

pixel on the 4th of july



NO SWIMMING
HAZARDOUS AREA
BEACH CLOSED

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**DEDICATION: TO ANIMATORS AND THE MAGIC
THEY CREATE**

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1

The July 4th Commission is a combination of hundreds of hours of interviews, dozens of sworn statements and testimony by every witness, victim and suspect to understand all the events that took place on Poughkeepsie Island. Most volunteered the information freely, some were more reluctant especially since the new administration was sworn in on January. Others refused outright to speak at all taking the 5th instead. All of the commissions questions asked were in regard to what led to the events that took place on the island on July 4th, 2020.

Below the commission has provided a list of the people most directly involved with the events on the island and will include a brief biography. Normally such information would be censored or withheld, however due to the severity of the events the current administration insisted on transparency, most accepted this begrudgingly with the exception of one of the witnesses who told the commission as much as he could about things relevant but also irrelevant and had to be asked repeatedly to stop explaining certain explicit acts he engaged in and with whom. The commission however was granted by the US Supreme Court to make all information public as this was in the public interest.

JACK SACKEM – A 5th generation video game icon, Featured in Jack Sackem 3D and Jack Sackem: Everlasting, Retired from starring in video games to become as he exactly quoted: ‘a sexual conqueror, an entrepreneur, a businessman, a sexual titan, a television producer, and a sex magnet.’ It was he that was made interim police chief of Poughkeepsie Island during the events in question.

NOOBERT THE HODGEPODGE – A 4th generation video game legend of the more family friendly variety, he spent his video game days as the Mega corporations rival to the Tanoshimi Enjoyment System, aka the TES console, flagship game series The Super Miroslav Bros. He developed a gambling addiction and had difficulties but overcame this problem. He retired from gaming in the early aughts and currently is employed as a manger at a local Time Kill gas station located on Aramingo avenue in Northeast Philadelphia.

BOB THE BOT – An AI robot who briefly was a peripheral during the TES’s early days during the 3rd generation of gaming, headlining two games, Bottle Tight and Box Maker, both of which failed to sell despite the success of TES console. Bob was forced into retirement very early on by the TES corporation, spending most of the 80s in the underground club scenes of Philadelphia, Chicago, NYC, synthesizing music for artists such as Debbie Deb and Grand Master Flash. After years of poor financial decisions he began working at the same company as Noobert the Hodgepodge.

JOHANN COCKTOASTOVENSTEIN – Poughkeepsie Islands’ Coroner/M.D. Dr Cocktoastovenstein lost his medical license briefly in 1997 as a plastic surgeon in the state of Pennsylvania due to an ethics violation by his associate Mr Sackem. Dr Cocktoastovenstein

2

eventually regain his license to practice and after years of volunteer work he was hired as the islands coroner/M.D. in 2012.

VICTOR LAZENBY- (R) Mayor of Poughkeepsie Island, a life long island resident elected to multiple terms since 2002. He was a graduate of Penn State with a degree in law with a minor in communications. He made connections to a variety of people, on both sides of the law as a prosecutor on the main land. After a few years he retired from prosecution to run for mayor of the island which he handily won. His popularity was so great that on two previous elections, he had run unopposed.

DUDLEY KRAVITS - Richest man on the island though not an islander by birth. His father was an oilman from out west and retired to this island in 1962 when Dudley was born. He inherited that oil money to build a five star hotel by the beach and a string of gift shops and arcades on the boardwalk. He was the big push behind Mayor Lazenby's idea to build multi-million dollar villas.

MURRAY FEATHERSTONE – Political Reporter for the Poughkeepsie Gazette, the islands local paper that ran stories that were favorable to the mayor and the GOP in general. His articles varied on subjects such as antifa militants, Covid being a hoax and a weekly accomplishment list of President Trump's 'wins', and an article from March with a headline declaring the Corona virus a liberal hoax with an opinion piece written by Jeremy Voight, pastor of the 'First Pescatarian Baptists Church.' An article where he declared such things as face masks being a mark of the beast, and Democrats as spawns of Satan. The article with its screaming 72 point font was pasted on the windows of many local businesses and rental properties, certain people were anxious that talk of Covid and face masks would scare away Summer dollars.

