

# **OLD-SCHOOL “MEDICINE MAN” OR “WITCH DOCTOR”?? – A TRUE LIFE’S EXPERIENCE!©**

*by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, Florida – April 14, 2024*

*During 1987-1992, my wife and I resided on the Italian island of Sardinia, where I was assigned as a McDonnell Douglas Commercial Field Service Representative to support our MD-80 Customer airline Alisarda (later named Meridiana). We resided in the town of Olbia, with a population of only around 40,000 at the time. There were numerous small villages in the countryside just outside of Olbia.*

The standard method of cooking a steak at this location (other than via a bar-b-q) was to heat up a flat griddle on a gas-powered stove. Unfortunately, on one occasion while using this griddle, my wife Sadhana suffered some significant 3<sup>rd</sup>-degree burns on one of her hands. I was at a loss about what first-aid measures I could offer my wife; eventually an airline engineer recommended some ointment, as available at the local pharmacy (farmacia). I purchased the product and began dressing my wife’s hand on a daily basis.

After about a full week of dressing my wife’s hand with just ointment, it was apparent to me that the ointment was not going to be effective in healing her burns and I expressed my concerns about this amongst my new-found airline friends. Apparently, after caucusing with one another behind the scenes, an airline mechanic who I had gotten to know came into my office one afternoon and offered his help. The plan was for him, my wife and me to travel to a tiny village to visit a local “doctor” (?) who specialized in burn treatments. I can no longer remember the name of the village nor the name of the doctor, but what an experience this would prove to be!

After entering in the front door of this doctor’s residence, we sat down at an antiquated wooden table in a separate dark parlor just inside the door. Eventually, an aged man entered the parlor, sat down in front of us and spent at least 10 minutes exchanging greetings and other (extraneous) conversation with our friend in a “Sardo (quasi-Italian) dialect” that my wife and I could not understand at all! Finally, he asked why we were there! My wife showed him her burns. He expressed concern but implied that her injury was nothing! He then reached behind him and retrieved a dusty photo album from a shelf and during the next 30 minutes showed us a collection of very-gory photos of multiple burn victims - some with charred/black skin from gasoline fires, various serious burns from car and motor cycle accidents, etc. These photos showed the victims before and after he treated them; the results of his treatments were incredible - if not almost unbelievable!

So, back to the disposition of my wife’s injuries; please read on and you will be amazed; I promise you!

After just a bit more conversation, the man arose from his chair. Immediately behind where we were sitting there was a tall dusty/rustic cabinet; atop this cabinet was a jar of some “unknown awful-looking concoction” with a feather sticking out of the top. The man retrieved this jar and placed it on the table in front of us. He stirred the jar’s contents with the feather and then drizzled some onto my wife’s burn wounds. He stated (through our translator friend) that my wife’s burns should be healed within a matter of days and if not, he would visit us at our home in Olbia for another application of his “juice”!

After departing this man’s home, it was hard for me to overcome my personal doubt and trepidation, even after seeing photos of what seemed to be “absolute miracle cures”! In my mind the treatment given my wife was going to result in a severe infection that would actually do nothing more than aggravate an already-bad condition. I also felt that if visiting this man and getting the noted treatment is the best to be offered by my new-found airline colleagues, my future in dealing with these supposedly-educated engineers was going to be very difficult! How wrong would I be!? Within days and without any further treatment, my wife’s burns were almost 100% healed and thereafter I felt nothing but total respect for this “doctor” and my airline friends – throughout the rest of our stay in Sardinia.

Considering that burn clinics exist in all corners of the world and their treatments are time-dependent, painful, and sometimes marginally effective, I often thought that whatever “magic potion” this Sardinian man had devised, it should be available around the world in 55 gallon drums, but it was never to be.

Although this was indeed a true life’s experience, to this very day it’s hard for me to rationalize the reality of it all! I guess one could sum it all up by saying: “God sometimes works in mysterious ways”? So, always have faith!

