

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



The MATHEMAT1C1AN by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | Jan.  
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by Mike Bozart

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Late Saturday afternoon, December 14, 2019 in east Charlotte. A typical late-fall temperature of 55.4° Fahrenheit (13° Celsius) under partly cloudy skies. After watching the 120<sup>th</sup> Army – Navy (American football) game (Midshipmen 31-7 Black Knights) with the 61-year-old, Caucasian American visual artist known as Kat Da'dy at his Kilborne in the Woods condo, I moseyed my 55-year-old, back-aching frame over to single-family-residential, mature-tree-canopied Falmouth Road to check in with 62-year-old, Amerasian Mortimer, who was often referred to as Mort the mathematician. And once after a slip of the tongue, Math the mortician.

I knocked twice on his modest, 61-year-old, brick-veneer house's slate-blue front door. A granite-gray-haired, thin, flannel-shirted man opened it and led me in to the knotty-pine-walled den. *This looks like the original wall covering. Wonder if there are any notes in the void.*

"Have a seat, Tryke. [my art name] Want anything to drink?"

"Nah, I'm fine, Mort. But, thanks anyway." *Damn, this couch is so soft. Feel like I'm going to sink into the floor. Or the next multiverse.*

"Not even a cup of oolong tea? It's a good cut." *A good cut?*

"Ok, you sold me," I acceded. *Wonder if it's synaptically spiked. Would old Mort still do that?*

"So, tell me, how has your day been so far?" Mort asked in a decidedly nonchalant manner.

"Well, after finally being allowed to pass through a CMPD [Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department] street-closure roadblock ..."

"I noticed that, too," Mortimer quickly interjected. "Do you know what happened?"

"It seems that a 24-year-old, drunk-as-a-frunken-skunk Latino, one Jesus Lopez, crashed his over-speeding Ford F-150 pickup truck into a brick pillar and power pole near Sudbury [Road] – at 11:45 AM! Dude was already completely sauced before noon. You know what they say: Liquor is quicker." *To jail or the grave.*

"Starting early and ending early. Hope no innocents were injured."

“His buddy got the worst of it,” I informed. “He’s in the hospital, and may not make it. Pacing yourself is the key. I had three pints [1.42 Litres] of porter spread out over three hours at Karl’s pad. It took Kat Da’dy two hours to drink the one that I gave him. He’s not a fan of dark beer, Mort. He kept grimacing as he sipped at it. I could ‘hear’ him thinking: *This beer is so damn bitter!* When I opened his fridge, I saw that he was a Coors-in-bottles man. Now I know what to bring to the next banquet.” *Banquet? Tryke’s such an odd duck.*

Mortimer chuckled. “How is Kat Da’dy doing?” *That skittish feline in Karl’s bathroom. Maybe it was the tone of my voice. Or my sulfuric breath.*

“Pretty good it would seem. No more flirting with female bartenders via dart-flinging. By the way, he said that that incident [at the now-long-gone Pat’s Tavern in NoDa (northeast Charlotte)] was blown way out of proportion; the dull dart was lightly tossed and bounced off her jeans – it was not sticking in Mandy’s left buttock.” *What in the world!*

Mortimer sighed. “Well, that’s good to know.”

“Anyway, he’s doing knife paintings now.” *What?!*

“Oh, is he painting droplets of blood on his pocketknife?” Mortimer seemed genuinely confused.

“No, he’s using an X-ACTO® knife as a brush. We traded paintings. I tendered one that had 26 of those craft-store eyes glued to it. [title: *The Eyes Have It*] He offered up this cool, abstract, diminutive piece titled *Allegory in the Cave*. On a real-property note, he still has his condo; I lost mine in the crash of ’08. Well, the crash combined with a string of deadbeat, ‘Oh, I’ll have the money for you next week, Mike’ tenants. I’m too much of a softie, Mort; I accepted all excuses, even the one about the dog eating the six C-notes.” [hundred-dollar bills] *Wonder where her Fido crapped.*

“I could never be a landlord, Tryke.”

“I’ll never be one again,” I replied.

“Well, what did Kat Da’dy have to say?” Mortimer asked as he scratched the left side of his hardly-a-wrinkle tan face.

“We got into this conversation about some artwork hanging above the bar in his kitchen. They were a pair of small,

unframed, oil-on-canvas landscape paintings by a local artist named Donald Lee Baldwin, who passed away in 2017 at the age of 61.”

“What was the cause of death?” Mortimer promptly enquired.

“Lung cancer,” I blurted. “Karl said that he smoked like a chimney his whole life. Well, anyway, Karl informs me that Donald went to Garinger High School [in east Charlotte] in the early ‘70s. That would be the same time that the late Dwight Clark attended.”

“Dwight Clark?” Mortimer was drawing a blank.

“The San Francisco 49ers wide receiver who made ‘the catch’ in that [January 10, 1982] NFC Championship Game.”

“Ah, yes. Continue.”

“Donald and Dwight probably ran in different circles, but they must have passed each other in the hallways. Did they fancy the same girl? Were their locker numbers both multiples of four? Did they ever wonder what lay ahead? Just what-if stuff like that.” *Multiples of 4?*

“You didn’t talk about Gary Weiss [the late Agent 86] living in a heat-less shed in the neighborhood behind Garinger?” *Is that where the shed was?*

“No, I didn’t mention that this time, Mort. But, you would like this: the golden ratio [1.618] came up. I then mentioned that it’s almost equal to the number of kilometers in a mile [1.609] – an American land mile, that is. And then we wondered what would happen if one mile was reset to equal 1.618 kilometers.” *I bet they were both sailing on Sylvester’s serum.*

“You mean, would a mile grow longer, or would a kilometer get shorter?” *Huh?*

“If a statute mile was fixed at 5,280 feet ...”

“A kilometer would shrink by about 17½ feet to 3,263 and some change,” the mathematician quickly calculated.

“I don’t think France would like that,” I added and then chuckled.

“Probably not. But, did you guys realize that in such case there would be .618 miles in a kilometer?”

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