

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



psatori ... pso psuddenly psuggestive

by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) June 2013

We, Monique (Agent 32) and I (Agent 33), decided to ride our bikes over to the trendy NoDa area (northeast Charlotte), seeking satori, sustenance, and serendipity (with a silent *p* in front of each *s* word in the final report). Yeah, stuff like that.

We kept watch on our wheel-view mirrors. I moved up alongside Monique on East 35th Street. Though, boredom was gaining on us by Charles Avenue. Then a girl on the lawn with her head in her hands.

“Hey, Monique, is she crying or laughing?”

“Probably neither, either.” *Neither, either? What did she say?*

“Ah, blame it on the ether.” *Yep, he’s recording already.*

We arrived at Boudreaux’s at 12:12, m’eyes will kid you not. We got a small table outside. Well, we couldn’t seek refuge in Frank’s store anymore. (R-I-P, Agent 107.)

A lesbian couple was having a fascinating conversation at a table beside us. The short African American lady said to the tall Caucasian American lady that she had to leave her now-ex-girlfriend in South Carolina. Something about catching her having sex with some gay dude. *WTF!*

The compact, black lady said, “Yeah, he was a common friend, or something. When I confronted her, she said that it doesn’t count as cheating if it’s with a gay dude. Can you imagine that?” *Am I really hearing this?*

The white female replied, "But she had a real penis in her vagina!" *Wow! Never expected to hear this when I woke up today. Glad the audio recorder is running. Great stuff for a short story. Primo dialogue. This one will write itself.*

I leaned down and furtively whispered to Monique. "Did you hear that exchange, 32?"

"The women right beside us?"

"Yeah."

"Yes, I heard them. Bizarre."

"Welcome to the NoDa."

At a table just up from ours, an apparent first or second date was in progress. Some goo-goo eyes. Monique looks at the young, black-haired lady.

Monique then turns her head back to me. "The Asian girl appears to be pinay, Parkaar." [my ailing alias] Monique studied her more closely.

I glanced at the 20-something Caucasian guy. "And the guy is a hipster dude. Look at those skinny jeans."

Monique then mentioned something about finding a note inside a discarded lauan interior door.

"What did it say, Agent 32? Do tell. Speak into the mic."

“Between the thin sheets of Philippine mahogany?”

“Yes, and between the vertical lines. Hey, we all want to know. Well, sorta. I think.” *I'll just play along with his game.*

“Well, don't ask me; ask them.”

“Who, Monique?”

“Them. Over there.” She looks at two guys in work clothes.

“The construction workers?”

“No. They're busy. Don't bother them.” *She's surreally on her game – or on my game – today.*

And it went on like this for the next eight minutes. Utter confusion. No rhyme for reason. No time on the broken clock.

We finally ordered the seafood gumbo. It appeared on our table in just four minutes. It hit the spot. *Good stuff for this far inland.*

A cyclist almost got hit making a right turn onto East 36th Street from North Davidson Street. The left-turning motorist wouldn't yield. Par for the curse [*sic*] in this burgeoning burgette.

“Did you see that, Monique? We almost had a lunch-hour casualty.”

“I missed that one, Parkaar. I was watching our newly lovebirds.”

I went on and told Monique that I was now finally writing that novel novel (*Gold, a summer story*). It wouldn't be like this – this meandering short story that you are reading right now – it would have some coherence and logical flow to it.

I continued with my novel spiel. “It will even have a central theme, which would be imported and served to all of the characters. Well, maybe just to the main ones. Outliers gonna lie out of bounds, ya know.”

“Ok, that's great.” Monique ran her hands through her long, silky, raven-black hair.

I smiled then recommenced my novel's plan of attack. “I'll dredge up everything at least once. Sift it twice. Replay it thrice. I'll even agree to the customary conventions of quotation marks, paragraph breaks, discernible referencing, and proper pronoun usage. You know, all that boring stuff. I'll play by their rules.”

“*Their* rules? Oh, please, there is much to be said for a clear, concise syntax.”

“Sin tax?” *He never misses a low-hanging pun.*

“Oh, you’ll pay. One way or another, Agent 33.”

“Hey, Agent 32, would you like to hear what I have so far?”

“Sure, lay it on me, Parkaar.” *I’ll lay it on her later.*

“Ok, here are some random lines that I will try to weave into the story. One. It can leave holes in the lumber. Two. Oh, the baseball field where I taught my son how to ride a bike is now a drainage canal, but there’s no gold in it. Three. I checked the box four times before returning. Four. It’s lucky Shamrock Drive. Five. She told him how to break writer’s block: When all else fails, just plainly state what is happening in a patently matter-of-fact manner. Patiently reduce it to the simplest terms. For example, start with a sentence like Jack looked at Jane. Even Hemingway would agree to that. Now, the second sentence. See, the strand of possibilities is endless. Block removed. Broken into small pieces. Six. The usual processes were still at work with no vacation in sight. Seven. He kept his mind churning; it smelled like burning rubber. Eight. Gallery graphics are exploding. Nine. Go write a joke. Or, go ride a joke. Ten. He was going all the way. Far away. One day. Until it crashed and burned, he really knew nothing. Eleven. Make sure you tell them what I forgot to say. Twelve. ‘Hey man, want the short line?’ ‘Sure.’ ‘Ok, just hold this wire for me.’ Twelve. ‘Who did you like in that all-Deutschland Champions League Final?’ Thirteen. Grundel.”

“Fourteen’s enough, Parkaar. You repeated twelve.”

At table 3, we heard a quick back and forth, apparently triggered by my Champions League remark. “Dortmund should’ve scored in the first 12 minutes.” “Think so?” “Oh, yeah. At least once.” “Credit Neuer. He came up big in the biggest game.” “No doubt.”

Their conversation lost steam. I looked into Monique’s pretty dark brown pinay eyes. “Would you like to hear some more lines, Agent 32?”

“Lines like ‘Big Bang theorist,’ ‘microwave menu for 95 seconds,’ ‘go easy on the toilet paper dispenser,’ ‘weave one for me,’ ‘don’t lose your new spare key where the old one disappeared,’ ‘already in the house and still not home,’ ...”

“Ok, ok, you’re making me cringe now. How did you find my notes, 32?”

“An agent never tells, 33.”

“Not even if they are married?”

“The code is the code, and we all live and prosper by it, Parkaar.”

Moreover, this was NoDa in 2013 on a crisp spring day. There are worse places we could have been. We could have been stuck in the Mecklenburg County Courthouse, parked in the lawyer’s stall. Yeah, that malodorous. But at this NoDastic moment, it’s actually a keener kewl scene if you spell it the write [sic] way.

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