



MINUTIAE

REDEMPTION//3.14

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MINUTIAE #14

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DEPARTMENT OF SALUTATIONS



Hey there, readers. I'm Adam Kinkaid of Yucatan XV, a revived financial firm. You may remember Yucatan XV (when we were part of the Dakota Atlantic Group) as previous owners of Minutiæ Publishing

from April, 2010. The company was part of a dredging of the assets of another company, hPharma, and we had big plans to shake things up and make Minutiæ Publishing into a supernova. However, gross mismanagement of funds resulted in the federal government dissolving the company.

I learned a lot in my three years in Whiteman County Jail in Massachusetts. I learned about admitting to mistakes, growing as an individual, asking for forgiveness, and moving on. And thus it makes clear sense why the theme of this issue of Minutiæ is **Redemption**. Yucatan XV did some bad in the past, but we (along with a court order) promise not to deceive, hurt or lose the trust of our valuable investors ever again.

We promise not to repeat our funneling of funds into throwing lavish parties for ourselves. Me and my fellow employees fully own up to the fact that we would purchase vast amounts of liquor, beer and wine, along with oysters, a prime rib bar, and a full salad bar for use at after hour parties in our Manhattan offices. We also used company funds to hire exotic dancers for said parties. Finally, we used even more company funds to watch the exotic dancers eat oysters, prime rib and salads as we yelled at them to finish their plates until the sun came back up. We did this every single night of the week because we wanted to feel like fathers, but were too scared to actually have a committed relationship that would result in a family. For this, we apologize and pledge to never do again. Give us your money.

We promise not to make up companies and sell stock in those fake companies, and then hire grown

people that we used to pick on in high school to work at those companies, have them rise high up in the ranks, only for them to learn that their stock was worthless, the work they had been doing meaningless, and they would have to now explain to their friends and families how they were duped. Why did we do such a despicable act? Because, as a group, we most likely did not have strong father figures to chide us for being the bullies we were in high school, college and beyond. We apologize to the dozens of duped nerds, dweebs and spazes, and pledge to never to hurt them again. Give us your money.

Finally, we promise not to light our cigars with hundred dollar bills, snort cocaine with hundred dollar bills, throw hundred dollar bills out the window, blindly pay for small items with hundred dollar bills just to impress someone, use hundred dollar bills as toilet or tissue paper, wipe our mouths at restaurants with hundred dollar bills, or burn large stacks of hundred dollar bills to make a point about how our fathers never gave us any help or guidance. We apologize to the US Treasury for all the bills we ruined, and pledge never to misuse government property again. Give us your hundred dollar bills.

We look forward to providing you with sound financial services in the years and decades to come, and I and everyone else at Yucatan XV want to reaffirm our pledge that we will never get caught again doing something wrong. ♦

YUCATAN XV

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AGENCY OF CÖRRESPONDENCES + COMMUNIQÜÉS

Gentlemen, it sure has been a long time, hasn't it? I can't believe I never told Jessica the way I felt, and now it's like graduation night all over again. She's getting on a plane to art school, and I'm left all alone.

Jack Brody

Science Teacher, Hometown Boy

Fremont, Nebraska

Gentlemen, no way is our ten year reunion gonna end like this! Look, Jack, we are your best friends in the whole world, and it's clear that there is something between you and Jessica. We're getting in my van right now and heading to Omaha!

Peter Tracer

Vending Machine Specialist, Best Friend

Fremont, Nebraska

Gentlemen, ain't no way this van is getting to Omaha tonight. Huh? A helicopter?

Al Klinkaid

AAA Mechanic, Bearer of Bad News

Somewhere Along 275, Nebraska

Gentlemen, I was halfway back to New York City, when I realized that I left something here: You, Jack. I never knew that I had put my work ahead of my heart until we danced on that gym floor tonight. And I never want the song to end ever again.

Jessica D'Faunze

Professor, Institute of Fine Arts, NYU

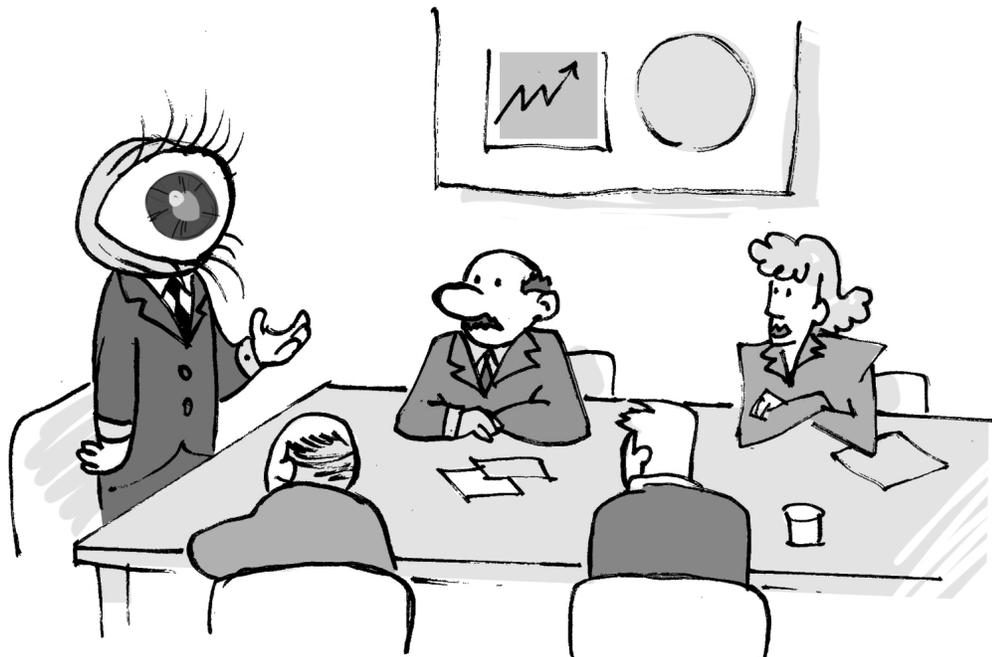
Somewhere Along 275, Nebraska

Oink oink.

Mr. Pigster

High School Mascot, Best Friend

Fremont, Nebraska



"This mortal vessel confines us."



YUCATANXV RELAUNCH PARTY YEAH, WE RENTED OUT THE FREEDOM TOWER

104 FLOORS OF
PURE PARTY

No Cover Charge — 18+

27 Full Buffets, 204 Bathroom Attendants, 9 Shirtless Buff Men Waving Black Pirate Flags, A Classroom of 6th Graders Taking a Geography Quiz, A Gaston Lookalike Contest, The Dado Disciples Spinning The Craziest Stupidest Beats All Night Long, A Rube Goldberg Frozen Yogurt Machine, A Kitchen Run by a Family of Mice, One Dude Running Around Like It's His Parents House and he REALLY Doesn't Want to Be Throwing a Party, Non-Newtownian Fluid Pools, Hot Climbing Wall Instructors, and Ravez from HOT 109.4FM introducing people at the door like it's a fancy state dinner.

THERE AIN'T NO WAY THIS IS GONNA
LOOK BAD AND NOT HELP US IN
GETTING THE PUBLIC TO FORGET
OUR PAST FIDUCIARY MISDEEDS!!!!

LONG LOST LETTER

This letter, reprinted in full, was uncovered in 2012 from inside the Minutiae Archives inside a sealed envelope marked undeliverable.

February 19, 1945
Thandy Norbet
82 Post Oak Estuary
Rusto, OK

My endless Thandy,

Normally, it would seem important to open this letter with solemn words, like "war is hell" or something. But the truth is, since advancing to the Eastern front, I have yet to engage with a single pillaging Cos-sack, and the Germans run from our gunsights just as soon as they're targeted. The Second Great War is coming to a close, I predict, with only Imperialist Japan left to be swallowed whole. The boys and I have been mostly pent up here in Tbilisi, Georgia, with the "Black" Sea to our right and the Caucus Mountains to our left (assuming you're always facing north, which nearly everyone is in Georgia, owing ~ I'm told ~ to its location so near the top of the world). We play snooker when there's tables, buckaroo when there's only cards, and drink heavily of *tjarnik*, the native fermented goat's milk alcohol that is so prevalent here.

We also, my understanding Thandy, avail ourselves of the endless Georgian women here. Each one taller and more blonde than the last, these striking beauties would kick up a dust storm back in Rusto from all the men running through the dirt to get a better look. These lithe, rippled women are of such unrivaled pedigree that it's practically against God's will to do anything other lay with them in the hay. It would be an impractical waste. I say this not with malice, my limp-faced Thandy, but as mere fact of circumstance. The friggin' beautiful women out here are worth more than all of Rusto, all of America and more. If they formed their own political party, the world itself would roll up and let them take things over.

Having seen parts of the world I never thought existed ~ and fine, supple bodies I didn't know were real ~ I can see now that I've been a foolish man, dim Thandy. I believed that loving you was all that was possible in our slice of Oklahoma, and so for two years before I was enlisted I did the best I could. Your soupy farmhouse drawl gave me shivers and your bushy, dusty eyebrows gave me pause, but I persisted in loving you because you were the postmaster's daughter, and that made you the most prized woman in all of Rusto. We even ~ as I more faintly recall with each passing day ~ had a moon-faced child by the name of Dorbert, a squishy boy who hadn't yet learned to stand on his own by the time I shipped off. Frankly, I don't hold much hope that he'll ever gain the cognitive capacity to understand the feet.

So I tried, unlovable Thandy, to find happiness in the corn mines of Oklahoma (here in Georgia they simply grow corn on stalks and eat them fresh, rather than growing and shucking the ears, then tossing them down a dark cave to be "mineralized," and sending poor bastards like me in to collect them up again). I tried to masturbate when I could and close my eyes when I couldn't, but I see now, in the creamy faces of these perfect bombshells, that Rusto ~ and, specifically, you, dirt-nasty Thandy ~ was never for me.

