

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



***It was a Leap Day*** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | Feb. 2020

## **It was a Leap Day**

by Mike Bozart

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It was a Leap Day – Saturday, February 29, 1896 – and wiry, 43-year-old, black-haired, handlebar-mustached Caucasian American Miles McGlowinghand was broke and very distressed. The Panic of 1893 had been brutal; all of his Union Pacific Railroad stock – his one and only security – was now burnt stone-oven toast – completely worthless. Juanita, his Mexican common-law wife of seven years, had left their modest abode near the mouth of Jackass Creek (real name; this area is now known as Wheeler) three days prior to go live with a Latino logger in Leggett Valley in the heart of the Northern California redwood forest. She couldn't take the stress, arguing, gloom and despair anymore.

As Miles walked up the treeless section of the wintertime-eroding-and-calving-in-chunks ridge just south of Jackass Creek in the still-sunny four o'clock hour, he could see a very long, north-south fog bank slowly approaching, hovering just above the predominantly teal-colored Pacific Ocean. He paused while his mind raced. *The fog is right on schedule. And I'm right on schedule, too. I guess. No one is going to miss me. Mom and dad dead and gone. May they be resting in peace. Steve won't care. [Miles and his younger brother had a falling out in 1888 over presidential politics; Steve preferred Benjamin Harrison, while Miles backed Grover Cleveland.] No kids to leave behind. Well, at least none of which I'm aware. And now, no woman, either. Wonder if anyone will remember me on Leap Day in 2020. Why did I choose 2020? Twenty repeated. 124 years from now. Wonder what the [United States] Republic will be like then. Benz's Motorwagen [the first modern car] will be everywhere, I bet. Wonder if it is foggy right now in Buenos Aires. Jim [a local friend] said that this economic depression [The Panic of 1893] all started in Argentina. The crop failed, but the coup succeeded. Sure wish it would have been the reverse. Not sure if [President] Grover [Cleveland] has made things better or worse. Silver, gold, or currency? Hell, no one wants paper money anymore. All those bank runs. All the hoarding of specie. It has made things worse. Much worse. People got scared. Lemmings afraid of their own shadows. Destitution demons. A chokehold. A fearful mentality that spread like a virus. A global pandemic. London and most of Europe are feeling it, too. 'Better to get a dime on the dollar than a penny.'* So tired of hearing that. And Jim always saying to 'just hang in there.' Yeah, right. 'It'll be ok; it all goes in cycles. Just be a miser and ride it out. Just live

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