also demoed the real application. But Scott wanted me to demo the live code because he thought I would be able to avoid the fragile edges and therefore the crashes.

Later, I initiated one of my engineers, John Sullivan, with this honor and doom. But in the beginning, it was me.

Toward the end of Summer in 2002, we were making progress with Safari's look and feel. While reviewing some of the affordances in the main Safari window again with Steve, we focused on the status bar.

Steve didn't like the status bar and didn't see the need for it. "Who looks at URLs when you hover your mouse over a link?" He thought it was just too geeky.

Fortunately, Scott and I convinced Steve to keep the status bar as an option, not visible by default. But that meant we had a new problem. Where should we put the progress bar to indicate how much of the page was left to load?

Before, the progress bar lived inside the status bar. So we needed to find it a new home. We discussed all sorts of silly ideas including making it vertical along the edge of the window.

Remember, this was back in the day before the spinning gear or other smaller affordances were widely used to indicate progress. In the age of barber-pole blue Aqua, it had to be a bar.

The room got quiet. Steve and I sat side-by-side in front of the demo machine staring at Safari. Suddenly we turned to each other and said at the same time, "In the page address field!"

Smiles all around. Which I followed with, "I'll have a working version of that for you by the end of the week." Over-committing my engineering team, of course.

But I didn't care. I had just invented something with the Big Guy. True, it was a trifle, but there's no feeling like sharing even a tiny byline with Steve.

The irony of that invention is that years later I tried to get the whole feature removed. Because even when precision testing showed that Safari loaded pages faster than any other browser,

that damn in-your-face progress bar made it seem slower to the user. Its wonderful visibility was killing our reputation.

While we never did remove it, we finally changed the appearance and behavior of the progress bar. And that made me sad, even while it made me happy.

Sometimes during those design review meetings I got a glimpse of Steve that few were privileged to see.

Once a co-worker in the room acted a bit unfocused and bleary eyed so Steve paused the review to ask if he felt okay. That person apologized and responded that he'd been in the emergency room late into the night with his daughter after an accident at home.

Steve, visibly concerned, asked if it would be better to do the review later. The fellow thanked him and said no, we could proceed. Then Steve related a story about one of his own children who had a similar mishap a few weeks earlier and how much that had shook him, too. He told the fellow he could take off early that day, after the review.

Another time Steve himself looked a bit bleary eyed and apologized to all of us. He told us he'd been up all night.

The family dog had passed away sometime earlier so Steve and his family adopted a new puppy. After a few days with that strain, his wife told him it was his turn to stay up minding the animal so she and the kids could get some sleep. Which meant he had been sitting on the kitchen floor until morning with a cranky little dog trying to keep it quiet.

Even he thought that was funny, a good thing because several of us were trying not to laugh.

Yes, Steve could be intense at times. But he was also a real person. He had to deal with the ordinary and mundane aspects of life like everyone else. Maybe even enjoy them.

I've written before about being at 2003 Macworld keynote rehearsals, [the event where Safari was unveiled](#). Also where Steve gave the first update on our new Apple Stores, at the time open less than a year.

Many technology and business pundits had already written off our retail effort claiming it would be a huge failure—yet another dumb-ass prediction about Apple. In fact, the stores had succeeded better than we expected. And Steve wanted to make damn sure everyone knew that. Especially the pundits.

During the two days of rehearsals, I sat about three or four rows away from the stage in the nearly empty presentation hall with Ken Kocienda. With the brightly lit stage in a dark hall, Ken and I were just visible enough for Steve or the support staff to see us if we were needed to troubleshoot the Safari demo.

But most of the time, we had nothing to do except sit there and watch The Master Presenter practice his magic.

Near the beginning of the first day Steve asked, “Is Phil here yet?” Meaning Phil Schiller, our head of Marketing. After a quick look around, somebody reported that he hadn’t arrived yet.

Steve explained to all of us that he was planning a little prank, we would see it first, and we had better not say anything about it when Phil did arrive later.

He then queued up the slides with the Apple Store update and inserted an extra special slide right at the end.

It. Was. Epic.

Laughter all around while we stared at the slide for a minute, a few moments to calm ourselves, and then the keynote was reset to the beginning. Great timing because that’s when Phil walked into the hall.

So Steve started the rehearsal, going through slides on the “Switcher” ad campaign and then the Apple Stores.

At the end of the retail update, he was supposed to conclude with something like “1.4 million visitors in the month of December alone,” but he added, “so to all of you in the press who doubted us...”

And then clicked to reveal his special slide—poster art I’m sure everyone has seen before—a 1940’s-style rendering of a grinning man holding a big mug of coffee next to his face with this text alongside like a word balloon:

“How about a nice cup of shut the fuck up.”

And then the best part—the part we didn’t know was coming—Steve paused, turned to his VP of Marketing and deadpanned, “What do you think, Phil? Too much?”