So I ain't never comin' home.

Don't try to find me,

Parcy Norbet

Upon discovering the letter, the Minutiae Teen Street Team, in an act of goodwill, was dispatched to deliver the contents to Thandy Norbet of Rusto, OK, its true intended recipient. As luck would have it, both Thandy and Parcy were home, together and by all accounts happily married, when the Street Team arrived, and the letter was ceremoniously read aloud in front of the lifelong couple and their jelly-legged adult son Dorbert.

Thandy and Parcy divorced on the spot, and Parcy now lives the life of an 82 year old bachelor, from his efficiency suite at the Dawn Rise Motel off I-215. ♦

GUIDANCE & ADVICE

Susan Alan-Wenswick is a prolific Life Specialist, working in the metro Miami area. She has written several books, including most recently Trees from Stones: The Nature All Around You

I'm a devout Catholic and just entered into an interfaith relationship. I really like the guy, but my religion is one of the most important aspects of my life and I'm having trouble not being able to share it with him.

Relationships are about making compromises and taking chances. Find aspects of your faith that you and your new beau can share. Is it the belief in a higher power? Is it the moral guidance? Is it the idea that intercourse can only happen during a full moon because of the tides in the Paradise Grotto? Whatever it is, remember to also embrace the differences. That's what makes a relationship keeps things interesting.

I recently moved from Boston and am looking to become more involved in the community. I used to spend a lot of time at a synagogue, but I'm worried about being alienated. I hate being the new person!

I had the same issue when I first came to Secret Meadow. Sometimes a new community of like minded and intensely focused people can seem scary at first, but once you embrace it (the customs, the schedule, the burlap clothing), you'll realize that even though they call it "Morning Dredge," it's just breakfast. Plus, you may find interests you never knew you had. For

example, I didn't know I liked welding until I started working on the Star Cruiser!

Ma'am, this is FBI Agent Brewster, we believe that the "community" you have been staying with for the past two months is a cult.

Uh, sir, that's ridiculous. If that was the case, I'm sure my new boyfriend Clan Master who brought me to Secret Meadow would have said something while we were in the Paradise Grotto.

Well, ma'am, what did he you tell you?

He told me he was a rocket scientist!

Just because someone says they are going to build a spaceship, doesn't make them a rocket scientist.

Look, he's a renaissance man! He's a painter, a model, a singer, a poet, a guide and a genius. I mean, how many celestial pathways have you discovered, you narc? Plus, he's a financial wizard. He was able to put all of my money into leafberries. I bet you haven't even HEARD of leafberries, you fed!

Leave me alone! I am missing the tea ceremony. Clan Master says if any of us miss the tea ceremony it's going to be another 30,000 years until we can board the Star Cruiser to take us to Heaven's Meadow! Oh no, they're already taking the pre-boarding elixir. And now they're getting all sleepy, just like we're supposed to! I'm being left behind! And now they're not moving. Oh... Do you know where I could find out how much leafberry commodities are worth? :(♦

A poem found folded and tucked in the left-handed pocket of the leather vest of known widower, Otto "Ike" Barinholtzen, who was struck by lightning, standing naked at the edge of Lake Jandro on December 30th, 2013.

Gracie, Gracie:

Without you, I can't eat breakfast. Once, I got angry and threw away my pants.

I miss your curtain call parties where no one really left.

I miss your terrible coffee. I miss the space between your shoulder blades.

Forgive me,

I left a pile of christmas lights shining by the door.

OLYMPICS 2014

NOTHING TO SEE QUEER

At least for the Russians in Sochi themselves, the issue of gay rights has been blown way out of proportion. Talking heads and TV pundits seem to decry the Kremlin's family-protecting measures as staunchly anti-gay, but in this "Black" Sea hamlet that has become the improbable site for the 2014 Olympics, there is no discussion to be had: gay people do not exist in Sochi.

That's according to Disko Fancy (a pseudonym used out of an abundance of caution), Sochi's own Minister of Data, a position which affords Fancy incredible amounts of data on each individual within his district. "Nope, no gay people here. Promise," says Fancy, through my brassy, overly gestural interpreter. "And we looked everywhere: alleyways, dumpsters, down by the forest. If gay people existed, wouldn't they be in those common places?"

Dmitri Prokov, a local hairdresser who shares a "Black" Sea-facing apartment with a heavy-set bearded man in his 40s, agrees. "It's all tough as nails here," Prokov confirms, while my interpreter rolls his eyes heavily, clearly a code which I fail to decipher. "Everyone wears a lot of leather, most men have mustaches, and thick, bulging biceps are... well, they're just about everywhere." A quick look to the lapping sea across the street confirms as such: thin men, mostly in black Speedos, lounge by the cold waters, laughing and pushing each other, rolling balding with boom boxes on their shoulders, without the Russian stereotype of a gay man in sight.

Prokov produces a picture, drawn up by the government in Moscow, of what to look to for in identifying a possible gay man in Sochi. The hand-drawn sketch shows a gaunt face that sports a thin, pointed chin beard, pits of fire where the eyes should be, hugely elongated ears and one long, gnarled horn that protrudes from the middle of the forehead upwards in a hideous curl. Listed traits include knees that bend backwards instead of forwards, thick, hairy red fur on

forearms and the ability to summon up a black pit full of wailing bodies at any moment. So far, no one like that has been seen in Sochi. "But should they come, we will know because we have this information."

And with that, Prokov and his roommate excuse themselves to go take a shower together ~ "to conserve water," says the interpreter, nudging my ribs and playing with the fly on my pants. When I point out that the "gay person" sketch the Russian government provided looks an awful lot like a Jewish person, I was booed out of town for being anti-Semitic and you know what? They're right. I really learned something. ♦

PARTICIPATION MEDALS

What do the triathlon, trampoline, and taekwondo all have in common? Aside from starting with the letter T, they are all relative new Olympic sports that were all added since the start of the century. The process of adding a new sport is not simple, and a slew of fallen sports like croquet and roque just show how it can be "games today, gone tomorrow." New sports petition the International Olympic Committee to add them to the docket. Here are a few that didn't get the gold...en opportunity to be a part of the historic games:

1. **Panda Fighting** — Garret Fahey, an ex-merchant marine living in Schenectady, NY, owns too many pandas. "Look, I have too many pandas," says Fahey. "I'm just trying to get some use out of them. I'm up to my fucking neck in pandas." After starting an illegal panda fighting circuit in upstate New York, he was hoping to bring the "bear brawl" to the international stage. While the IOC had an interest in the exotic non-mammal sport, they were worried that certain climates would have unfair advantages in the breeding and training. "I mean, yeah, upstate New York isn't the best place to raise a panda, but anyone with a Home Depot gift card can build the kind of habitat that I have."

2. **Ghost Touching** – This supernatural sport was proposed by a group of mediums from Quebec. The individual sport awards points based on how many times the athlete touches a ghost. “We spend all day communicating with the dead and allowing the departed to access the physical realm through our flesh-vessels,” says the official proposal from the Quebec Moyen Association, “It would be great to use this skill to win some gold for our home countries.” Dismissed by the committee as “too derivative of the Skeleton,” the mediums are hoping to get Ghost Touching on the TNT network in the fall.

3. **Interpretive Interpretation** – The Monarch Dance Company of Williamsburg, VA had high hopes for their submission. As far as we can tell from their proposal (which itself was an interpretive dance), Interpretive Interpretation judges which participants are the “the best at communicating with feeling, though without language.” The official rules of the sport involved 18 dancers in pearl white bodysuits performing to a pre-approved list of soundscapes developed by the late/great musician DJ Dado. Yet, never mind the lack of Olympic involvement, Interpretive Interpretation will still be used by the Vasser Admissions Department. (burn)

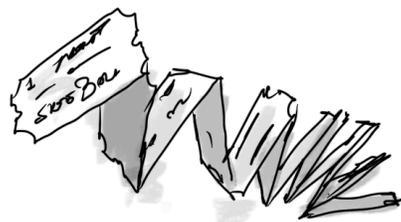
4. **Boomerang** – “They didn’t want us in the summer,” says Bommerang proponent Jack Spigley, “So we thought we could get in at winter. They just don’t want us.” He’s gone for now, but he promises to be back.

5. **Joybulball** – Sponsored by the Joybulball Corporation, Joybulball is a “fun game for all ages.” “You know, we have this great and popular game for kids,” says VP of Marketing Clark Wrenwick, “and we thought kids all over would want to get a kick of it.” Joybulball, played with a proprietary ball that can only be made by the Joybulball Corporation, is certainly fun, but the IOC decided the exorbitant fees that the

Joybulball Corporation were demanding were too much. Wrenrick responds: “Is Joybulball expensive? Heck no, it’s price-retentive! And what does that committee know anyway? We’re letting nerds decide stuff about sports?! That’s stupid.”

6. **Floating Metal Fights** – “We levitate the metal with our minds, and then the metal fights,” says evolved human Bryce Lozane. Lozane, who until last year was a pizza delivery boy in Austin, knows that this is the future of the Olympics. “Maybe it was when I emerged from that silo explosion by lifting the silo off of me with my mind, but I knew that a sport of floating metal fighting would be ratings gold. (Please let everyone know that I was trying to make a pun there)” Yet, until more humans have evolved to levitate metal, it looks like Lozane will be dismissed by society as a loner.

7. **Bridge Hold** – Brooklyn “neo-natives” Riddle Chambers and Desk Boxnap want to bring back the turn of the century art of holding heavy objects off of a bridge by steel cables. “What they used to do – and this was before the nanny state – was that a real strong dude with a sick handlebar would stand on the bridge and in one hand he was holding onto a cable car full of orphans; in the other hand, was his wife.” Sound a lot like Spiderman? “Spiderman stole it from the rich history of Gowanus!” complains Boxnap, who is hoping his sorbet cart takes off when the summer comes around. ♦



BRINGING DOWN THE NUHAUSER

Politics, long an inevitable part of the Olympics, have been front and center at this year's Games, thanks largely to Undersecretary of Education Buck Nuhauser. Known stateside as a lovable doofus, a gallant bumbler always ready with a smile and a not-quite-firm handshake, Nuhauser has been charming the pants off of vice principals and after-school program tutors since his appointment in 2009.

