

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory

WAITER



THE WAITER by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | Dec. 2017

The Waiter

by Mike Bozart

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Tim, a somewhat husky; mid-40-ish-appearing; dark-haired; olive-skinned; mixed-race American waiter, was a bit of a joker – an odd joker – at a very popular Italian restaurant in east Charlotte (NC, USA). He would often share his strangely amusing, twisted, self-disparaging riddles and conundrums with us. After bringing the drinks to our table, he decided to lay a new one on us (Monique, my wife, aka Agent 32, and I, Agent 33) on this chilly mid-December (2017) Thursday evening.

“Why does the restaurant owner stay in the kitchen?” Tim asked us without any discernible emotion.

I looked over the front counter at the massive pizza oven and saw the short, bald, rotund, unmistakably-from-Italy co-owner. “I have no worldly idea, Tim,” I replied.

“Are you sure?” he probed.

“So that he can stay warm next to the oven on a cold night like this one,” Monique blurted.

“That’s a very good guess, ma’am,” Tim validated. “But, sorry, no prize.” *Or cigar.*

“Ok, Tim, what’s the million-dollar answer that we would never guess in a thousand years?” I asked. *Or 10,000.*

“Drumroll, please. Ta-da-da-duh-dum. The answer: So that he won’t have to hear my riddles crashing on the floor.” *He’s a weird one. / Kind of surreal – like Mysterieu.*

“Bravo!” I exclaimed. “I like it, Tim. It’s not everyone’s cup of tea, but I’m down – or maybe I should say ‘up’ – with the

self-dep[recation] angle. Too much male comedy in America is now just 'I can fart louder than fill-in-the-blank with my foot-long dick stuck up my ass'. It's just cocaine-abetted, juvenile, primate-chest-pounding nonsense. Ya know what I mean, Tim?" *What the heck did my bana [husband in Cebuano] just say?! / Is he high on something fungal? / Did I really say that?*

"Yeah, I guess so," he said, feigning exasperation. "Anyway, thanks for the compliment. Your pasta dishes will be out in ten minutes – maybe twelve." He then waltzed off to the kitchen. *Maybe twelve? Not eleven?*

The dining area began to fill up with an assortment of patrons: families from surrounding neighborhoods, first dates, and lone just-got-off-work regulars.

"What do you think of our waiter?" I asked my charming, late-30-something, brown-eyed Filipina wife.

"He's a bit of an odd duck," Monique replied. *I just know that hubby likes his weird humor.*

"I wonder what his story is."

"Why don't you ask him?" *Should I? Would he take offence? Don't really know him that well. Though, I know that he has something interesting to reveal; can just sense it.*

"Ok, I will, Agent 32." *Agent 32? Recorder is on. I'm sure.*

"So, you're recording, 33?"

"Just to be safe. Don't want to let a possible short story slide through the crevices of the remaining gray matter." *Oh, boy.*

Tim would return with our entrées eleven minutes later. After he carefully placed the large, white, oval, marinara-sauce-splattered plates in front of us, I took a chance and casually casted my metaphorical, innocently-inconsequential-enough-though-could-quickly-become-worrisomely-weighty lure.

“Tim, what’s your story?” I boldly enquired. *Is this guy some kind of writer? He kind of looks like one. But, no glasses. / Hope he doesn’t say, ‘None of your business, pal.’ Awkward.*

He chuckled boisterously for several seconds. Then Tim recomposed himself. “Everyone has a story, right? Is that what you’re getting at? Or is it, to be more precise, ‘why are you still waiting tables at 47 in a mid-tier restaurant?’ kind of gotcha question?” *Gotcha? He really knotted that one up.*

“Any way that you want to answer it is fine, or you can just decline,” I stated. *And still get billed later.*

“Your question is too rich to walk away from, Mike. It’s Mike, right?” *He didn’t forget. / He has a good memory. Wonder if he remembers my name, too.*

“Yes – very impressive,” I lauded Tim. “You’ve got a much better memory than me.” *Maybe not.*

“A good waiter has to have a good memory to keep a good clientele,” Tim rattled off. “Wouldn’t you agree, Monique?” *Wow! He remembered my name as well.*

“Good memory, Tim,” Monique commended with a nod.

