

Not Radio Related – (But a great story none the less)

Here is a great story shared recently by Bruce, W8HW. It was documented by Jack B. Scott, the son of one of Ford Motor Company's employees, in *Life* magazine in 1965.

The story goes like this:

You've probably heard the old tale about the engineer who charged \$10,000 to fix a machine: \$1 for turning the right screw and \$9,999 for knowing which screw to turn.

Well, it's not just a legend — the engineer was real. His name was Charles Proteus Steinmetz (1865–1923), a brilliant mind in electrical engineering.

One day, at Henry Ford's River Rouge plant, a massive generator broke down. None of Ford's own engineers could figure out the problem. So, Ford called in Steinmetz.

When he arrived, Steinmetz asked for only three things: a notebook, a pencil, and a cot.

He spent two days and nights listening to the machine, jotting down calculations.

Finally, Steinmetz requested a ladder, a tape measure, and a piece of chalk. He climbed up the generator, took a few measurements, and marked a spot with an X.



Charles Proteus Steinmetz

Turning to Ford's engineers, he said, "Remove this panel, unwind the coil exactly here, and take out 16 turns of wire."

They did — and the generator roared back to life.

A few days later, Henry Ford received a bill from Steinmetz: \$10,000.

Ford, surprised by the amount, asked for an itemized invoice.

Steinmetz replied, "Marking the spot with chalk: \$1; knowing where to mark: \$9,999."

Without a second thought, Ford paid the bill.

Steinmetz was only about 4 feet tall, with a hunched back and uneven gait — but behind his unusual appearance lived one of the greatest scientific minds of the era, a friend to Albert Einstein, Nikola Tesla, and Thomas Edison.