JEREMY VOIGHT - Reverend of the First Pescatarian Evangelical

Baptist, and the author of article mentioned above, he was one of the tools used by Dudley and the mayor to get their project started. He was also a lifelong islander and gave communion to all of the locals for the last twenty five years. His church was where the financial malfeasance began, and the reverend's demise was what shook most islanders to their core.

The events here are all true and take place between June 20th and July 4th 2020. All names and places are real, and events have been put together in chronological order. All suspects were innocent until proven guilty.

‘We’ll be up for a visit very soon’ was what they texted him. He received it an hour ago and texted the others for a meeting at the 1st Pescatarian Evangelical Baptist Church, it sat across the street from Poughkeepsie Historical Society on Spicy avenue and would be safe from eavesdroppers. It was the first ever church on the island erected before the Civil War, it was empty this time of day. The text left his hand feeling sweaty and shaky, he dried it on a pant leg.

3

“It’ll be OK,” Mayor Vic Lazenby said to himself as he pulled into the church parking lot.

He tried to forget that the island police chief was missing as well, that could be very bad. He didn’t have a deputy and his squad car was sitting by the docks. The police trawler was still there but his personal fishing boat wasn’t. Chief Benton’s only known vice was night fishing, even though he had yet to hire a new deputy since his previous one was now serving over seas in the Marine Corps, he still did it as often as he could.

Benton was a curious cop that brooked no bullshit, he was hired before the mess with the mob had begun. It was easy at first to keep things quiet, but as the pandemic worsened things had gotten tight and Benton always seemed to be lurking over Vic’s shoulder.

Vic was a model Republican as mayor of this island, he modeled his dress habits after President Trump, a red tie with a too big knot and a dark sports jacket and slacks. He took a deep breath, and quickly checked his hair in the rear view before entering the church. In the vestibule stood the Reverend Jeremy Voight, a tall man in his sixties with hair as white and bright as his teeth that were even and shone as if coated with Vaseline, though he always maintained a dour look in his Father's house.

Dudley Kravits an overweight mostly red head in his fifties wearing an expensive suit stood there as well looking like he had a bad case of indigestion. Most islanders thought he looked like Weird Al Yankovic in that 80's music video when he blew up like a balloon. The church was quiet except for their murmuring.

They were going to miss another payment, a monthly installment plan of twenty five thousand dollars minimum in cash. They'd been paying on time every time to the Letuzzi family for over a year, until last month. They'd had less than twenty thousand and only half was in cash, they'd been hurting for months on the island and the mob doesn't accept checks.

They had dipped into the islands treasury to cover a previous payment but that was a drop in the bucket. Vic figured if worse came to worse he could just sign over a few of the villas to the wops if they didn't have the money yet. But what if they didn't agree to that?

"What the Christ are we going to do, Dud?" the mayor asked.

He tried to fix the fist sized knot of his tie with damp sweaty hands and only succeeded in greasing up his tie. Should of had the misses tie it for me, he realized. She was good for that kind of stuff, and was perfect eye candy. She was

a Ms. Pennsylvania in 1991 and had a fantastic set of tits.

4

It's why she was almost always at his side in public or speaking to reporters, people could take bad news better if they had a hot blond to gawk at while listening. She was much better than Dudley's wife, who always had bad breath and a face chiseled with frown lines. The mayor shook his head to forget about Dudley's ugly wife and focus on the problem at hand.

"Did they specify how soon they'd come up?" asked Dudley.

Vic shook his head, fighting a chill that raced across his spine when he thought back to last month when they came to collect and he told them they were short. They arrived in a black car you might see at a funeral. The driver was a short intense man with black hair and olive skin, he was quiet and looked straight ahead while Vic spoke to the passenger. He was taller and wider than his silent companion and wore an Armani suit, he was completely bald though he still looked to be in his early thirties.

According to Vic's connection the bald man, Nicky 'Numb Nuts' Navello, was a captain in the Letuzzi family. His voice was thick with an accent, he sounded easy going and Vic tried to get closer to speak with him, to help him understand the financial hardship they were all going through.

"Oh," said the bald man looking annoyed. "social distancing please, I forgot my mask."

"Yes of course..." Vic said almost with a whine stepping back with his hands up. "damn Dr Fauci can't make up his mind about them, friggin quack."

“Oh, what the fuck you say about a paisan?” the bald man said looking deeply offended.

Vic felt his stomach drop below his knees when the driver glared at him like he just insulted the mans mother.

“Nuh nuh...nothing, uh...I just meant...” Vic stuttered. “what if we sign over the properties to you or one of your bosses.”

