

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



A Blue Whale of a Tale by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | AUG 2018

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by Mike Bozart

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William 'Bill' Kent Bluestone, a 63-year-old, five-years-widowed, gray-to-white-haired, still-spry-though-now-semi-retired Caucasian American, emerged from the East River Mountain Tunnel in his nicely restored, engine-recently-rebuilt, maroon, 1979 Mercury Cougar on northbound Interstate 77. He promptly veered to the right and took Exit 1 for Bluefield (West Virginia). It was a sunny, and now quite mild, 11:02 AM on this mid-April (2016) Tuesday; the spring sunshine had now scoured all of the fog from the dales. As Bill motored westward on US 52 North, he mused. *Ah, headed back to once-upon-a-very-different-sort-of-time-a-boomtown-though-still-very-scenic-with-nice-cool-summers Bluefield, West Virginia – the birthplace of John Forbes Nash, Jr. [the famous (deceased May 23, 2015 due to a taxicab-guardrail collision on the New Jersey Turnpike) mathematician whose life was the basis of the 2001 movie 'A Beautiful Mind'] Game theory. Differential geometry. Partial differential equations. Complex systems. And schizophrenia. What a world-class genius to emerge from such a humble, run-of-the-mine, valley-and-ridge town in Appalachia. A radiant diamond in the thick, dark, bituminous swath.*

Four minutes later, Bill eased right and made a left turn at a traffic light in front of a Big K-Mart. He was now on two-lane Cumberland Road. About a mile and a quarter (2 km) further, he made another soft right, which had him staying on US 52 North; this residential, south-side-to-downtown connector was Bland Road. Soon the old, double-yellow-line-divided, asphalt street was whipping back and forth. At Oakhurst Avenue, he saw the old, round, stone-and-mortar-basin fountain on the right. *It's still there. And, it's still working. Nice flowers. Wonder who's maintaining it now. Is crazy Cathy still alive? When was the last time I saw her? 1999 in Charlotte with sexy Martha at Surf Inn. Woah. Has it really been 17 years? Where did all that time go? Or flow? From East to New. [Rivers]*

While stopped at the College Avenue traffic light, he noticed the Little Caesars restaurant on the right. *Should I get a small pizza now? Nah, I'm not really that hungry. Wonder if the older Latina still works there. What was her name? María? Maybe. I bet that she has moved on.*

The light turned green. He curved to the right, and soon passed the Harley-Davidson dealership. *Always tempting to get another bike. But, I'm sure that I would lay it down again.*

Probably for the final, fatal time. The reflexes just aren't what they were. The 'joy' of being old. Bleh!

At a four-faced clock, the road forked into one-way streets. Federal Street descended into the central downtown area. At Raleigh Street, Bill turned right, went a block, and parked on the curb next to a four-story, century-old, beige-brick-only-on-the-first-level building.

He stepped into the soon-to-be-functioning tavern with a medium-size, creek-silt-brown, cardboard box under his left arm. A slender, attractive, late-30-ish African American woman was polishing the dark-red-stained, extra-long, wooden bar.

"Hello there," she merrily said. "Do you have a package for us?" *Strange, he's not wearing a typical, delivery-company uniform.*

"I do," Bill replied. "Is Steve in?"

"Steve had to run an emergency-parts errand," she informed. "He should be back in ten to fifteen minutes. Can I sign for it?" *Emergency parts? Is he picking up a new prosthetic leg? Why'd I think that? Because of my age.*

"Well, there's nothing to sign for at this point. It's an ultra-rapid chiller for canned beverages. Would you like to see the demo?" *Oh, he's a salesman. Should have known.*

"How long will it take?" *He had better make it quick. I've got too much work to do for a longwinded sales pitch. Grand opening is only four days away.*

"Just a minute. Would you happen to have a hot beer?" A *'hot' beer?*

"How hot?" She guffawed. *She's certainly a hottie.*

"Oh, just room temperature. I'm sorry, what is your name?"

"Melodie. Just a sec." Denim-legged Melodie then began walking towards a behind-the-bar storeroom.

"No rush, Melodie. I'm Bill – Bill Bluestone. This is my sole appointment today." *Wonder where this old dude came from. Charleston? [WV] Roanoke? Winston-Salem? With that last name, he just may be from the Bellepoint-Hinton [WV] area.*

She soon returned. “Ok, here you go, Mr. Bluestone. This can of Elkins [WV] Big Timber Porter will cost you five dollars. Just kidding; it’s on the house.”

“Why, thanks, Melodie. I actually prefer dark beer.”

“Ok, I’m all eyes and ears, sir. Show me your device’s magical cooling trick.” *Magical?*

Bill then extricated the black, metal, styrofoam-protected, miniature-refrigerator-looking machine from the box. “Ok, Melodie, I just need a standard, grounded, 110-volt receptacle. AC, of course.” *He’s weird.*

“I’ve got one right here behind the bar. Just give me the plug.” *I’d love to give her the plug alright, but no blue pills. Is she single? / Receptacle and plug. Wonder if this old guy picked up on the sexual allusions. Probably not.*

“Ok, thanks, Melodie.”

Melodie plugged in the medium-gauge cord. “You’ve got a 20-amp circuit to yourself. Will that be sufficient, Bill?” *It had better be.*

“More than sufficient, Melodie. This thing only draws eight amperes, max.” *Please, no fire.*

“Ok, do you need anything else?” *Hope not.*

“No, we’re all good for show.” *Good ‘for show’? Not ‘to go’? Another oddball salesman.*

“Ok, you’ve got one minute, Bill. The clock is now ticking.” *She’s probably had some annoying vendors in the past. / Really don’t have time for this, but he has been polite so far.*

Bill then assumed his TV-infomercial-sounding, polished, über-persuasive persona. “Forty-five degrees [Fahrenheit; 7° Celsius] in forty-five seconds. Yes, the KraftKanKooler® 2K will cool your seventy-five-degree [Fahrenheit; 24° Celsius] can of craft beer – up to a half-liter [16.9 oz.] – yes, pints are fine, too – to forty-five degrees Fahrenheit in a mere three-fourths of a minute. You just put your can – cans only, please – no glass bottles – in here, close the door, push the button, and voilà!”

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