

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



OVERHEARD & OVERHEAD by **Mike**

Bozart (Agent 33) | May 2014 [tweaked in August 2015 and then again in March 2016]

I had been craving – to the point of carving – a Taco Bell Cantina Bowl (yes, believe it or not) all the live-long May morning in east Charlotte. And, I know what you're thinking; well, actually, I don't – maybe Ernie the electronic earwig (the ringleader of psecret psociety) does. What's more, I know this opening paragraph is a bit obtuse, but hang on and bang on. Our little story gets more focused.

Ok, moreover than under, when I got back to our east Charlotte abode the puns ceased. I immediately commenced with some persuasive, steering-to-leading, questioning of my wife Monique, the gorgeous Agent 32.

"Say, how would you like to bike it over to Taco Bell, mahal? [mahal, love in Tagalog] It's less than two miles away."

"I don't know, 33; it's kind of hot outside, isn't it?" *I thought that he hated to ride in sauna weather.*

"Well, yeah, it is; but, it's only a 13-minute jaunt. We can outrun the sweat." *I doubt that. / It's a lie, but maybe she will believe me.*

"Thirteen minutes, Parkaar? [my ailing alias] Are you sure about that? Did you time our last trip there?"

"No, but my bike computer did, Monique." *Why, of course.*

"Oh, I should've known." *He's always measuring and logging everything. And, I'm sure he's already recording.*

“Aren’t you hungry for a Cantina Bowl? Remember how much you loved them in Asheboro? [mentioned in the *Zoo Are You?* short story] You devoured two a day.”

“They were bigger in Asheboro.” *What?*

“Well, I just know that this is our lucky day.”

“Our lucky day? A mass-produced fast-food dinner via bicycle in sweaty weather at a Taco Bell? Have you been sniffing rubber cement again, 33?” *Rubber cement?*

“Monique, you make it seem so ordinary. And, well, you know that I don’t allow anything to be ordinary, especially when the recorder is running.” *I knew it. He’s already switched on the digital audio recorder. I better watch what I say.*

“Now I’ve heard everything.” Monique then rolled her eyes.

“Ah, what do ya say? C’mon, let’s burn some calories.”

“And, then add several hundred more calories.”

“Which we will burn off on the ride back home.”

Monique sighed. “Ok, whatever, Parkaar; let’s do it. Can you get my bike out of the furnace room?”

“Yeah, sure.”

“Salamat, [Thank you in Tagalog and Cebuano] Agent 33.”
Yey! I convinced her to go.

I got Monique's pink Electra Townie bike out and checked the chain guard, which had come unbolted on a previous ride. It looked ok; the lock washer was doing the trick. *Seems secure.*

Then I wheeled our bikes out of the house and up the driveway. We were all set.

"Do we have everything, Parkaar?"

"I think so. We're good to go."

"Ok, let's hit it, artsy-sportsy." *She remembers.*

And with that, we were off and rolling down Kavanaugh Drive. No traffic was spotted on Somerdale Lane, so we just did a flying merge. We coasted to Abbeydale Drive and turned right. An immediate, heart-pumping incline greeted us.

"Time to pump those pedals, Agent 32!" I shouted like a football coach. Then I laughed.

Monique just looked at me as she shifted into first gear and began the ascent. Farther up we passed some tuggies, [*sic*] (as Monique calls them) of various races, who promptly yelled some nastiness at us. We didn't stop; we just kept on rolling.

After a long climb, we made a right turn onto busy North Sharon Amity Road. Well, actually, onto the western sidewalk, which is essentially an elevated bike lane, as there

is no planting strip (no blocked sightlines) and rarely any pedestrians to navigate.

I stayed on guard for turning cars as we crossed Sudbury Road. And then we passed Love Avenue. I noticed that the street sign was higher up the pole than most. *I bet that sign gets stolen a lot. That's why they have it set way up there.*

Next, we crossed Tarrywood Lane, and after that, Auburndale Road. And when I saw the cacti garden on the right, I knew it was time to stop. *End of this sideline.*

We dismounted our bikes. When there was a sufficient gap in the southbound traffic, we walked our bikes to the eight-foot-wide concrete median. There we waited for a break in the stream of two-lane northbound traffic. The feeling at this point was six or a half dozen.

When a large gap opened (after about a minute), we made the crossing to the other sidewalk like a wide receiver tiptoeing into the end zone after leaving a defender down on the field.

A quarter of a mile down the sidewalk, we turned to the left to enter a carless church parking lot. We exited the newly-paved asphalt lot onto Wilora Lake Drive. Next, we turned right onto Stilwell Oaks and rode it all the way down to the partially torn-down, four-foot-high, galvanization-failing, chain-link fence, narrowly evading a footloose and collar-free dog.

Using the concrete steps and adjacent dirt trail, we walked our bikes down to the back service road of the old, now-

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