But with heightened tensions between the United States and Russia in the months leading up to the Games' opening ceremony, President B.H. Obama decided to keep all of his previously appointed high-level delegates at home, and send Nuhauser as the lone American representative from the federal government. The national media immediately began to salivate at the comical possibilities. But Lucky Bucky - as his wife calls him, usually in public - has been determined to turn those chuckles into cheers by proving his talents, his generosity and his composure while halfway across the world.

In short: Buck Nuhauser, Undersecretary of Education, did not come to Sochi to mess around. Unfortunately, the universe has had other plans.

Often considered a low-brow, canned beer partier by his loyal Ohio constituents and the larger Washington press, Nuhauser was determined to put together a classy arrival procession, full of American whimsy, when being formally introduced to Russia's own low-level designee, the Minister of Culture Vladimir Fukofski. Dozens of bewildered locals were scooped up and sent to the tarmac for the official ceremony, which had been bedecked prior to Nuhauser's arrival by his own staff members.

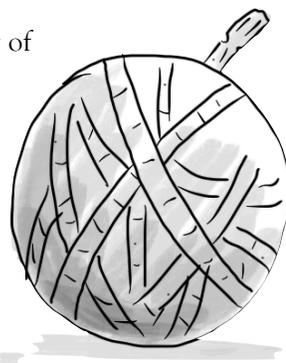
Upon his request, a giant ice cream sundae loomed at the center of a long red walkway, and strong men in American flag judo jackets stood ready to throw hot miniature apple pies into the crowd. An Uncle Sam character on stilts, complete with long red-

striped pants, hovered in the wings. The resulting fun-fetti and pomp that unveiled itself as Nuhauser stepped off the plane was certainly its own brand of charming, if a bit culturally tone deaf. Then the Undersecretary of Education brandished a gun.

Well, a rifle really, a holdover from the Civil War. Meant as a symbol of America's willingness to come together even in the face of adversity, the rusty musket (somehow, improbably, still loaded) misfired, catching fire to several tall banners depicting the Grand Canyon filled with the Kremlin in a show of cultural unity. In the immediate inferno that followed, Nuhauser stepped on the train of Minister Fukofski's wife as she tried to flee, tearing it completely off. Sammy Hagar, an American ride-along sent as a cultural attaché (complete with electric guitar) immediately swung into action. With a quarter century of volunteer firefighting under his belt, Hagar, ringed by smoke and flames, began to pound out the fire using his priceless guitar.

The resulting single image of the mess, captured perfectly, shows a stilted Uncle Sam face down in an oversized ice cream sundae while a wall of flame plays behind. In the foreground, a naked Russian woman - the Minister's debauched wife - stands in heels as Sammy Hagar smashes his Fender guitar on the ground, and Nuhauser stands holding a rifle, the whole scene lit by orange rolling flames. The Associated Press, not known for editorializing, call the event "fucking awesome."

Things have not gotten much better for the man in the days following the photo's international release. Nuhauser unknowingly used the top half of one of the city's oldest matryoshka dolls to down a shot of Jack Daniels from a minibar bottle kept in his back pocket, his dog Wolfie - a lumbering sheepdog who accompanies the Undersecretary everywhere - interrupted the first elimination round of international hockey after trying to slowly "fetch" the puck while in play, and an important dinner meant to smooth over the earlier



arrival snafu has arguably been the worst-received moment of all.

The meal was originally planned as a down-home country barbecue, complete with ribs, mac & cheese and Nuhauser's famed Good Lawdy Cornbread, but the idea was scrapped in favor of a more international, high-class modernist feast. Nuhauser's reason for the change was to show that the earlier comedic situations were not indicative of who he was, just a series of coincidental mishaps.

Struggling with the last minute about-face, the underprepared chefs (many from simple barbecue restaurants in North Carolina) tried to foam up, emulsify, CryoVac and flash-freeze the ingredients on hand. The raw pearls of pork ribs, dressed in beef blood foam to the best of these simple men's abilities, made nearly every guest sick (Wolfie loved it), and those who were somehow unaffected by strychnine had their cheeks and tongues frozen by the poorly prepared dry ice bits of hoof. Fukofski, the guest of honor following the previous fiasco, choked on a large piece of bone, fell back into the serving table, creating a fulcrum that launched a bowl of emulsified potato salad into the lap of Fufofski's incredulous wife. Wolfie immediately came over to lick it all up, and (for a brief moment) her face went from shock to comical arousal. The Associated Press, starting to become known for their editorializing, described the moment as "fucking awesome."

Nuhauser, hellbent on making things right with Fukofski, his wife, and the people of Russia, decided to try his best for a speech he was to give the following day on the shores of the "Black" Sea. After getting a surprise call from President B.H. Obama, Nuhauser opted for a more toned down approach, standing on a simple stage to speak about the need for education worldwide. After twenty minutes of heart wrenching, off the cuff remarks, the crowd moved to tears, and without incident, Fukofski relaxed, thinking the speech was over.

However, Sammy Hagar had not gotten the memo about the updated speech plans and drove in from the ocean on a fan boat blasting "Ride of the Valkyries" followed by a fleet of American servicemen in landing craft (reminiscent of D Day). The Russians, believing an invasion, ran in every which direction. Nuhauser, while thrilled to see his good friend Hagar, tried to call off the presentation by waving furiously. In the process, he also stepped on Fukofski's wife's dress again, as well as his own pants, resulting in the photo of she and him holding each other, pantsless, to which the Associated Press called "a fucking thrill ride."

As of this printing, Nuhauser has returned to America and is hard at work using the same skills he displayed in Sochi on fixing America's educational system. Fukofski and his wife returned to their demure life in Moscow, though she has been rumored to buying bottles of Nuhauser's cologne (not the brand he wears, his own line). And Sammy Hagar, well, he took the "Black" Sea in a fan boat and hasn't been seen since, but he's been heard rocking all over the god damn world. ♦

The Infinite Sky,
The Great Unknown,
The Last Frontiers.

We dare to dream,
Stare at the clouds,
Wish upon the stars.

We'll take you there.



SHADOWS: THE ORPHANED APACHE TRACKER/ A TRUE CRIME STORY - PART 1: 1999

The following is compiled from notes, interviews, articles, testimony, photographs, old 45s, and a little bit of good old American elbow grease to tie it all together.

*“Ladies and Gentellmun, It is in the oh-pine-
yon of dis here humbuh pwosecutah, dat dat
mayne dere, Shadahs, dat tewwifuhin’ mayne,
why he’s as guitee as dat jureeee is
fahhhhhhhhn and handsome” - Brad Starwood,
Minneapolis State’s Attorney*

1.

The ice cream sundae is the mascot of Lance Le-Blacque High School in Conrad, Minnesota. Ever since Alan Brighton won first prize for his “Northern Iced Cream Sundae” in the 1986 Minnesota State Fair, the town had been “damn proud” of their reputation.

In Conrad, Alan Brighton owned a very beloved ice cream shop on the main drag of National Boulevard. Brighton Scoopery had been in business for the past fourteen years in a space that before had been a butcher shop called Conrad Tiny Delights. For selling ice cream in Northern Minnesota, Mr. Brighton was doing well. Alongside the Northern Iced Cream Sundae on the menu was his Hydrox Cookie Buffalo, the Gummie Three Little Bears, Cookies and Dreams, and the Nutter Butter Fluffy Number. Up until 1991, Brighton Scoopery had been the most famous thing to attribute to Mr. Brighton or even the entire town of Conrad, Minnesota (aside from the Conrad Copa, a short-lived tropical nightclub in the 1950s that could not withstand the high costs of shipping pineapples to the Northern Midwest).

Around this time there were a tad bit more than ten thousand folks living in Conrad. The town had fire and police departments and a local hospital. There was a bustling economy of local shops along National Boulevard, and an A&W and Dairy Queen not much

further. Churches dotted each neighborhood (mostly Protestant, but there still stands a Baptist church on Holly and 8th), as did bars that kept the men relaxed when they returned from felling logs or driving big rigs or whatever men do where it gets to twenty below during the winter. Conrad had three elementary schools feeding into one junior high that then in turn fed Le-Blacque High School.

In April of 1991, the school administration at Le-Blacque High School let the students vote for a new school mascot. Publicly the administration, with the aide of hot young 24 year old civics teacher Peter Racer, said they were teaching the students about democracy. Internally they had to retire the Lance Le-Blacque Pow-Wow Chiefton, not for the obvious racist depiction of the area’s native inhabitants, but the Cheifton’s dance routine had grown so elaborate that no freshman would dare attempt to fill the moccasins of the beloved mascot.

The students rallied behind well-liked senior and Alan Brighton’s oldest son Gregory and voted for the new mascot to be the ice cream sundae, modeled after his father’s famous creation. It helped that the other options were the uninspring Paul Bunyan, A Wooden Log, some kind of grotesque “Freedom Bird” drawn by goth Branden Whitzen, and a giant life-sized iron rock to symbolize the mining history of the town. (The two art students who created a prototype of the giant iron sold it to the local Saturn dealership where it stood for nearly seven years, the victim of constant youth spray-paintings.)

In May of the same year, across town at Pillwicky Elementary, twenty three 5th graders were climbing into a school bus for a weekend trip to the Twin Cities, roughly three hours away depending on the time of year. The annual 5th grade trip was a rite of passage for the ten and eleven year-old boys and girls, who would soon be moving onto Alberbach Middle School. The kids had been spending the last two months learning

about Minnesota state history and were itching to be let loose in the capital city.

