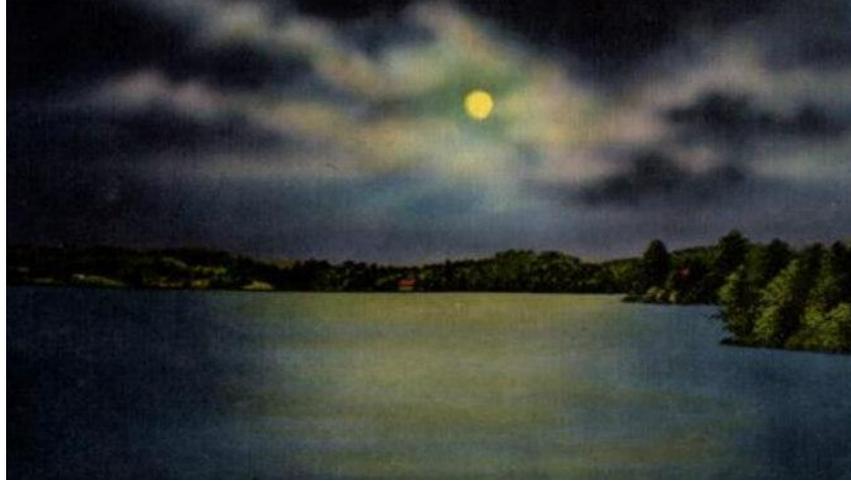


another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



The Postcard by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | February 2019

The Postcard

by Mike Bozart

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Saturday morning, May 2nd, 2015. Thin-faced, silver-haired, Arizona-tanned Justin Case is whizzing northward up Interstate 77 in North Carolina. The sky is already azure-clear and the air is a refreshing 48° Fahrenheit (9° Celsius) as he crosses the Yadkin River, merges left, and takes Exit 83 (US 21 Bypass). He muses: *Should be a perfect weekend for golf. Both days with highs around 70°. [F; 21° C] I'm going to blow ol' Steve-O off the course. No, I'll go easy on him. Let him think that he has a chance to win. Then on the 34th and 35th holes, it's birdie-birdie, bye-bye. The 36th hole tomorrow should be quite satisfying as he rears up and mis-crushes a desperation tee shot in an attempt to eagle. The pill [golf ball] will go way out of bounds. Yeah, he'll probably hook it into the woods. The trees will play ping pong with his Titleist. Or, maybe he finds a bunker. He'll finish even farther back. Will thoroughly relish the walk up to that green. Can hardly wait.*

As Justin's rented-from-Hertz-at-the-CLT-airport, black, super-shiny, 2014 Corvette Stingray curved through the Thurmond community on the now-two-lane highway, he could see the Blue Ridge Mountains ahead, or more specifically, Murphy Ridge.

Soon the low-profile vehicle was twisting and turning up the southeastern flank of the vehicle-vacant, forest-bisecting, scenic route. A diamond-shaped, seemingly bored, black-on-yellow warning sign stated that the safe speed for the curvy mountain road was 35 MPH (56 km/h). He took it at 45 MPH (72 km/h). The tires slightly chirped. Justin backed off. *What the heck am I doing? I'm freaking 53 – not 23! Take it easy, old boy.*

Just as he passed the **WELCOME TO ALLEGHANY COUNTY / LEAVING WILKES COUNTY** green sign, his cell phone rang. It was none other than Steve Olivert IV, his golfing partner/foe, onetime college drinking buddy (at Duquesne University), and intense-yet-friendly (usually) rival.

“Hi Steve. I'm close.”

“Have you passed Statesville yet?” Steve asked sarcastically. *What an asinine question.*

“Long past there, sport. I just entered Alleghany County. They spell it differently than they do in Pittsburgh; it ends with **any** instead of **eny**.”

“Yeah, I noticed that, too, Justin, the first time I came up here back in 2009.” *Hmmm ... Thought he said that 2011 was the first time. Why would he lie about it? Or, is his memory already starting to go south?*

“Well, the GPS [Global Positioning System] says that I only have four miles [6.4 km] to go, Steve.”

“Good deal, pal. I’m in the clubhouse – in the main dining hall.” *Probably already getting sauced. This will be easy.*

“Oh, what are we playing for this time, Steve?” *The maid?*

“I am offering up a priceless, vintage, linen postcard of Lake Louise. It’s from the end of World War II in Europe. It’s dated May 3, 1945 – seventy years ago tomorrow. The cursive on the back – well, you’ll just have to read it, Justin. It’ll give you pause and some deep thoughts. Anyway, I got it from a postcard collector on the internet. And, what are you putting on the table, Doctor Slice?” *Doctor Slice? Oh, I’m going to show him no mercy. Going to beat him by at least six strokes. And rub it in.*

“I didn’t have time to get a special trinket. So, I guess I’ll just tender a crisp portrait of Benjamin Franklin, [\$100 bill] Steve.” *Which will be as safe as being in my safe: my wallet.*

“That’ll work. Drive safely. Some dangerous curves lie ahead.”

“Will do. See you in about ten minutes. Ciao.” *Bet he’s dating an Italian lady now. Bet Justin marries her, too. She’ll be good for eight years, just like the previous two. He’s such a fool when it comes to women.*

Justin continued climbing the escarpment in the American sports car that purred up the slope. When he passed Oklahoma Road on the left, which a brown sign on the right indicated: **STONE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK** (left arrow), he suddenly remembered his first wife, Jenny. *Wonder if she is still in Tulsa. Is she still with Reid McGreed? No telling, and won’t be asking. What a shifty-eyed huckster. So glad that we never had kids. That would have been awful.*

When he reached the ridgeline, a green sign plainly stated: **Eastern Continental Divide – ELEV 2972 FT [906 meters]** *Nowhere near the elevation of the western divide in Colorado, but it sure is thick with flora.*

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