

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



THE PUNT by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | JAN 2017

The Punt

by Mike Bozart

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A cool, gray, late November Saturday, replete with low clouds that looked exquisitely bored, found my 13-year-old Amerasian son (the new Agent 66 – formerly 666) and I playing some American football in our east Charlotte (NC, USA) back yard. We were passing the brown, bi-pointed, oval, white-striped pigskin back and forth. I then told him: “Get ready, son. Here comes a booming punt. See if you can field it.”

“I’m going to catch it and return it for a touchdown on your ass, dad!” he exclaimed. *Such adolescent boldness.*

“Be sensible, son. Call for a fair catch. You don’t want to get crumpled by the old man.” I chuckled.

“Crumpled? Ha! You won’t even be able to touch me, dad! I’m going to juke you. I’ve got the moves.” *He sure is feeling his oats today.*

“Ok, here it comes.”

My son nodded. He had such a determined look on his face.

I then dropped the football from both hands and my right, brown, steel-toe safety shoe struck it fairly hard. It went about forty-five feet (13.7 meters) up in the air.

“The 52-year-old geezer hit that one pretty good,” I proudly announced as the football was in mid-flight.

However, the punt was partially shanked, and started heading for the garden area to my son’s right. *Oh, crap!*

That's going offline. I hope that it doesn't slice through the bird netting. Monique [my wife, Agent 32] won't like seeing a big rip in it.

"You shanked it, dad!" *I sure did.*

The ball soared over the now-dead stalks in the vegetable garden and into some Japanese mimosa trees that lined the back patio. Some autumn-defiant leaves were knocked off by the ball and fluttered downward. But, I never heard or saw the football hit the ground. *Hmmm ... that's odd. Wonder where it went. Maybe it deflected into the neighbor's yard.*

My son and I then walked over to the patch of slender, smooth-trunk mimosa trees, which were about sixteen to twenty feet (4.9 to 6.1 meters) tall. We didn't see the football anywhere on the ground. But when I looked up, there it was: Our laced ellipsoid was stuck in the crotch of some upper limbs, some eighteen feet (5.5 meters) above the ground.

"Well, there it is, son," I said as I pointed to the limb-pinched football. "What are the odds of that happening?"

"About the same as winning the Powerball lottery, I would bet, dad." *One in 292 million? That may be about right.*

"Oh, you would have to bring up that sore subject." [reference the short story *Powerballed*]

"Sorry, dad."

"It's ok, son. That's life. Par for the curse." [*sic*] *The curse?*

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