Along for the trip was Mrs. Julian, a twenty two year veteran of public education, and four recently divorced parent chaperones who were no doubt hoping to use this weekend to feel young again. They left on a Friday at the end of the third week of the month, and were scheduled to return on the following Tuesday. The kids were most excited to be missing school on Friday, as well as the following Monday (Rice Day in the cafeteria) and Tuesday (Soggy Joes).

It wouldn't be until the Tuesday at 4pm (a late spring snow storm slowed them down on 53 coming home) that Marissa Brighton, the younger sister of Gregory and the only daughter of Alan, would be declared missing.

A statement given to police and reiterated through testimony states that Alan Brighton asked his son Gregory to drop Marissa off at school that day. Mr. Brighton had to meet with Harrison McFigure, a local plumber, about a rusty pipe in his ice cream shop. Mr. Brighton didn't want to wait another moment to get the pipe fixed, as a rupture could damage his store and summer was right around the corner. Mr. Brighton had been working on a brand new sundae, the Loop-de-loop North Woods Big Sundae, to be unveiled at the big town parade on June 21st as spring turned to summer.

Gregory left the home with Marissa in his 1987 Ford F-150 - that he paid for himself - at 6:50 AM because he had to go to LeBlacque High School early that day. His popularity had gotten him a position on the prom selection committee, which was working at a furious pace to select the final prom committee before a few hundred teenagers descended upon the gymnasium in only three weeks time.

Pillwicky Elementary's doors did not open until 8AM to teachers, and 8:45AM for students. To Gregory's ever lasting regret, he did not know this when he dropped his sister off at the school at 7AM with her canary yellow child duffel bag for the weekend trip

down state. Marissa had spent a solid hour agonizing over the bag - her first - that had to be specially ordered by Trading Hill Outfitters, down the street from her father's ice cream shop on National Boulevard. When it arrived the previous month she carried it around with her everywhere like a doll. She insisted that because she was almost in the sixth grade she was carrying it around like a briefcase that a "modern business lady" might carry to work, to play, and to that middle ground that the 90s never shied away from.

When it came time at 10AM for the students to load the bus, Marissa was nowhere to be found. Yet, Mrs. Julian knew many children over the years who backed out of going on the Twin Cities trip last minute due to primarily home sickness. She knew Marissa well and was not at all surprised that the girl did not show, given that she barely handed in her permission slip. Mr. Brighton had spent a solid hour on the telephone with Mrs. Julian trying to get Marissa to agree.

It was with this that confusion broke out at 4pm in front of Pillwicky Elementary on that fourth Tuesday in May of 1991 between Mr. Brighton, Mrs. Julian, the recently-divorced (and even more recently hungover) chaperones, and eventually the school principal Mr. Ashton Jackson and the police of Conrad, Minnesota when no one had any idea where 10 year old Marissa Brighton was. It took them an entirety of fifteen minutes for Gregory to be called out of his prom committee meeting (to a prom he never did attend) and for him to explain the circumstances of being the last one to see Marissa. Once it was understood that Marissa had been missing since shortly after 7AM on the Friday before, the police began a search.

The mayor of Conrad, along with the city council, held a candle light vigil for Marissa on the steps of town hall. Paster Kellem Williams, the head of the church where the Brightons belonged, spoke, as did Conrad Public School Superintendent Powers Grace. "What a horrible tragedy has befallen our schools and small town," said Superintendent Grace. "Some might be wondering, 'Superintendent Grace, could this have

been a result of your rampant standardized testing?’ To that I respond that none of the multitude of highly-necessary tests we currently administer could have resulted in this little girl going missing. Now, I would propose to the school board that we must enlist American Testing Systems, the company my cousin helps run, to create some kind of standardized test that we might give to the kids to help us find out which ones are at risk for being kidnapped so that we might prevent this tragedy from ever befalling another child again!”

Brighton Scoopery remained closed, despite fully functional pipes, and Gregory didn’t show up to another prom committee selection committee. The final theme of the LeBlacque High School prom, suggested by Gregory before he was called out of the meeting, was Promises. The intent of the low-key affair was to match the somber tone of the town. Yet, teenagers being the emotionally inept monsters that they are, soon turned the night into the traditional evening of under-aged lunacy. One group rammed their 4x4 into the makeshift memorial that had been created for Marissa outside the elementary school. The following morning another memorial was set up for the victims of the 4x4 crash the evening before. That evening a man’s shirt caught on fire while he was setting down a candle and burned down the newly erected memorial. (Marissa’s memorial was moved across the street the next day.)

Seven days after Gregory tragically dropped Marissa off at her school, her canary yellow bag was found by a hunter in the Wompwa Forest that bordered the Eastern edge of Conrad. There was no mistaking it was her’s, right down to the “MWB” sewn onto the top. Alan and Gregory, along with the police, were energized by this finding and their hopes were renewed.

What followed was a dredging of the Wompwa River. Although dredged only three months prior when the cattle from Heppler’s Farm got spooked by a roaming sleep walker, the police and townspeople came out in full force to find any further sign of Marissa. By the end of the day, as Mrs. Cawfield of the

local diner handed out grilled cheeses (and some toast to that snooty vegan police officer), whatever hope had bubbled up had been thoroughly popped.

Yet, two days later, seemingly out of nowhere, the police arrested a well known local by the name of Shadows. What followed was three months of emotionally draining legal proceedings where a fancy pants State’s Attorney from Minneapolis worked tirelessly to put Shadows behind bars (prison, not boozy).

*“Judge, if ya be so kind, Imma useta a far more hot and humid courtroom with a slowly rotatin ceilin fan and puhaps a nice pitcha iced tea.” -
Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State’s Attorney*

2.

The photo of Shadows on trial at the Conrad County Courthouse shows a tall man with dark skin and long clean hair. He was wearing his red and black Mackinaw flannel, on top of a dusty orange t-shirt, with a wooden tribal necklace around his neck. How an Apache orphan made it all the way north to Conrad, Minnesota is somewhat a mystery, just like his name.

As far as public records are concerned, Shadows was born in 1972 in New Mexico and spent his first thirteen years living in a church near the Jicarilla Apache Nation in Dulce. One day in late 1972, Sister Francis Delfonico found a baby resting under a tree off the side of the highway. She brought the baby back to her church. Delfonico waited weeks, wondering if anyone from the Jicarilla would come for the boy. When no one came, Father Ardin Semple decided to have the Church of Constant Contact raise the boy as kind of a “screw you” to his non-catholic neighbors.

“I knew I could really get their goat, or whatever those people eat, by raising one of theirs as one of ours,” said Father Semple at the time of Shadows’ arrest in 1991. “Does that make me sound like a bad per-

son? Well, try being called The White Man hundreds of times and see if you snap. See if you snap!?”

The Church of Constant Contact (named for the ideal of being always in touch with the Christian Lord) had a very tenuous relationship with the Jicarilla Apache Nation. The CCC (nowadays called “3C” or “The Trip-C” following the addition of the young cool guitar-playing Father Devon Malone) was always metaphorically-poaching residents of the reservation and trying to convert them. This angered many elders, including Scott Grayscales, a member of the Nation’s government for many years in a range of capacities.

“I’ve been vice-president and a council member,” says Grayscales. “But I’ve also worked at the Safety Department, the Game & Fish Administration, the radio station as a morning shock-jockey, the Senior Center as a magician, and one half of a pair of tax enforcement officers. I guess you could say I’m something of a Govnut.” He holds up a govnut, a native nut of the area that appears to have several different parts banded together.

“We hated that Church,” continues Grayscales. “They were not only trying to turn my people, but flying all the time. You would wake up and there’d be a flyer on your front door and in your mail box and on your truck. That’s not a way to make you like an organization.”

The greatest victim of the two sides hatred was the orphaned boy. The Jicarilla didn’t want to give the CCC any satisfaction, so they just ignored it all, even when the church would have the young boy sing highly infuriating songs like “Raised White” and “I Should Be Yours” right outside the post office.

Being raised in a church is the kind of non-ideal upbringing that would result in a very quiet child. Perhaps it was because he was found under an unusually shady tree, or his propensity for hiding in dark corners, or the wooden tribal necklace left with him indicating it... but the boy was called Shadows, the orphaned apache.



By the time Shadows turned 13, he came to the realization that not every boy was raised by a group of people working in a church. He always had this suspicion, sure. Who were the people that brought children to the church on Sunday? “I told him that they were bringing their own orphans from a much smaller church, and that shut him up,” Semple told me when I showed up in Dulce in 2011. “Then one time he asked another kid which church he lived in, and Shadows spent a week trying to understand what a house was, but we explained that away saying that the kid meant a house of god. But, finally, he got a stuffed elephant for Christmas one year from the donation box, and got obsessed with it. So, we took Shadows to the Albuquerque zoo, and there he saw parents with kids, and he freaked out.”

When they returned to Dulce following the zoo trip, Shadows ran right out of the church to the Jicarilla Apache reservation, a place he belonged from the start. Yet, despite him being back in his native home among the native nation, not every one felt the fit was as natural as it should be.

“We didn’t know what to do with Shadows,” says Grayscales. “He hadn’t grown up here on the reservation, so his idea of who we were was based on what the Church had told him. He had trouble fitting in.”

But try to fit in Shadows did. He used all of his knowledge of Native Americans that Father Semple and the sisters had taught him. He eschewed living in one of the homes, favoring a teepee (despite the Jicarilla historically using a hogan that was adapted well to

the desert climate). He made every attempt to wear authentic Apache head dressings at all times and insist on eating as authentically as he could. His fellow teenagers wanted nothing to do with him, and the adults were no help.

Following the incident where Shadows showed up to school drunk (entirely based on the extremely ignorant stereotype that had been instilled [or distilled] in him by the Church), the elders had to do something. A meeting was held to decide the fate of Shadows. It was then that Calvin Manyports, the current head of the Game & Fish Administration, would take the boy in.

