

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Le Noir de Lenoir by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | OCT 2015

Then, there we (Monique, Kirk and I; Agents 32, 666 and 33, respectively) were, driving around Lenoir (NC) on a splendid Saturday fall afternoon, looking for an Asian grocery store that Monique said that she saw in a Google search. *Is there really an Asian grocery store in this little town?*

I turned left onto Morganton Boulevard SW from Harper Avenue NW. I started to scan for the *fair value* store.

“Well, guys, what side of the street do you think 2025 is on?” I asked.

Monique, who was riding shotgun in our gray Kia Rio hatchback, gave me a blank-bot look.

Kirk, who was seated behind her, quickly spoke up. “Are we going towards or away from downtown?” he asked.

“We are headed towards downtown, son,” I replied.

“Then 2025 will be on the right,” Kirk confidently announced.

“How do you know that, Kirk?” Monique asked, somewhat surprised by his assured proclamation.

“The OR-OR rule,” Kirk proudly stated. “On returning to the center of a town, the odd address numbers will be on the right. Get it? O for On, R for Returning, O for Odd, and R for Right. OR-OR.”

“Ah, you remembered, Kirk!” I exclaimed. “The corollary is the OL-OL rule, Agent 32. On Leaving, Odd Left.”

“You have way too much time on your maps, Agents 33 and 666,” Monique blurted. *Way too much time on your maps? That sure was a strange phrase. I’ll make sure that I use that when I write up this day. / I’m sure that he’s already switched that darn digital audio recorder on. I bet he has it hidden in his shirt pocket.*

Kirk soon spotted an odd-numbered address on the right side of the five-lane highway (NC 18 and US 64). “See there, look at that address number!”

“Ah, I see,” Monique said. “Very smart, Kirk.”

Soon, we were pulling into the grocery store’s parking lot. Once inside the store, Monique frantically searched for the Asian food section. But, it was to no avail.

“I don’t see any Asian food aisles, 33.” *I’ll call him by his agent number in here. He seems to like that in public places.*

“I don’t, either, 32.” *She’s already hip to my recording. / Dad is in psecret psociety mode.*

“But, why did it come up in my Google search results?” Monique asked with a confused look on her face.

“What keywords did you enter?” I asked as we stopped in the snack aisle.

“Asian grocery stores Lenoir,” Agent 32 recited.

“Because there are no Asian grocery stores in Lenoir, it probably just gave Asian a strikethrough and searched for grocery stores in Lenoir,” I theorized.

She shook her head. Kirk and I gathered some chips.

At the checkout register, there was a dark-skinned, black-haired, short in stature, middle-age Latino in front of us. He ended up with seven plastic bags full of assorted groceries, including canned goods.

“Could you double-bag them, please?” he asked the bagger in a Central American accent.

“Sure,” the blonde-haired, courteous, high-school-age, male worker replied.

The dark Hispanic man then turned to us and plainly stated: “I have a long walk.” He smiled as he tied several of the bags together. Then he hoisted the chain of plastic bags over his right shoulder and marched out of the store. *I wonder how far he has to go with that load. / Should we have offered him a ride? No, it's too risky in America. This is not the Philippines anymore. / Poor man. I don't want to end up like that when I grow up.*

A few minutes later, we were back in our car. As we began to leave the parking lot, we spotted *the walking man* as he ambled diagonally across Morganton Boulevard SW at Fairview Drive SW. He continued walking through the parking lot of a newer cinema. Then he disappeared into the woods behind the freestanding theater building.

“There he goes,” Monique said.

“Yes, there goes Le Noir de Lenoir,” I added. *Luh-n war?*

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