

**another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory**



**Zap** by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | November 2017

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by Mike Bozart

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At 2:49 PM on a sweltering, steam-pot-hot, mid-August (the 15<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday in 2017 in uptown Charlotte (NC, USA), I opened the massive portcullis-esque wooden door and entered RÍRÁ, an Irish pub on North Tryon Street. The air conditioning felt great. I glanced up at the nearest flat-screen TV. The score was still nil-nil (Hoffenheim – Liverpool) in the 5<sup>th</sup> minute. *Good deal – haven't missed a goal.*

I made my way over to the bar and alighted on a stool three-fourths of the way down. Soon I was looking once again at the statue of St. Patrick. *Ah, he's still scaring the snakes away from the beer taps.*

Then in the 10<sup>th</sup> minute, Hoffenheim were awarded a spot kick, due to Lovren tripping Gnabry in the penalty area.

“Come on, Dejan!” I yelled to a nearly vacant back section of the tavern.

However, my outburst found the 30-ish Irish bartender's ears. Joey, a West Ham United fan, began chatting with me.

“A tough call for you guys,” he stated.

“Lovren can't be that reckless in the 18-yard box,” I retorted. “So foolish, and probably so costly.”

“Think Mignolet can save it?” he asked.

“Wouldn't bet on it,” I groaned. *Maybe if I think negatively ...*

But, Simon did. It was a poor penalty kick by Kramarić. Mignolet didn't have to move his feet. *It worked!*

“Zap!” Joey shouted. *Zap?*

“We got real lucky there,” I insisted. “Got away with one.”

“Your team killed off a bigtime Hoffenheim scoring chance,” he commented. “A major confidence boost for you guys. I bet that Liverpool now scores a goal.”

“That would be nice,” I replied.

Then, about 25 minutes later (the 35<sup>th</sup> minute of the match), an 18-years-young Trent Alexander-Arnold curled a 28.5-yard (26 meters) free kick into the lower-right corner of the goal. One-nil for the Reds. *Sweet!*

“Hope they can hold onto the lead,” I wished. “They have a knack for allowing goals right after scoring.”

“Hey, that was very Coutinho-like,” Joey contended. “You guys may be fine without him.” [Barcelona would be rebuffed in the 2017 summer transfer window.]

“Joey, let’s not talk about our pouting, petite Prince Philippe right now. It’s become a sore subject – kind of like an open, pus-oozing, festering wound. How about your Hammers match against [Manchester] United?” [their Premier League season opener]

“Four-nil. It was awful. They killed us. Totally outclassed us. No two ways about it.” Joey sighed. “Not sure how this season will turn out for us. I’m not very optimistic.”

There was a late scare, but the first half ended with Liverpool up 1-0. *So far, so good.*

Then a stocky, dark-haired, middle-aged Latin American man walked up to the bar.

“A Liverpool fan, yes?” he asked me, suspecting the answer.

“Even after all the heart attacks,” I answered and tittered.

“Mignolet is a good goalkeeper,” he then proclaimed. “People are too hard on him. That penalty-kick save was major. Oh, my name is Tyler Durden.” *That sounds familiar.*

“Pleased to meet you, Tyler. My name is Mike.” *No need to use a ‘psecret psociety’ alias in this setting.*

“Have you been here before?” he enquired.

“Ah, yes – many times. This was the official LFC [Liverpool Football Club] bar for Charlotte, but we got tossed; red-carded in June of 2016. We’re now housed at Valhalla Pub on South Church Street, right at the corner of the Latta Arcade alleyway. I didn’t have enough time to make it over there today.”

“Oh, yes; I know the place.” Tyler seemed interested.

“We’ll be there until someone plays Frisbee® again with a porcelain plate. Oh, by the way, I wrote a short story about a time in this bar last year. [*RíRá Ruckus*] The setting was almost exactly where we are right now. The protagonist was a prosthetic limb salesman from San Diego.”

“Was he on his last leg?” Tyler deftly linked.

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