Manyports was a kind old man who enjoyed hunting in Northern New Mexico and into Colorado. He would regularly take Shadows on camping trips into the wilderness. It was on these camping trips that Shadows became an expert tracker. He could track packs of animals and even multiple humans. It was this skill that Shadows would know where the kids who ditched him went off to. He would follow them, only for them to ditch him again.

Shadows' only friend was his guardian Calvin Manyports. Aside from tracking, Manyports taught Shadows what it meant to be a real citizen of the Nation and how the real world operated. Many camping trips included Shadows playing "restaurant" so that he might learn how to order from a menu and tip properly.

Then Manyports died.

Manyports didn't get the chance to teach Shadows about their people's ritual of burial. Shadows leaned on the assumptions he learned in the Church, resulting in him showing up to Manyports' funeral in what can only be described as a multi-colored flamenco dancer on stilts from a Carnival parade. Totally off target. Completely the CCC's fault. They were bad people

and now Father Semple has to carry around an oxygen tank so maybe he got what he deserved?

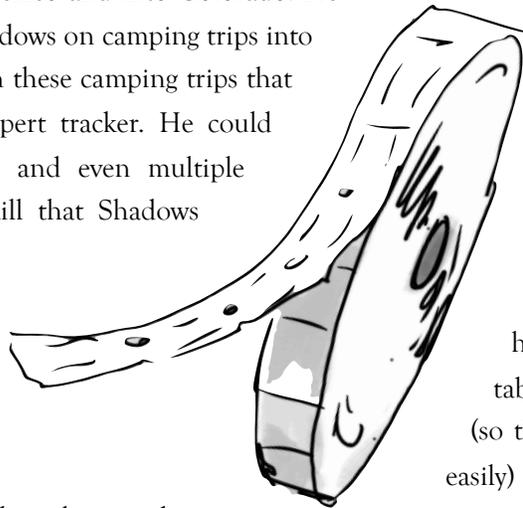
Once again, at 17, Shadows was all on his own.

In 1989, the Army created the "Let's Try This Again" Initiative with the goal of incorporating more of the continent's original inhabitants into the fighting force. The new post-Cold War attitude and the imminent threat of the 90s gave way to a flood of funding from the Department of Defense for experiments. With no home and severe encouragement from his unfriendly school chums, Shadows signed up the LTTA Initiative and ended up being positioned in Czechoslovakia.

Records of his discharge include the account of a rare and surprising outburst of rage from the normally calm and quiet Shadows. Following an evening meal of spaghetti, a private accidentally bumped into Shadows, causing him to spill his tiny mug of hot chocolate everywhere. Shadows, almost close to his final height of six foot five inches, began to flip over tables. It took a tranquilizer meant for elephants (so the soldiers could ride around on them more easily) to stop Shadows. He was sent back to the states two days later.

In 1990, with a recommendation from a hometown boy who was in his unit, Shadows moved to Conrad, Minnesota and began working for Trading Hill Outfitters. He would help lead trips of early 1990s Yuppies into the nearby Boundary Waters Canoeing Area and sometimes further up into Canada. Shadows became known for his quiet demeanor, always sitting in the corner of Grandy's Bar, mostly listening to Victor Bauser, the owner of Trading Hill Outfitters, talk to his buddies.

Shadows never caused any problems, mostly keeping to himself in the cabin he was living in out near the Wompwa Forest. In the cabin were maps of the Great Lakes area and trips he had led. There wasn't a bottle of booze or a dirty magazine. The only item that



indicated this cabin was lived in was the wooden tribal necklace carved with Shadows' name in the Apache language.

The few who had ever carried on a conversation with Shadows said it was "brief and cold, like fresh briefs on a cold morning." He was as mysterious as he was physically imposing and skilled at tracking: a lot.

Many always suspected that something was off about this tall quiet Apache. And while some were surprised by his arrest in the kidnapping of Marissa Brighton, more used it to confirm their longtime suspicions.

During the following three months, as Shadows stood trial, the town became a media circus (much to the dismay of the actual circus that reported low attendance) and the recently emerged cable television news swarmed the story, squeezing all the details from the stone that was Shadows' past.

It came out that Shadows' parents were in fact citizens of the Jicarilla Apache Nation. His mother was a seventeen year old student at the school named Franny Reederror. She was stunningly beautiful and had aspirations of moving to Hollywood (Hollywood, FL being the home of infomercials at the time). Shadows' father was the govnut himself Scott Grayscales, who began a relationship with the mother when he was the MC for the yearly Jicarilla Family Unity Parade. Grayscales could not have a bastard son ruining his reputation and had Shadows sent out of the reservation. When Franny begged and pleaded for the boy she saw the CCC raising to be brought back, it was Grayscales that publicly lashed out at the Trip-C and refused to wanting the baby back.

Shadows reacted to learning of his past with the same quiet reaction that made Brack Fruckledon at the newly created International News Network give him the unnecessary nickname "Stones." He was on trial, after all, standing up to Brad Starwood, hotshot state attorney, the disgusted eyes of the people of Conrad and the hatred of Mr. Alan Brighton.

"Let the record show that he articulated his mop at Mr. Shadas" - Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State's Attorney

3.

The area that's about 50 miles inland from Lake Superior and the Canadian border was original settled by fur trappers in the late 1600s. French explorers called Voyageurs would trade pelts and beads with the native Ojibwe people. Eventually these explorers became trappers, settling on Ojibwe land. And if I have to explain even further, you shouldn't be reading this because it's pretty obvious what happened. It's a tale as old as time: White men did heinous things that history glosses over.

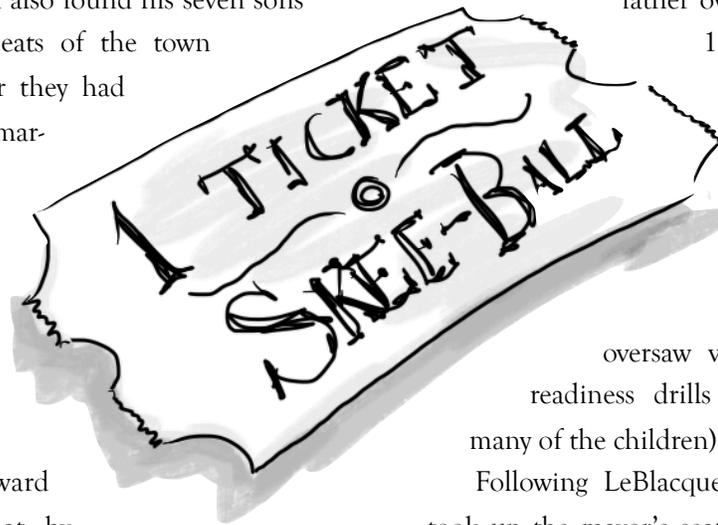
Conrad, Minnesota was incorporated in 1872 as a logging town from the Pillwicky Family. Joshua Pillwicky lived in what eventually became city hall, along with his wife Rebecca and their seven sons Abel, Bradford, Carter, Derrick, Evan and Klup. At the peak of the Pillwicky Lumber Company almost 600 men lived in the town. Pillwicky established the Pillwicky Lumber Company Store and a saloon next door that was constantly covered in a fine film of saw dust (not to be confused with the popular pornography film of the same name, you pervies.) During the day the men would cut the area barren of its native Douglas Firs, and at night would spend their wages on whiskey and cheap laughs (in fact the most base comedians of the day would travel to the Pillwicky Lumber Company town to perform for 1 Northern dollar and a thick gravy dinner).

Joshua was mighty proud of his lumber company, and his second gem was the emerging town of Conrad. General stores and taverns beget restaurants and hotels, and soon enough the men were sending for their families to travel to the emerging Northern town. A school and church soon followed. A proud immigrant

with a thick Polish accent, Joshua named the first major thoroughfare National Boulevard to emphasize his love of his adopted home nation.

As would become the tradition in the town, major decisions would be voted upon by the teenagers. They decide to call it Conrad as that was the name of the popular ragamuffin in the novels of the time. Conrad and his bespectacled chum Lyle would cause mischief, such as stacking rocks in a main road or stacking cans on the corner of sidewalks. In 1872, these activities were considered highly offensive and rude, and the teenagers of the time could not get enough of it. (Also, Conrad really liked watching ladies change.)

Joshua became mayor of Conrad in 1880 following the first elections which also found his seven sons being named to the seats of the town council. The year prior they had been simultaneously married off in what was the most dazzling event ever to be seen in Conrad up to that point. (Eventually the septumlet-marriage was popularized in an Oscar award winning musical format by Stanley Donen known as *Damn Yankees!*) Joshua saw himself as not only a titan of industry, but a genius of government. He enacted sweeping initiatives that, while unpopular, were for their benefit. He banned trans fats, which at the time was thought to be fats that were transported from a very long ways away. He also limited the amount of sugared soda water that one might consume. Not because of health concern, but because there simply wasn't enough refined sugar to go around. Joshua also limited where smoking was allowed, from everywhere to "not near those damned petroleum tanks, for god sakes." Yet, Joshua was a beloved man, and the town council of his sons did as he said.



The Pillwicki administration lasted until the late 1920s. The Great Depression saw the collapse (pun very much intended, please & thank you) of the lumber company. Joshua, now needing a rickety steel apparatus to keep him upright, was long dying and his sons had moved away to pursue their interest of business. The town, previously buffered from state interference, was soon swallowed whole by Minnesota. The blue collared men of the town turned their attention from the forests to the mines of iron.

It was during this time that Lance LeBlacque was elected mayor. He was a very well liked man with a square jaw and a full head of stallion-black hair. In fact, he was so well liked that he was able to father over thirty children during the 12 years he was in office. Yes, despite, or maybe along with, his predilection for fertilization, he took Conrad from the Great Depression to the doorsteps of World War II. He oversaw victory gardens and air raid readiness drills (during which he fathered many of the children).