The bald man looked to the driver who shrugged, and then back at Vic before laughing.

“Ha ha, yeah who should we make the land deed out to? ‘Knuckles’ Letuzzi or should my boss just hand it over to the IRS so they can send him to jail for racketeering? Huh?” he said with a laugh that was slowly wavering into rage.

Vic literally pissed himself at that moment when the bald man stopped laughing.

5

“How bout dis?” asked the bald man in eerily calm voice that was Philly English spiced with a thick Italian accent.

“You pay me double next month. Otherwise my associate will have to speak with you, and he don’t like to talk. Capisce?”

“Fucking Christ, I’m scared Dudley.” Vic said trying to shake the memory out of his brain

“Please mayor,” said the reverend easily. “we’re in His house.”

“God damn it,” replied Kravits. “first the mob now Benton’s vanished. He must of found out about the money missing from the treasury. Christ in hell!”

“Please, gentlemen.” Voight said with his sunny smile.

“Maybe not, he could just be fishing.”

“Don’t be so Christing stupid.” said Dudley.

“Please gentlemen we’re in...”

“Oh shut the fuck up Voight.” said Dudley who feared neither the mayor or the reverend who was just as dirty as they were.

“Yes, can the God shit, Jeremy and get your head out of your ass. We’re broke and owe the mob money? Are you comprehending any of this? They’ll kill us.”

“Jesus Christ,” said the reverend. “they can’t blame us it’s not our fault. The Covid restrictions it’s it’s kuh...killing us.”

“You think those grease balls will give a shit!?” asked Dudley. “They’re gonna want the money.”

“But we won’t have it...” Voight said with glassy eyes.

6

“Yes we will have it,” Dudley said. “as long as we keep the mob business to ourselves and the newspaper keeps backing us for giving the finger to quarantine to keep the beaches open to keep the money coming to pay back the wop’s. We get through this god damn lock down we’ll make quadruple out investment with one villa rental.”

“But what about the Chief? He’s been leaving memos all around the station about an appropriation audit by the Treasury department next month.” said the mayor with a green face.

Before Dudley could respond, the mayor’s phone rang a loud hellacious chirp that echoed in the church making them all jump.

“It’s Featherstone. What is it Murray?”

“I think they found Chief Benton, he’s dead. I’m at the morgue with Dr Cocktoastovenstein.”

The mayor left the others and quickly drove to the morgue on Wisteria road, thankful that he had Featherstone, the island newspaper reporter in his pocket as well. He was in some of the mayors secrets, he knew about somethings but not about the money he, Dudley and the Reverend borrowed from the mob. It was a simple plan, buy the land and build luxury condos and rent them out at an extraordinary price.

But there were taxes and the fact he was mayor of the island and so many other things. He’d nearly given up on the idea when he drunkenly shared his half realized plan with Dudley while hanging out one Saturday night at the mayors office. The fat mans white face lit up like a bulb and tried to get Vic to

reconsider.

“I don’t have that much capital, Dud.” Vic explained.

“But I do...” the fat man said easily as he sipped his brandy.

“...the loan though...” Vic slurred as Dudley poured him some more bourbon.

“...I can’t have my name on that paper work...”

“I’ll take care of that, Voight owes me a favor.”

7

Dudley had convinced the Reverend to sign the papers for a bank loan to refurbish the church basement which it did not actually have. Vic was afraid to ask what the secret was but Dudley told him easily enough and it turned out he was just in the closet.

“The man sucks dick, I told him to sign off on the loan or I’d tell.”

From there it was supposed to be easy sailing, but then the pandemic and only half of the properties had been finished. The money the bank had given them was not enough, not enough by half to finish and they were still demanding payment. Vic had a connection to the Letuzzi family through one of the heads of the Carpenters Union that was building the condos and asked him for a favor, and now they had the bank paid off but owed the Italians instead.

The mayor tried to forget how he’d arrived at this situation as he waved and

smiled at everyone he saw while driving over. He blew kisses to a quintet of World War Two widows selling miniature American flags in front of the island's high school football field to raise money for retarded kids was the mayor's guess. He drove down Poughkeepsie Avenue, nodding with approval at how many of the business' in town and on the boardwalk eschewed masked mandates and a few even refused service to those that did wear them. As the week of the 4th of July approached many US flags and Trump flags were being unfurled at six am by residents, some of whom actually believed going one morning without raising the flag would cause the island to be invaded by Commies and Mexicans.

