

**another Secret Society short story**



**A Spring Hike** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | AUG 2016

After finally getting settled in at my small High Peak Mountain abode (on the cover of the short story *High Peak Revisited*), it was time to do that long-anticipated spring hike along the South Fork of the Mills River in nearby Pisgah National Forest, just north of Etowah (North Carolina, USA). Tomorrow, Saturday, April 18, 1998 would be in the 50s (Fahrenheit, that is; 10 to 15° Celsius). Great hiking weather, even if there was a slight chance of a shower.

At 8:38 AM the next morning, I was parking my white 1991 Plymouth Voyager minivan in the Turkey Pen Gap Trailhead gravel parking lot. There was just one vehicle, a maroon Toyota Corolla with a *Go Vegan* bumper sticker, and no people to be seen. I thought: *Good deal. It's not crowded. At least not yet.*

I turned off the van's engine, but let my *Wings Greatest* cassette tape play on. *You would think that people would have had enough of silly love songs ...*

Then I rummaged through my green backpack until I found a black 35mm film canister. I opened it and poured the blue-speckled white granules into the remaining four ounces of coffee. After a stir, I gulped down the mud-colored solution. *Well, in twenty-five minutes things will get real interesting, boy. Hope we don't get hurt out there. Need to keep my wits about me. Help could be hours – or even days – a way.*

I hoisted the backpack onto my bony shoulders, locked the van, and caught a glimpse of my unshaven red-haired Caucasian mug in the side mirror. *Ok, sport, let's not do anything 'too' foolish today.*

I walked towards the trailhead sign. Soon I was marching on a wood-planked pedestrian-only suspension bridge that spanned the wide mountain stream. I gave the steel cables a shake. *Stop playing around, you loon. Just walk across it. With your luck it may break.*

The river-hugging, densely forested trail was like something out of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Completely canopied. Luscious vegetation; mainly rhododendron, mountain laurel and witch hazel, but with ferns and bamboo stands, too. Lots of conifers, especially hemlocks. Deciduous trees already getting their leaves back. I almost expected to see Hansel and Gretel around the next bend of the sometimes-narrow auspicious footpath.

I quickly fell into a brisk gait. It was like I was being drawn towards something important. And then, there it was. In the deposition side of a hairpin turn in the river, in the light brown sand, someone had scratched with a stick:

### **Remember Linda 1941-1998 R-I-P**

I stood and stared, remaining motionless for several minutes. My mind was awash with thoughts. *Wow. Linda McCartney is really dead. [Peter Jennings had announced it on yesterevening's 'World News Tonight' broadcast.] And John Lennon taken from us in 1980 by a madman – a mad fan. The end of that idealistic, psychedelic era. Even with all of her money, Linda couldn't beat the scourge of cancer. I wonder who scratched that – that reminder of inescapable mortality. Probably a hiker from that car in the parking lot. She sure lived a full life, though. Wonder if her spirit is looking down on this right now. Wonder if there are any*

## Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

