

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



The Busboy by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | May 2018

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by Mike Bozart

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It was a cool, rainy Tuesday afternoon in late April (the 24th, 2018) in the Plaza-Midwood area of Charlotte (NC, USA). I mounted a padded, armless stool at 2:40 EDT before a large rectangular oak table occupied by seven football/soccer fans at Jackalope Jack's (now at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Pecan Avenue). The Champions League pre-match (the first semifinal) show was on the large flat-screen TV over the bar. I said hello to a few middle-aged Reds fans. Liverpool FC would be playing AS Roma at Anfield (the first leg) in just five minutes.

"Now, would you happen to have a scoreline prediction, most clairvoyant one?" I asked Bradford, my jovial, 50-something, Caucasian, white-LFC-jersey-donning pal from New Jersey.

"I'd love 3-nil with goals by Salah, Mané and Firmino, but I will gladly take 2-nil," he replied with a pint of light-yellow ale already in hand. "A clean sheet is going to be major."

"Going +3 would be sweet," I added as I looked at a nervous Liverpoolian named Turk at the bar. I mused. *Boy, he really looks worried. I think we'll be ok. Hope Lovren and Klavan don't screw up. Hope we score first. That would be huge.*

More male LFC fans between the ages of 35 and 65 streamed into the dark bar/restaurant. I ordered a Ballast Point Black Marlin (a porter) from the new, 20-something, short, attractive, strawberry-blonde bartender. My bottle of beer arrived just as the match kicked off. *Well, here we go.*

"Come on you Reds!" Bradford shouted.

"Get in there!" a dark-haired man to my left added.

“Up the all-leaguers!” I tacked on like a strange garnish.

Some blank stares ensued. I just smiled. I could hear their thoughts. *Is this [50-something] red-haired guy going to be like this the whole game?*

After a nervy half-hour, the game was still nil-nil, though Roma had hit the crossbar and Mané had blown some gilded gifts. Then Salah put a beauty in the upper corner. Lots of cheering followed. The young Middle Eastern (Egyptian?) American busboy, who was taking a break at the bar, just smiled. Salah would add another nifty goal just before halftime.

“Two-nil and looking good,” I said to Bradford as I headed for the restroom.

“We need two more,” he replied. *That would be nice. But, is that realistic? Greedy thinking. Though, Salah looks like he could score more. But, Mané couldn’t even hit the broad side of a barn. Hope Klopp rights Sadio’s head during the break.*

I nodded to him and continued walking towards the men’s room door. As I started to take a pee at the urinal, I heard the aforementioned busboy, who was now standing at the semicircular stainless steel sink, some ten feet (three meters) behind me, talking on his cell phone.

“I just know that she’s not really into me, man,” I heard him plainly state to the person on the other end, who I assumed was most likely his best friend. After a five-second pause, he blurted out: “Listen, Dave; listen to me. She went on a five-day cruise and never replied to my texts – not a single one.”

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