His smile was full of false cheer as he honked at locals and waved to the Poughkeepsie Island club, his wife the club's president was among them waving back, as they entered the grand Maxwell Fox Public Library. Vic was breathing heavily as he pulled up to the morgue, a small building that was connected on the Police Chief's office around the block. When he killed the engine his smile turned upside down and he lit a cigarette and took a few puffs before pitching it out the door.

He popped in a breath mint and tried to fix his tie again. He might have some bullshitting to do and that kraut MD was a pushover. Vic checked his smile in the rear view before heading inside. The coldness of the morgue was a slap on his hot cheeks, he shuddered upon entering and felt like vomiting when the stench of chemicals stung his nostrils like pins and needles. He went down to the hospital-like hallway and came to the iron door with a tiny porthole window made with frosted glass.

“So what's this I hear we found the Chief?” said the mayor as he walked inside.

The room was small and brightly lit from the fluorescent on the ceiling, his shoe heels clicked loudly on the pale blue tiled floor as he walked. Featherstone was in a yellowing collared shirt minus a suit jacket, a brown tie hanging loosely on his neck, his notebook, for now, was tucked in his shirt pocket. He gave a nod at

the Doc who stood just a few feet away in front of a gurney that held a heavy black bag with a large zipper. He was a tall gray haired man with a white push broom mustache that made him look kind, his white smock hung on tired bony shoulders.

8

“Mayor,” said the doctor in a hard European accent through his face mask as he wiped sweat from his brow with a handkerchief. “a fisherman found the Chief's boat anchored just beyond the docks, his remains were washed in by the tide this morning. I inspected closely and believe it could be a shark attack judging by the wounds.”

“What?” the mayor asked sounding befuddled.

Featherstone looked to the doctor and back to the mayor but was silent. Vic could see by the shape of what was in the body bag was only partial remains. The Mayor lifted a hand to his chin in a way to show the doctor he was more curious about his assessment than worried.

“Uh did you see the body yet Murray?”

“No, I didn't.”

“Oh...” The Mayor said as he followed it up with a hmm sound as he scratched his chin in a faux show of thinking.

“Well better show it to me, Doc.”

The doctor looked confused and looked to Murray who only shrugged and then back to the mayor before asking: “Show you the body? Why?”

“Well I uh...” The Mayor looked to Featherstone and smiled awkwardly before answering. “I’m the mayor, Johann, and as you know the Chief has no family or close friends, and that makes it my official duty to identify the body.”

“It does?” the doctor asked.

“Yeah, tell ’em Murray. About what...the town charter and all that says...”

“Oh right,” the reporter said. “Yeah on the island, when you die and have no close relations the town charter says the mayor has to identify the body. It’s in the state constitution as well I believe. I think you have to follow the mayor’s lead on this one, Doc.”

9

The doctor still looked unsure but he went to the body bag with the mayor following close behind. With a quick pull on the thick metal tab he pulled it open revealing a bloodied torso that was covered thinly by a torn and blood soaked button up beige shirt with a leather back metal badge still attached on the front of the shirt that said clearly: Poughkeepsie Island Police Department. The stench was foul and thick, all three were gagging loudly at first.

“As I said I believe a shark killed the Chief, Mr Mayor.”

“How’d you come up with that?” asked Vic who felt his internal temperature go to zero.

“Well, the wounds of the torso. Mr Mayor they are consistent with marks of a predatory animals bite.”

The mayor was silent for a second before laughing, he stood beside the doctor with a thumb cocked at him.

“You believe that, Murray. A shark, in these waters.”

The mayor laughed a little louder, Featherstone began to laugh as well and after minute or so Johann was laughing as well though it was forced. After two or three minutes the mayor shook his head and pretended to wipe away a tear from the laughing.

“A shark,” the mayor said though with more disdain this time. “that’s a hell of a guess doc. Did you find a tooth or anything?”

“No,” Johann said slowly.

“Well there you go, and you said the Chief’s body had puncture wounds? Could be he was stabbed by some hoodlums.”

“Who would want to do such a thing?” asked the doctor.

“Antifa?” the mayor asked Featherstone.

“Could be, looks like he has a lot of holes poked in him.” Murray said.

10

“Antifa?” The doctor asked again.

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