Following LeBlacque's reign, Richard Alberbach took up the mayor's seat. Around the same time the Conrad Daily had been established as a record of the town's struggle to emerge from obscurity. It tracked local stories along with columns such as "Jam Talk," "Talking Jam," and "Tam Jalk." While it never got the chance to report on anything big in its heyday, it's reporting was fair and honest and everyone in the town read the paper each day (maybe for the news, but certainly for the Tim Griggles' penned comic strip called "Worser" about a little chubby boy who only wore a diaper and would sleep in the crescent moon.)

By the 1970s, the modern National Boulevard began to take shape. Trading Hill Outfitters had always been there, but now there was the real estate office and

the bank, with the post office and the candy shoppe. And then in 1977 came Brighton Scoopery.

Brighton Scoopery became Conrad's crowning jewel. Anyone traveling south from Canada knew they had to make a stop at the home to the Northern Iced Cream Sundae, especially once it won first prize at the Minnesota State Fair. In fact, Brighton Scoopery was one of the most important part of Mayor Grant Lippy's Conrad Central Business District.

Grant Lippy was elected Mayor of Conrad in November of 1984. Lippy is a tall man and Conrad's native son. He returned to Conrad in 1980 with his wife Bella and his son Franklin. He had previously been living in Minneapolis, working as a lawyer for Marsailis Reality, a real estate company that was known for high-end condo and shopping projects.

Lippy says the move back to his hometown was so he could be closer to his roots. Others say he had aspirations of being mayor ever since he was Student Council President at LeBlacque High School. Still others point to his son Franklin. The boy had been having problems in school and there is a December 18th, 1979 article in the Minnesota Star Tribune that tells of Franklin being found in the middle of the night wandering the highway. Whether he was sleeping walking or not is unknown, but when it became clear that Lippy's high stress lifestyle as a lawyer for a major development company was in direct conflict with the well-being of his family, he took the route to a simpler life.

Lippy was a well liked Mayor. He would spend most of his time outside of meetings walking up and down National Boulevard. There's a photo of him and Alan Brighton in Brighton Scoopery and a signed one dollar bill up at Pachino's Slicery. In fact, it was in 1987 that he helped to establish the Conrad Central Business District and began to beautify the town. Lippy wanted to make Conrad more than just a destination for Mr. Brighton's sundae. He gave a powerful speech in his 1990 re-election campaign: "For all those folks living down in the Twin Cities, they should be piling the kids in their station wagon and heading to

Conrad! Not Gasberg! My fellow neighbors, there will be people here to shop and eat and stay the night."

The Conrad Daily, with offices right on National Boulevard, right across the street from town hall, had been started by Joshua Pillwicki way back when as a way of disseminating news to his employees. Over the years it had changed from a paid local paper to a free circulator with ads for guns and canoes and car racks. By the time the Marissa Brighton trial began, the Conrad Daily had become a free weekly that contained more advertisements than real news. It hurled Max Bixtome, the editor-in-chief and only reporter, into overtime as he produced reports for major newspapers (including my employer The Times of New York, as it liked to be called behind closed doors).

"I couldn't believe my eyes, what had happened to the town," says Bixtome years later. "It was _the_ small town America, truly. I don't know if it was Brad Starwood that brought the media, or the media that brought him, but once he was here... it all changed."

Mayor Lippy's campaign promise never came to be.

"I intend obah duh necks... well, I kant eemugun dis takin dat looong... but... I intend ta pwoove beyawnd a SHADOWS uba doubt... dat mayne dere, did take duh beyootifuwl girl, Ms. Marissa Brighton," he paused to wipe his brow "Now, ladies un gentellmun, y'all gotta know foshu, and I intend to have dat here ASSURITY. SHADOWS IS GUITEE!" - Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State's Attorney

4.

Brad Starwood was a slim man who favored silver. Silver suits and silver cowboy hats. Silver rings and even a silver cap on one of his back molars. He carried a silver Confederate coin in his pocket, although he would never show you if you asked. He was a native

Mississippian, but he took to the North Woods “like a catfish to milk.”

[Play track “Southern Strang” on the included CD on your boombox stereo]

Starwood was born in the bayou sun in the summer of 1950. Boy did that child shine when he came out of his mamma. His papa, a musician who liked his whiskey like he liked his banjo playing (flowin’), named the boy Bradley after the greatest folk star of the day: Bradley Copper. His mama made dresses for the women in the small town of Chitawilly. Occasionally a city woman would drive through and that fancy woman would think something high of Mrs. Starwood’s dresses and give her three dollars for something so fine.

His papa and his band would play down at the old saloon that was right on the edge of the bayou. Called it “Dat Place,” named after the second generation Vietnamese owner. Dat Place was always hopping with folk and blues and rock. One time Elvis came in, said, “heck, this too much for me,” turned right around and slunky all away he did!

One night, when Bradley was barely old enough to “pour his syrup on them waffles” as the saying goes down in the bayou, his father had been playing a furious set of fast paced southern folk at Dat Place. They’d been playing with only grits & heavy gravy in their stomach and ice colds to wash it all down. They’d been playing since the sun went down and the moon came up. They’d been playing so hard and so furious that his papa done fainted and was having a heck of a time reviving himself, no smelling slats or gatorpuss would bring him to his feet.

His bandmates dragged him back to the shack that the Starwoods was living in and set him down on that tiny cot that he loved so most. It was on that dying bed that Mr. Starwood gave his son the most precious gift that young Bradley ever received: it was a flattened confederate silver coin that his papa would use to pick

the banjo. He said “I’m depending on you son, to pull the family through. My son it’s all up to you.” Don’t matter that he had plagiarized from Mr. Clarence Carter, the sentiment was the same.

Things got tough for Bradley, they did. His mama, so distraught, couldn’t make her dresses no more. Many times Bradley wanted to sell the silver coin just so he and his mama could eat a healthy amount of grits & heavy gravy. He was hardly getting the daily recommended amount of grits & heavy gravy that the Hogbill County School Board suggested, and almost none of a full portion of hogbill. Yet, whenever he felt like it was time to give up, he would see his father in the night sky, talking to him like a vision in the clouds. Now, heck, maybe t’were the fumes coming off the oil rigs in the bayou, but maybe t’were really the spirit of that banjo playing fool telling him to stick it out.

And stick it out Bradley did. He studied them books real hard and was the first human to graduate from Chitawilly High School in fifteen years. T’in fact he made it to the state college where he started to go by Brad. T’in facter, Brad even went to that Vanderbilt University Law School where he worked real hard and finished top-first in his class.

Bradley spoke at that graddiation, and despite knowing it wasn’t quite politically correct to do it, he held up that old flattened confederate silver coin and showed his papa that he ain’t ever spend it to get by. He paid for all of his success in hard work.

[Stop CD]

After graduation, Starwood eschewed the opportunity to work for Nashville law offices or return to Mississippi. He got a job up in Minneapolis with US District Judge Patty Malton. Malton, nicknamed “The Irish Eye,” was known for his keen sense of vision. He was always noticing things: a bailiff’s loose tie or a juror with a loose button. Such a keen visual sense for loose apparel. It was this, and Judge Malton’s reputa-

tion for always trying the craziest of cases, that drew Starwood to the land of a thousand lakes.

In 1978, Starwood moved from clerking to the state's attorney's office where he quickly made a name for himself. That name was Brad Starwood, Case Winner. He didn't lose a case. He was a puzzle master with the evidence, a charmer with jury (ladies and fellas), and was well liked by the judges. In 1979, a bunch of big rig truckers were on trial for dumping their cargo for insurance, Starwood won by putting silhouettes of babes on his eyelids, getting up real close, and closing his eyes. Those truckers were so freaked out that they practically admitted guilt.

So what did a gleaming lawyer from the big city want anything to do with the kidnapping of a little girl in Conrad? It didn't come to light until years later that Starwood and Mayor Lippy knew one another. They both had worked for Judge Malton when Lippy still lived in Minneapolis and before he had moved onto Marsailis Reality. When it came out that the state was pressing charges against Shadows, and the town wanted a guilty verdict, Lippy pulled a few strings to get Starwood sent up north.

Starwood happily accepted. This kind of case (which he was confident of winning) would take him from the State Stage to National Stage at the next American Lawyers Conference. (The National Stage is a much better crowd). Within three days of being called, Starwood was standing in front of a jury of 12 men and women of Conrad hell bent on condemning Shadows.

"Well, I don't think I needa be sayin much more. Ain't no one in dis here town got a jacket like that. And the man who done took da little girl had a jacket like that... That's math a rooster could do with one cluck." - Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State's Attorney

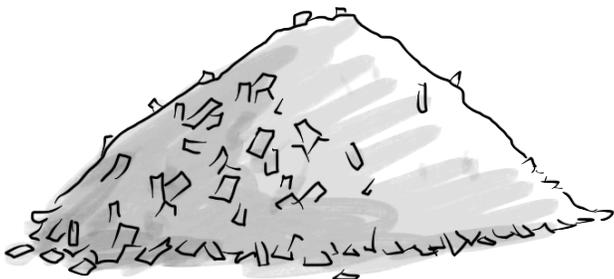
5.

Shadows was in his cabin in Wompwa Forest when the police came for him. There was a warrant for his arrest, signed by Conrad's Judge Harrison. Chief Lashly and his men had the cabin surrounded and yelled for Shadows to come out. Shadows did so with no fuss. The police tried to bring him down, and eventually had to ask that Shadows lie on the ground. They cuffed him and took him to the Conrad Jail, on the backside of the Town Hall.

