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## THAT STUPID CAT!

Hello world!

This is one of those silly stories that I would normally keep to myself out of embarrassment. But I shared it with an Army buddy here, J.C., and he seemed to totally relate to my experience. J.C. was in Baghdad and his incarceration is also due to a PTS reaction.

So maybe someone reading this will also gain some understanding.

We went to work on Thursday as normal, but I was feeling a bit under the gun because I had seven projects on my desk and 3-of them were due on Wednesday (yesterday).

(Side note) They sure seem to expect a lot for paying me \$1.50 an hour. 😊

We have a new cat they named "Chance" (as in "Last Chance"), but he looks more like Garfield from the comic strip. In case your wondering -- a cat keeps mice and rats away from the fine wood furniture being built here.

So anyway, I do like the cat. In fact, he usually sleeps for an hour or

two curled up inside my in box on top of my desk. Why, I do not know? Especially since he has two nice soft pillows on the other side of my desk right behind the computer monitor.

As most of us know, cats get real jumpy when a vacuum cleaner is nearby. Okay, this is expected.

So the vacuum is being used outside the office, but visible through the glass walls. I note that Chance is wary, but calm. No problem, I'm focused on organizing my days activities, while trying to stay calm even though I know I'm faced with an impossible task.

"Suddenly" ... the key word is suddenly, for no obvious reason Chance leaps off the desk and bolts into the back room. Now, the cat jumping is nothing new and doesn't bother me. It's usually pretty funny. It was the large wooden in-box that flew in the other direction crashing loudly next to my face on the computer monitor. That startled me into a familiar and other reality. I was instantly on "high alert", my heart beating, my

adrenaline rushing and for a split second I caught myself instinctively searching for my weapon, or any weapon.

Within another split second I had assessed "everything" immediately around me and quickly began to tell myself there was nothing threatening me.

Okay, now I'm edgy, stressed and hypervigilant, but everything is normal so I am attempting to continue my work without anyone noticing that I'm not doing well. It's okay though, I've experienced this before, maybe 10-minutes and I'll be calmed down, no big deal.

I did take note of Chance sitting perched high up on another 2-stack in-box licking his paw calmly. This was on the other desk to my left about 6-feet from me and on a bookshelf so about head height. He was calm and so was I, but not for long...

In less than 2-minutes the door was opened, the sound of the vacuum increased suddenly. Calm kitty became crazy kitty, leaping off the book case the in-box flew into the air crashing onto the desk, typewriter, my left hip and then the

floor. Oh crap! Now, I'm not doing well. How could a stupid cat trigger me after such a long time of maintaining self control.

Even though I knew it was all so silly, I was unravelling quickly.

I was in a bad place, I was getting tunnel vision and felt like I would pounce at the next noise.

So I cleaned up the mess quickly and left the office. I found a place where I could be alone. I began using breathing exercises, praying and telling myself to calm down, I was in no danger, it was a safe place. I don't know if it took 15-minutes or thirty.

I want to laugh because this is so-o-o stupid. But I know what my mind and my body are experiencing is not funny at all.

Stupid cat!

In conclusion... on Monday I intend to bolt down those in-boxes with self tap screws... out!