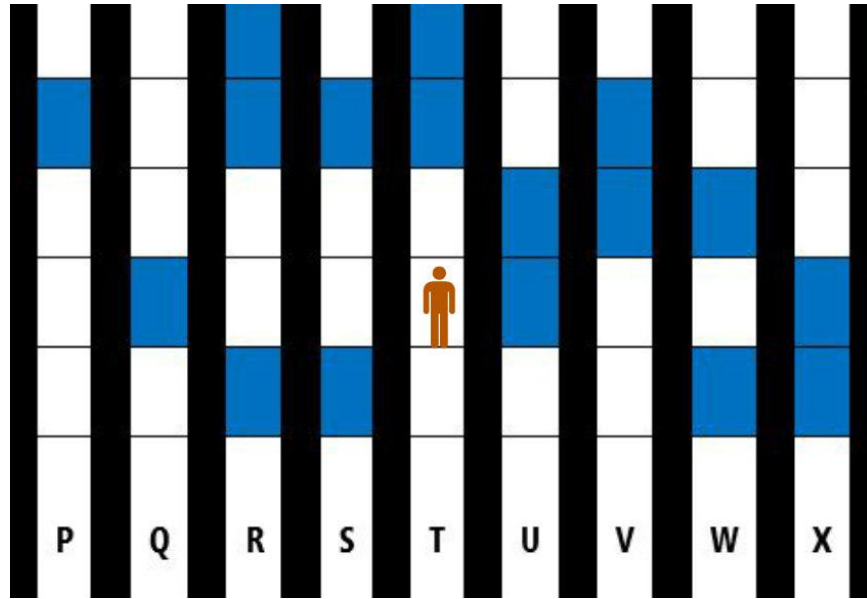


another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



**The Alphabet Man** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | June 2019

## The Alphabet Man

by Mike Bozart

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“Rochester, New York, man – not Rochester, Minnesota,” the mid-40-ish, athletically thin, short, light-brown-haired, green-eyed Caucasian American man barked from a well-worn, swivel-type office chair. “Now, do I look like I came from the Mayo Clinic?” *Mayonnaise balm for cranial sutures? Why’d I think of that? Need to start writing this stuff down. Maybe I could get something published like that lucky dog Paul did. Something in my new alphabet. / Este hombre se ve demacrado. [Spanish for ‘This man appears gaunt.’]*

“You look like you need a drink, my friend,” the nearly bald, portly, 50-ish Bolivian American retorted. *¿Es él anoréxico? [Spanish for ‘Is he anorexic?’]*

“You’re always thinking about cerveza fría, [Spanish for ‘cold beer’] Jorge.” *A beer or three sure would be nice tonight.*

Jorge chuckled. “It’s very good in this hot weather, Bill.” [It was already 95° Fahrenheit (35° Celsius) at 2:02 PM in Bismarck, North Dakota on Saturday, July 14, 2018; it would hit 99° Fahrenheit (37.22° Celsius) at precisely 4:44:44.]

“Well, after that event is over in Steamboat Park, I might join you for a drink. So, how did the parking situation look at last check, mi amigo bromeando?” [Spanish for ‘my joker-friend’]

“Ah, you’re learning some Spanish, boss. You dating Latina caliente?” [Spanish slang for ‘sexy Hispanic woman’]

“Ha-ha. Now, wouldn’t you like to know?” *Eh, sí – él es. [Spanish for ‘Ah, yes – he is.’]*

“Bill, where is your hometown of Rochester in the state of New York? Is it near Buffalo?” *Ah, he must have seen my Bills cap. But, everyone has a map app nowadays on their phone. Sort of an odd question.*

“No, but it’s in the Upstate, too, though not as far west as Buffalo. It’s on the Genesee River – on the southern shore of Lake Ontario.” *Genesee beer. Maybe pick up a six-pack later. Wonder if Tesoro [a nearby convenience store] still stocks it. Hope so.*

“Oh, near Syracuse,” Jorge ventured while eyeing a framed photograph of a waterfall with a nighttime city skyline just behind it. [High Falls in Rochester, NY]

“No, not really near Syracuse, either. Syracuse is 87 miles [140 km] to the east,” Bill explained, wondering why Jorge was in-a-sudden-flash curious about old Kodakville. [sic]

“Got ya, boss. Well, I’ll be going now. I’ll text you if I see any cars on the grass.” *‘Oh, I’m sure you will, Jorge.’ He’s so lax; he’ll probably pretend not to see the illegally parked vehicles.*

“Oh, just go ahead and ticket them, Jorge. There are plenty of **No Parking** signs in that area. They have no excuse.”

“Well, remember last time, boss: all those appeals, claiming that all the parking spaces were full.” *So what!*

“Yeah, I remember that, Jorge. But, they were just too damn lazy to walk a few extra yards. [meters] I denied all of them.” *He denied all of them? Wow!*

“No wonder you’re so unpopular in this town, boss.” Jorge was rapidly consumed by a mighty guffaw. *Ol’ Jorge sure is in a jovial way today. Wonder what good fortune landed in his lap.*

“Ok, get the hell out of here, sabelotodo,” [Spanish for ‘smart ass’] Bill demanded with faux anger. And then smirked.

Jorge gave him a mock salute as he began to exit the modest office, and Bill just smiled and gave him a ‘just go now’ gesture with his right hand. *El jefe realmente quiere que me vaya. Él está haciendo algo. Puedo decir. [Spanish for ‘The boss really wants me to go. He is up to something. I can tell.’]*

Once Jorge was out of the old, four-story, concrete-panel building on East Rosser Avenue, Bill retrieved some marked-on sheets of gridded paper. There were a series of narrow columns with what seemed to be randomly placed azure-blue squares divided by bold, black, vertical lines, all of which were five blocks tall by one block wide. Upon closer examination, each column-character represented a letter of the English alphabet. *Could I read this alphabet better if I were high? No, don’t even think about sparking up any weed. Can’t afford to lose this gig.*

A lone fly suddenly whizzed by and alighted on the small, triple-pane, single-sash, engineered-for-the-ultra-frigid-Northern-Plains-winters window. Before Bill could take a whack at it with his red-striped, dollar-store swatter, it flew off

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