According to the logs at Trading Hill Outfitters kept by Victor Bauser, Shadows left for a trip the day after Marissa went missing, and returned five days later, just in time to see the people of Conrad dredging the lake. He was unpacking as he watched Mr. Brighton from afar, almost crawling through the river for any sign of his daughter. That evening Shadows went to Grandy's Bar and learned of what had happened as he was leading a trip through the Boundary Waters.

The following morning the police came for him. How they narrowed it down to Shadows is either the greatest police work or the flimsiest investigation ever. The only piece of evidence they have is from a janitor at the elementary school. When Janitor Gruggle was questioned the day that Marissa was missing, he said that while he was cleaning classrooms before the school opened he noticed the classic red & black plaid pattern of a Mackinaw jacket. The same jacket that was Shadows' trademark.

Shadows always stuck to his story: He was in his cabin. The next day he left for a trip leading Connecticut yuppies through the wilderness. He came back.



Next day he was brought in. Of the few words he ever said, none were used to change his story.

Shadows spent two nights in jail before the trial began. In the cell next to him was the constant town drunkard Old Bill Causgey. Bill Causgey liked to wear elaborate sweaters, eat pudding, and scat. Ever since the Pillwicki Lumber Company closed down, the worst criminal there ever was in Conrad was Old Bill Causgey, and he hadn't ever hurt a fly. Shadows went from a footnote to a headline.

Mayor Lippy called up his friend Starwood to town, and Judge Harrison agreed to hear the trial right away. (Sadly, any hope of resolution for the case of Dan Longsley vs. Conrad Women's Volleyball Club would have to wait and Longsley would continue to sit on the bench). Two days after his arrest, Shadows was sitting in a courtroom with his court appointed attorney. It was difficult to find anyone who wanted to represent Shadows, and he was left with a 26 year-old public defender from Gasberg named Gus Bung.

This didn't help Shadows in the least as Gasberg was Conrad's sworn enemy-town just next door. Not to mention that Gus Bung was a dweeb beyond contempt. He wore heavy black sneakers that he pretended were dress shoes. His black lint-covered pants were double pleated, his jacket had a mustard stain on the lower back, and his ties were always patterns of the least interesting Warner Bros. cartoon characters like Private Snafu or Inki, the highly offensive African tribesman that hadn't been in a cartoon since 1950.

Gus Bung was always sweating and would regularly wipe his brow and then his shirt causing large sweat stains. On several occasions throughout the trial he would trip over his own feet and send papers flying everywhere. During Starwood's cross-examination of Shadows, he leaned his chair all the way back and fell backwards and knocked himself unconscious for eighteen minutes. Just a real dweeb.

On the jury were twelve truly stand-up Conradians. They were all pillars of the community: Sharon Dawsy, the owner of Sharon's Teeter-Top Two Story

Cafe; Martin Vuren, the owner of the Vacuum Repair Shop; James Gardner, the owner of the Salt Store; James Saltier, the owner of the Conrad Nursery; Grant Rutherford, substitute teacher and band drummer; Cole Pueter, the local metal artist; Richard Lubbert, a retired World War II veteran; Cynthia Bolkuski, a homemaker; Goran Visnjic, a young struggling actor; Patty Stews, a romance novelist; Urilla Tostilla, the local gypsy; Ricky Barbarino, a handyman and foreman of the jury.

The entire town stuffed themselves into the courtroom, including Max Bixtome, the solo reporter for the Conrad Daily. His reports would get sent out to the Associated Press and helped to spread the word. The word was spread so wide open by the metaphorical hands of newsworthiness that the second day of the trial shocker (a tradition in American law) was Brack Fruckledon of the newly created International News Network. The fledgling upstart cable television network decided that this small town scandal was just the thing to hook in audience, so Brack Fruckledon and a small crew flew to the city and were reporting outside of the courthouse.

Inside the mood was tense. Starwood, so comfortable in his native southern sun, requested that the heat and humidity in the room turned all the way and Judge Harrison, to use a term of Starwood's upbringing, "happily obliged." This made the jurors drowsy and nearly sent Gus Bung to sleep, but put Starwood right in the mood to gallivant and proddle around the courtroom for his opening statement.

"Ladies and Gentellmun, It is in the oh-pine-yon of dis here humbuh pwosecutah, dat dat mayne dere, Shadahs, dat tewwifuhin' mayne, why he's as guitee as dat juwee is fahhhhhhhhhn and handsome," began Starwood, and the jury responded to such a polite man. "I intend obah duh necks... well, I kant eemugun dis takin dat loooong... but... I intend ta pwoove beyawnd a SHADOWS uba doubt... dat mayne dere, did take duh beyootifuwl girl, Ms. Marissa Brighton," he paused to wipe his brow "Now, ladies un gentell-

mun, y'all gotta know foshu, and I intend to have dat here ASSURITY. SHADOWS IS GUITEE!"

It was a powerful rousing speech that woke the drowsiness of individuals in the court room. It was clear why Starwood hadn't ever lost a cost. He had more charisma than, to use a term of Starwood's upbringing, "a catfish with a cowboy hat." It was then time for Gus Bung to present.

Gus Bung began with banging his knee on the table, causing him to throb in pain throughout his opening statement. "Hi there, my name is Gus Bung, I am Mr. Shadows' public defender. I'm from Gasberg." This statement caused all of the Conradians in the courthouse (everyone but him) to quickly fold their arms in defiance. "Oh, no need for formalities, we're all Minnesotans here... ah, where was I? I really got thrown off by having to say that kind sentence about us all being Minnesotans. I, uh—" He looked back at Shadows. "Oh, yeah, that's right, the girl snatcher. So, Mr. Shadows did not take this girl, this, uh..." He looked down at his notes all smudged from his sweaty forehead (normally sweaty, but not helped by the increase heat and humidifiers blowing in the corner of the room) "Majinka Bnuton? Majinka Button? What are we calling her?"

"Her name is Marissa Brighton, Mr. Bung," said Judge Harrison. "Please wrap this up."

"Righty-do, judge. So, yeah, he didn't take the girl, because there's no proof." He turned and slipped on a banana peel that had earlier gotten stuck to the bottom of his shoe.

While Bung didn't present it properly, he wasn't exactly wrong. The only evidence known so far was Janitor Gruggle's testimony of seeing a red & black Mackinaw jacket. But then it was time for Starwood to start calling witnesses and presenting evidence and things slowly began to turn from bad to worse for Shadows. (Bung wouldn't call any witnesses)

"Duh-scuse me, sir? You sayin that [Shadows], the siege of your life, could not have committed the crime of kidnapping this little innocent girl!" - Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State's Attorney

6.

Alan Brighton sat with his son Gregory in the front row behind Starwood for the entire trial. He already knew that Shadows was guilty. But it was up to Starwood to prove it.

"Faw ma fuwst witnesssss, I wanna bwing up da nice old man Janetow Gruggle from da school!" hollered Starwood. From the back of the room came Janitor Gruggle, with his mop and bucket, squeaking his way up to the front of the courtroom.

No one had ever seen Janitor Gruggle outside of the school. In fact, he was born in the school to the previous janitor, Darrel Gruggle, and an unknown school teacher. They kept their love a secret, so much that the teacher had no idea that their affair had any emotion attached to it. That's why when their lovechild was born, she hopped town over to Gasberg, leaving Mr. Gruggle with a son to raise on his own. He named the baby Janitor, and they lived in a shack right behind the school, sharing it with the lacrosse equipment and the lyme for marking the lines for the baseball field.

Janitor Gruggle was sworn in and sat in the booth with his mop and bucket as Starwood stood to begin his line of questioning.

"Mista Janetaw Gruggle, thank you for coming here today. It is my understanding that you have been the janitor at dat Pillwicki Elementary for, what is it, fitty figh yeas?"

"Fifty six," said the executive custodial professional.

"And you probably know nearly everybody in dis here town, yeah?"

"That's right. I know them all."

"And on the morning in question, that Marissa Brighton went missin... what did you see?"

"I saw a red and black Mackinaw jacket walking away from the school."

"And who here, in dis here cawt room, has dat jacket? Can you point to him here, pwease?"

Gruggle lifted up his mop and pointed it in the direction of Shadows.

"Let the record show that he articulated his mop at Mr. Shadas."

Starwood smirked as he did a Mowtown jiggy.

"Mista Janeeetaw Gruggle, now you ain't ever done been seeing with your two peeper-bulbs ~ dem eyes to y'all ~ anudder mayne of this here town with a similar jacket?"

"No, sir, I have not," stated the janitor, "and I clean my eyes every morning while I do the windows."

A hushed murmur filled the room before excused by the bailiff.

"In fact, has ANYONE of this fair town evah seen anudder mayne with a jacket like that of this here terrorfyun mayne Shadahs!?"

Nary a hand was raised, though they were not under oath, a fact that Bung somehow communicated to the judge: "Judge, I don't think it's allowed to ask the audience questions."

"That fool from Gasberg is right. This is highly unorthodox," said Judge Harrison, "but, I guess you could say I'm not an orthodox judge." Judge Harrison then lifted up his feet to show off his cool Nike high tops. The crowd was impressed. "You may continue, Starwood."

"Well, I don't think I needa be sayin much more. Ain't no one in dis here town got a jacket like that. And the man who done took da little girl had a jacket like that... That's math a rooster could do with one cluck."

The jury liked that, nodding and smiling to each other.

"Your witness," Starwood said to Gus Bung as he shimmied back to his seat.

Gus rose, still smarting from his earlier pratfalls.

"Janitor Gruggle, could you please describe the window that you saw the person wearing the jacket out of?"

Janitor Gruggle leaned forward in his seat.

"Anyone from Conrad would know exactly what that window looks like! Go back to Gasberg!" shouted the Janitor.

Everyone joined in and began to harass Gus Bung, throwing tomatoes, shoes and unused panties at him.

"Judge, please!" pleaded Bung.

"Huh?" quanderied Judge Harrison, who had put headphones on, "Sorry, I'm listening to Pearl Jam." Harrison pointed at a pair of moody teenagers watching the proceedings.

