



a
psecret psociety
pshort pstory by
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(agent 33)

The number on the Asheville hotel door was 415. It was my old area code from when I lived in San Francisco, California. As I stared at the plastic numerals, my mind went into rewind mode. *Man, that was a long-azz time ago. 1992. Two decades over the dam. Almost another life ago. 737 Hyde Street. Apt. 405. Was that the number? Think so. And I thought I was going to be the next Andy Warhol ... or something. Foolish illusions of art-world grandeur. Ha-ha. That sure didn't happen. Just ended up on the walls of a coffeehouse. What was the name of that joint? Oh yeah, it was called Café Soma. And what was my phone number? Can't remember it now. [And even if I did, would I want to have it printed here?] BART didn't go to SFO back then; had to jump on a MUNI bus or pay a hefty cab fare. Ok, back to Asheville. Let's focus on the here and now before we have an accident.*

We, Monique (an alias for Agent 32, my Filipina wife) and I (Agent 33) were staying at the Downtown Inn, a five-story older hotel undergoing some sprucing up. A local artist had painted a lurid mural on the wall around the ground-level pool. This patio pool was closed, as it was late December and a wee chilly. It was December of 2012. But for some reason we would wander out there. Oh, yes, it was for the free continental breakfast. Not a bad spread. Bagels, flavored coffee, fresh fruit. It surprised me for a two-star (I would venture to guess) hotel.

Ah, but back in the room, the sheets looked clean and the mattress was bedbug-free. And the view – now isn't that why you go to the mountains? – was majestic. We would later watch snow squalls scrape the southern flank of Beaucatcher Mountain.

It was one of those exterior-entrance, corridor-out-in-the-weather hotels. Motel style. *What differentiates a hotel from a motel? John said that exterior doors = motel; interior corridor doors = hotel. But, I always thought that motels were only one or two*

stories; three levels and above = hotel. Hotel, motel, no-tell, show-and-tell, the big tree fell, oh, well.

Well, this is where we were, agents 32 and 33 of Psecret Psociety. [a group on facebook] Agent 32, her alias this week is Monique Siquijor, and she calls me 'Parker' for sport. *Parker, go do some parkour in the park.* [Pritchard Park, that triangle in the middle of downtown Asheville where the homeless congregate and break bread. And break and make bad, sometimes. Usually stayed clear of it. The aggressive panhandling turns me off and seals my wallet shut.] *C'mon, do a trick, dude. Make yourself disappear. Ok, that was harsh. Just do something creative. Use your bean. Let it ferment. Don't be another obnoxious oxy-drunk with an out-of-tune acoustic guitar trying to be the next Bob Dylan. Listen, you sing worse than me ... and that's saying something ... terrible!*

Yes, I failed my 9th grade final chorus audition. In fact, my choral teacher just said: Let's just stick with the academic grade. Still remember that humiliating line. The class laughed. Had to smile. It was that bad. So, I know bad singing firsthand. I can detect it, like really quick ... as in five notes or less. Thus, we stayed clear of the terrible triangle.

Of and on course, we ate at Laughing Seed on trendy Wall Street. Good veggie fare. A wee pricy, though. The waitress wasn't too kewler-than-thou. You know, some call it the Asheville attitude, rather than the Asheville altitude. Hey, just relaying what I hear in C-towne. *Hope they can't read my thoughts in here.*

So, anyway, we stayed at the Downtown Inn in room 415 for two nights. Shot some pics that we used in a 70-second artsy video-short. I think it's up to 9 views on youtube. Maybe 12 now. Not exactly going viral. Oh, well ... that's fine. Psi's record is safe.

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