Ken and I struggled to keep from collapsing in another giggling fit and falling on the floor.

That Steve made such an effort to punk Phil not only meant he had a wonderful sense of mischief, but it was clear he thought well enough of Phil to know the man could take the joke. Which Phil did after a few moments of what I assume was panic.

Steve didn't always wear blue jeans and a black turtleneck.

Sometime during my early years at Apple, I spoke with a veteran engineer in his first-floor office. He had his back to a window so I had a good view of the big path outside which led to Caffè Macs.

While looking out that window, I became distracted trying to figure out who was walking along that path with Jony Ive. The hand gestures seemed familiar, but... Wait. What the hell?

I pointed at who I saw out the window. My host turned around, looked and said, "Yeah, that's how we know it's really Summer—Steve is wearing short pants." And apparently a short-sleeved, almost-tropical shirt with actual buttons.

Seriously, I didn't recognize him at first. There were always a few strangely dressed folks around campus, including one fellow who regularly wore a plaid kilt. And I'm not even sure that guy was Scottish.

At least Steve looked like he was cool even if that wasn't a particularly cool look for him.

And in retrospect, he did have a better tan than most of the rest of us geeks.

In my later years at Apple, I probably saw Steve less often than the early days of Safari development. Partly by circumstance and partly by my choice.

I had fewer new applications to review with him and often when I did, I tried to get someone on my staff to do the demo instead of myself. This made for less crowded reviews and it gave other folks experience dealing with Steve. I didn't want to hog all the glory. Or all the doom.

Once there was a longer than usual stretch of time where I hadn't been in a meeting with Steve. In fact, during that period, I didn't recall seeing him in the cafeteria or walking around campus either.

And then I was called to participate in a design review with Steve.

When I walked into the meeting room I was shaken. Steve looked thin and haggard with an unhealthy color, like someone's grandfather.

Just as unsettling was his demeanor. He seemed tired and without his usual focus.

We all knew Steve was sick. He had told us about the cancer. But until that time I didn't realize how much it had ravaged him.

I don't even remember the subject of that design review. When it was over, I left quickly and headed toward my office.

Realizing that what I saw had bothered me so intensely, I stopped at Darin Adler's office rather than my own. I needed to talk to someone about it. As a manager, you should never share such things with someone who reports to you. But I had known Darin for years and trusted him not to freak out.

And he didn't. But at the end of the day there wasn't much for either of us to do except hope for the best and prepare for the worst. And get back to work.

Which is why, months later, I was actually relieved to hear that Steve would be getting a liver transplant. That idea scared a lot of folks, but I thought it felt hopeful.

When he returned from the operation, he still didn't look like the Steve of old, but he looked much better than that last time. So much better that many of us hoped he would be with us for quite a while.

The last time I saw Steve we talked about Safari.

This was earlier in the Summer of 2011 before he resigned. Steve had been on another medical leave since January of that year. Getting thinner and weaker again, he still came into the office to do what he loved.

At a design review of a new Safari feature, the subject of the Windows version came up. Steve wanted to know what we could do to make it better and more competitive.

By this time I felt pretty relaxed being around Steve. So relaxed that I decided—what the hell—I'll just be blunt.

Besides getting more folks at Apple to support development of Windows components the application depended on, I told him this wasn't an engineering problem—I really needed advertising. And that Safari for Windows couldn't compete with Chrome when Google put a download button for it on their home page and spent big on television, print and Web views.

Scott Forstall, also in the room, backed me up on this. Another reason Scott made a great boss.

Darin Adler, now running Safari and WebKit for me, had the presence of mind to add that the need for promotion wasn't just a Windows Safari problem—Mac Safari would benefit from it too.

We were all huddled in the little design review room, some of us in chairs. I sat directly across and just a few feet from Steve.

He seemed to be thinking about the problem and the proposal for some time. He was actually considering this. And that was heartening. After all, Steve was famous for changing his mind.

But, in the end, he said no.

While not harsh about the decision at all, he didn't really elaborate on the response. I assume his reason was focus. By then we had focused on iOS, iPhones and iPads. Hell, I don't think we even advertised Macs or OS X on television at that time.

I wasn't thrilled, but I could understand.

And when you can get the time for thoughtful reflection on your idea from a visionary like Steve—well, that's a good day.

A few months later, I was home sick in bed with the flu, a little out of it due to medication and not at all aware of the news.

It's not like all of us didn't expect it, but it surprised me when Scott called to tell me that Steve had died. A courtesy that I've always greatly appreciated because I know how difficult it must have been to talk then.

And it seemed better that Steve passed away at home with his family around him. Because that's how a good man goes.

After I called my staff and made sure they were aware and they were okay, I told them to let any of their team members leave for the day if they thought that was best. Most of them stayed anyway because they didn't want to be alone.

Then I laid back down, alone, and selfishly realized how fortunate I had been to have known this man, if just for a little while.