

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



The Cell Tower by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | March 2018

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by Mike Bozart

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Monday morning, October 21st, 2013. It is a crisp 39° Fahrenheit (4° Celsius) under a cobalt-blue-sky dawn in midtown Charlotte (NC, USA). Mateo Lopez, a 45-year-old cell-phone tower technician from Nicaragua, has just backed his work van up to an abandoned, small, brick, one-story building off South Kings Drive. He thinks: *Won't be long before this little rathole gets bulldozed. Wonder how much the new apartments will rent for? Ah, mucho dinero, estoy seguro. [much money, I am sure' in Spanish]*

He checks his task-assignment printout for the day, gets his tools and climbing gear, and then begins walking on the crumbling, weeds-growing-in-the-cracks asphalt parking lot behind the now-broken-windowed-with-vertical-bars-bent-out-of-parallel-for-crackhead-entry/egress, onetime, low-end saloon (which was previously a tax accountant's office, and before that a lax acupuncturist's malpractice).

Once on the other side of the little, dilapidated edifice, Mateo unlocks the padlock on the chain-link-fence gate. He looks upwards, and sees all the way to the top of the 138-foot-tall (42-meter-high), tri-pole, gray cell-phone tower. *Well, at least I don't have to go all the way to the top. Got dizzy last time.*

Mateo closes the gate back and relocks it. Soon he has started his ascent. He pauses to notice the inbound commuter traffic stacking up on East 4th Street at 7:43 AM. There is already a wreck on Interstate 277. *All of the cars look like crazy, scurrying, multicolored cockroaches from up here. Yep, un mundo tan loco. [such a mad world' in Spanish]*

Four minutes and four seconds later, short-black-haired Mateo is passing around a large, bowl-shaped, white-cowling-covered microwave antenna. Just above it is the lower cell-phone antennae array – the one which needs to be removed and raised due to the forthcoming, adjacent, six-story, upscale apartment complex.

Mateo begins to make notes on the bolt types and nut sizes on his smartphone. His safety lanyard is securely attached to a galvanized cross brace. He looks at the Charlotte skyline. *O Charlota, [sic] you have been good to me and my family. María, [his Belizean American wife] Juan [his 7-year-old autism-spectrum-disorder son] and I could have picked a worse American city. Yes, I am going to miss you. Well, maybe so. Ah, who knows?*

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