"Hey," said the lanky teenage boy, "he listens to Pearl Jam, just like us."

"You're right," said the shorter boy, "and he wears high tops just like us."

"Let's wait and see if there is a third thing that will ingratiate him towards us."

"Whatever the problem is," said the Judge, "I'm cool with it."

The teenage boys looked at each other, lowered their sunglasses, and dropped their jaws.

"I have no further questions, your honor." said Gus Bung as he waddled his back to the table with Shadows.

The court took a short recess for Judge Harrison to hang out with the teenagers, but they were soon back at it, with Starwood calling Chief Lashly to the stand.

"Chief Lashly," said Starwood as he trounced around the courtroom, "Could you please describe the manor in which you arrested Mista Shadas?"

Lashly went on to state the only two pieces of evidence they had: the testimony of Janitor Gruggle and

the fact that Marissa Brighton's yellow backpack had been found in the same forest that Shadows resided in.

Went it came time for Gus Bung to cross examine the police chief, the dweeb from Gasberg knocked himself out by punching his own face after freeing it from some gum he got it stuck in.

It was time for Starwood's last witness.

"Ladies and Gendarmyne of da juwee, and of this sweet sweet town of Conwad, Imma let me call my next witness. And y'all betta git excited because it is SOOPWISE witness: Shadows' pappy."

Another in a long series of gasps filled the room. For a brief moment Shadows, a man who up until this point had no idea who/m his father was, was nervous and scared. He turned and saw the man from his past: Scott Grayscales, but much older, much slower.

Grayscales took the stand and Shadows looked away. Starwood regaled the crowd of how Grayscales was Shadows' father and how the two were never that close, but felt that Grayscales would be a good judge of character of the man.

"Mista Gwayscales, could you please tell us how ya know the man Shadows?" asked Starwood.

"I guess you could say I'm a bit of a Govnut," said Grayscales.

The crowd did a simultaneous "huh?" Grayscales then produced the exotic nut to the town. It was passed around until everyone got a good look at it. Then the crowd did a simultaneous "oh."

"I was a very important part of the Jicarilla nation, and as such, I had to keep the fact that I had given birth a secret." said Grayscales. "Yet, when Shadows was returned to us, it was clear that I needed to keep my relationship a secret even further because he was a loser."

All this time, Shadows just stared down at the table and the passed out Gus Bung.

"So, in ya opinion, Shadows is no good?"

"He's no good."

"And do you believe that Shadows would be capable of da crime he is on trial for here today?" asked Starwood.

"No." said Grayscales, stopping Starwood in his tracks. "He's not capable of anything."

"Duh-scuse me, sir? You sayin that your son, the siege of your life, could not have committed the crime of kidnapping this little innocent girl?"

"That's what I'm saying." said Scott Grayscales as he stared down a quiet and somber Shadows. The two men looked eye to eye for one last moment before Grayscales was excused.

Starwood gave his closing statement, and Gus Bung drooled on the table. Judge Harrison excused the jury to deliberate while he skated on the front of the courthouse steps with the teenagers.

And the jury came back in an hour, with a half hour for lunch, with a verdict. Goran Visnjic, who had demanded to be foreman, read the verdict to the room. In light of the evidence, testimony and overwhelming hatred that the town had, the jury had found Shadows not guilty.

"I guess some things, like winning a trial, take 32 years, and then there are other things, like one's virginity to an able-bodied woman, that take a little bit longer. I hope the bus to Gasberg comes soon." - Gus Bung, Gasberg Lawyer

7.

It was already summer by the time the trial was over and Shadows was set free. Summer in Conrad is a truly beautiful time. It's normally a perfect 73 degrees, but on the occasions it does warm up, there's usually a huge storm to cool thing back down. Kids roam the town on bikes and skateboards. The public pool opens up, but the older kids know that the Wompwa River is the place to hang out. Yet, the little kids need a little

bit more supervision and are sent to National Boulevard to buy a treat. Normally this would be the time that Mr. Brighton would be busy from sun up until sun down. Yet, the shop didn't open.

Mr. Brighton sat in the fading orange love seat in his living room. He didn't even have the strength to walk upstairs to his bedroom. He hadn't felt like this since Marissa's mother died. At least with his wife, he thought, there was a funeral.

With this he didn't know when to stop hoping that at any moment there could be a call or even that his daughter might walk through the front door. He couldn't give up his hope and his time was consumed with it. He thought about opening up the Scoopery, but he couldn't bear to see the faces of so many happy children and so many pitying parents. He thought about maybe going through the mail, but he couldn't. All he could do was focus on the next step.

Something happens in the mind when a great loss cannot be accepted. At first we cannot deny it, but slowly we come to accept the new reality. Mr. Brighton could not. He could not accept no resolution. He had to know, and he made a decision that the man who knew was Shadows.

There is an alley behind National Boulevard on the side that Trading Hill Outfitters and Brighton Scoopery share. Shadows liked to eat his lunch back there, away from anyone. Alan Brighton knew this and was ready for him with a wrench.

When Shadows came to, he was strapped to a chair in the basement of the shut down Scoopery.

"Where's my daughter?" asked Brighton.

Shadows said nothing.

And Brighton put a bag over Shadows' head, walked upstairs, and left the building. And he came back the next day, and the next day, and the day after that. The distraught father would walk down the stairs, pull the bag off Shadows' head, ask him where his daughter was, and Shadows would say nothing.

Not many wondered where Shadows had gone. Victor Bauser assumed that he had sent Shadows on a

trip and forgot to put it in the log. The media attention had already died down, and the town was so used to seeing little of the Apache that they didn't think twice about his absence.

On the 16th day, Alan Brighton came down the stairs, pulled the bag off Shadows' head and asked his prisoner once more where his daughter was.

And then, finally, Shadows spoke: "At time, I knew."

Brighton stumbled back and grabbed the wrench.

"But, I lost that time. Instead of putting me in jail, I could have been tracking her."

Brighton fell to the floor and wept. It was true, actually, that Shadows was an expert tracker. He was so good, in fact, that he had been uninvited from every Scavenger Hunt, Easter Egg Hunt, and Afikomen Hunt in Conrad.

Mr. Brighton now knew in his heart that Shadows was innocent, and now the crime had shifted to him. He had kidnapped the man. He had to end this.

The award winning ice cream man stuffed Shadows' mouth full of rags, put the bag back on, and loaded him up on the dolly that was normally reserved for hauling big 5 gallon buckets of sweet frozen dairy treats. After much struggle, Alan Brighton managed to get Shadows into his van and drive away down National Boulevard in the middle of the night.

When Mr. Brighton pulled the bag off Shadows' head, the Apache was surprised to see his cabin, lit with the lights of Brighton's car.

"We're gonna find her," Brighton said. "Tonight."

The father of possibly two got the exhausted and battered Shadows to his feet and the two men walked the half mile to where his little girl's yellow canary bag had been found. Brighton knew this spot well. He had it memorized. Which trees were where and how much of the river he could hear. This was where they would start.

"You're a tracker. Start!"

Shadows turned to his captor.

"Track her!"

Shadows stared at him.

“What’s wrong with you? You said you could.”

Shadows walked towards Brighton.

“Like I said, it’s been too long,” said Shadows.

The strong Apache, though weakened, began to pull apart the rope around his wrists. The rope dropped to the ground.

“There is no trail,” whispered Shadows as the ropes that bound him dropped to the ground.

Brighton backed up and fell to the forest floor. By the time he managed to muster enough strength to stand again, the sun began to rise. The two men walked back to Shadows’ cabin where Mr. Brighton’s car battery had died.

Shadows’ jumped the car while the two men shared coffee. After Brighton finished his coffee, he got in his car. “I’m sorry,” said the father. And Shadows said nothing as Brighton drove away.

Later that day, Mr. Brighton told this story to the police after the entire town had been wondering where Shadows had been for four days. Mr. Brighton walked himself into the police station. He wanted to be punished for what he had done. “Someone needs to be punished for the loss of my little girl,” he said.

“Dis much is clear: whomeeeevah done took that sweet child is a monstah. And this ain’t no regulah monstah neither. This is a monstah dat lives among us here in Conrad. And dat? Dat chills me right to da bone. Bad to the bone. Buh-buh-buh-buh bad.” - Brad Starwood, Minneapolis State’s Attorney

8.

So, who took Marissa Brighton? That’s the one hundred thousand dollar bar question. But, to find the answer to that question, there is another we must ask first: Why Shadows?

Sure, there was the evidence that Starwood presented during the trial, but a lot of that came after the arrest. All the police had to go on was Janitor Gruggle seeing a red and black Mackinaw jacket. At least a couple dozen people in Conrad owned that very same jacket. How do you pick out Shadows from the crowd?

Perhaps it was the hunger of the town. They wanted to know who upset their community. They demanded answers and felt a deep desire for safety. Mayor Lippy, in response, put pressure on Chief Lashly to make an arrest. With little to go on, the Chief choice the most outcasted citizen in all of Conrad.

It all happened so quickly that assumptions were made. The anonymous tips might’ve been the work of an individual or a group of individuals (people) to push the police closer towards Shadows... if the tips were real at all.

Yet, after the trial, none of these questions were answered. Everyone was so exhausted. Starwood returned to Minneapolis, with a broken winning streak. And Shadows didn’t countersue the town for a wrongful arrest, or get angry at the men who put him on trial. He didn’t even press charges against Mr. Brighton who himself went free. Shadows returned to his corner of the forest, like a green ogre to his swamp, not to be stirred for twenty years

In 2011, another little girl in Conrad went missing, and this time Shadows was once again called upon. But not by the police, but by the girl’s parents, who took the advice of Mr. Brighton, that they needed an orphaned Apache tracker. And what Shadows would find would change the course of Conrad, and it’s enemy-town Gasberg, forever. ♦



REDEMPTION