“It’s all done by association – the Jerry Lucas image-based method,” Tim disclosed. “But, I go a step further and make it

a rhyming phrase. 'Mike the redhead on the red, lead bike.' It sticks better that way. I've now got 400 customers memorized." *How amazing! / Is he serious?*

"But, my bike is a black steel-frame," I quipped. *Ah, a stickler for details. He probably works with codes.*

"Now I might forget you," Tim declared as he descended into a hearty guffaw. His laughter wound down and then he continued. "And, chic Monique beside the mountain creek." *Has he read 'Monique by the Creek'? Must be just a coincidence. Don't even think that short story is online yet.*

"Tim, you are so witty!" Monique proclaimed.

"Thanks, Monique. Well, back to your question, Mike. I'll give you a four-sentence summary, since I'm pressed for time. Is that ok, folks?" *Anything will most likely be fine.*

"Sure," Monique and I said in unison.

"I was an only child born in Charlotte on Earth Day [April 22nd] 1970," Tim informed. "My hippy parents were killed in an automobile accident on Eastway Drive on August 9th, 1974 – right as [resigning President Richard] Nixon's helicopter was leaving the White House lawn for the last time. I suffered some brain damage in that violent collision; cognitive dissonance is now a staple of my staples. I was an orphan in area foster homes up until the age of 18; just a waiter who has bounced around town since then. Did I go over the limit if we allow a pair of semicolons?" *What a life story. / Woah!*

“No, you did fine,” I assured him. “I’m so sorry about the loss of your parents at such an early age.”

“Ah, it’s ok,” Tim mollified. “It happened a long, long time ago.”

“My heart goes out to you, Tim,” Monique empathized. *It’s so sad.*

Tim detected our now-glum mood. “Well, it wasn’t meant to be a let-me-bring-you-down-tonight speech,” Tim avowed. “Just stating the primary facts in my run-of-the-mill life thus far. I’m still single, if you know any unattached Filipinas, Monique.”

“Sure, Tim, just give me your full name and e-mail,” Monique requested. “Oh, are you on Facebook?”

“I am, but not that often,” Tim answered. “I’ve dated a few waitresses over the years, but they all drank more alcohol – and took way more pills – than me. All became shipwrecks.”
Shipwrecks?

“Tim, what’s your favorite TV show?” I asked for some suddenly-escaping-my-fleeting-cognizance reason.

“None. I’m over and done with it. There’s no TV in my apartment. Not to brag, but I can see through all the manipulation and deception. No show – or even TV news – is able to suspend its ridiculous unreality for me – not even the so-called hardcore crime-story series. And, those you-can-trust-us-because-we’re-not-*only*-after-your-hard-earned-money commercials – well, I’m sorry, but it astounds me how so many fail to see the disingenuousness. It’s insulting to my

intelligence. Listen, I'm not the smartest guy – I'm well aware of that – but, I'm not stupid. And, how about all of the constantly-employed scare tactics? Did you know that 1.1 million people die each and every week? No one's death is going to stop the universe from doing its thing. 'Get over yourself!' The current state of TV bewilders me. It's gotten so *1984-ish*." *Wow! Snagged another short story. He was perfect.*

"Thanks for your candor, Tim," I responded. "Can I use what you just said in a future online short story?" *I knew that he was a writer.*

"Sure, just change my name, and don't use the restaurant's name."

"You got it, man."

"So, what website will it be on?"

"A dozen or so. Keyword-search *psecret psociety*, Tim, with silent p's." *Huh?*

"Oh, like the word *psychology*?"

"That's correct, Tim," Monique affirmed.

What follows are waiter Tim's running-score sheets (written on his blank guest checks) of his customers on this particular fateful night. I wonder where (on which rows) Monique and I got scored.

Date	Amount	Guests	Server	
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Guest Check

Date 12/14 2017	Table 4-8	Guests ?	Server Tim	Thursday eve. shift
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APPT - SOUP/SAL - ENTREE - VEG/POT - DESSERT - BEV

	jerk	1	
	scumbag		
	cool		
	bitch		
	priss		
	airhead	1	
	douchebag		
	cunt		
	prick		
	clueless		
	decent		
	worthy		
	coy		
			Tax
			Total
Thank You - Please Come Again			

Date	Amount	Guests	Server	
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	airhead	1	
	douchebag		
	cunt	1	
	prick	11	
	clueless	1	
	decent		
	worthy	1	
	coy	1	
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	clueless	1	
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