

OUR FOREFATHERS BICKER BEYOND THE GRAVE!



**JULY 2022
VOL.1 NO. 1**

**SCHNOOK SLAIN IN OWN SEX PAD:
"NONE OF THE DNA WAS HIS!"**



MUNDISA

**SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA,
REVENGE IS SERVED ALL NIGHT LONG**

WELCOME TO THE SHIT SHOW

Dear reader,

If you're reading this, you've either signed up for our "weekly newsletter" which hasn't been dispatched in a number of months. OR you've purchased our debut novel, [Under the Knife](#) (or the various merch we sell on the site). Whatever the reason, thank you for the support, it's much appreciated.

With that out of the way, we want to welcome you to the world of intelligent sleaze. We are carrying on the tradition of the long standing culture of trash fiction that started as Pulp Magazines, evolved into paperbacks and men's mags, and found a home in cinema as Film Noir, exploitation films, and action flicks.

What you are holding is a portal into our world of Punk Rock Pulp and you are actively taking part in the resurgence of Pulp Fiction. Because of this, you are already an amazing individual.

Within these pages is our sandbox where we are testing out new stories, characters, and writing styles. If you want to read something polished, [buy our book](#). But if you want in on the ground floor, get first looks at characters in the future novels we will write — buckle up.

So turn the page, pour out your favorite poison, and smoke em if you got'em. You might want to sit down, this will get messy. Enjoy.

- The Editors
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JAIL BIRD DINER

BY: BRUCE NORWICH



Torrential pearls of angel piss beat a steady rhythm on the Jaybird Diner. This ancient eatery was nestled in the bosom of Matanza, Florida. Matanza wasn't really a town. It was more like a stain between two nowheres that wouldn't wash out, no matter how hard it rained.

Richie Munday clashed with the pastel booth he sat in. The last forty years had been etched in his face with a jackhammer. A couple faded tattoos adorned his steel cable arms. A gut clung to his muscular frame like a stowaway. His voice was like a bulldozer scooping gravel as he growled, "Goddammit! I said I wanted this steak rare!"

A coffee pot slid in and refilled Richie's cup. Attached to it was Tanya Wallace, a waitress who made every stitch of her uniform scream with delight. Her apple cheeks framed a hard candy smile.

"You can't have a minute steak rare. There's no such thing." Tanya punctuated her point with a "fuck yourself" wink.

Richie could feel his face getting hot. Some guys were ass men, and some guys were tit men. Tanya had plenty of both. But Richie was, above all things, a silence man. As far as he was concerned, he didn't shoulder life's bullshit so some greasy spoon twat could get uppity with him. When he wanted her mouth open, he'd let her know. Considering what he was thinking, he managed to stay rather polite.

"Watch that mouth, darlin'. I ain't no fun when I get mad." Tanya raised her eyebrows, assessing Richie the way a gardener would a poisonous spider.

As she turned around, Richie watched her ass swing back and forth. He clapped his hands loud enough to make Tanya's ears ring. If she insisted on putting on a show, then he would give her the applause she wanted. The diner was empty except for the two of them.

Tanya slid onto the counter and crossed her legs.

"How long you been out of prison?"

Richie turned, shocked. Was it that obvious?

Tanya re-crossed her legs. The motion acted as a ratchet, hiking her skirt further up.

"Nobody eats three courses here unless they just got out. Besides, we're the first bus stop from Mapleton."

Richie was starting to sweat. His shirt stuck

to the naugahyde booth. He couldn't understand why he was letting this chick rattle him. Every swingin' dick in Mapleton talked about getting their first outside meal at the Jailbird Diner...and maybe a waitress for dessert. Now was the time to take what he wanted. It was as simple as that.

Tanya kept her eyebrow cocked. She was clinging to that facial expression like a knife in a dark house. She could tell this man was rough, rougher than the others. She could tell by the way his eyes crawled over her flesh. Her voice lilted.

"So here you are, an old convict with no one to eat with."

Richie's face tensed with a studied plan of violence. He had just decided everything he was going to do to her. Tanya responded by arching her back. Her breasts taxed the buttons on her uniform. Her bottom half was so finely toned, it hovered above the counter like it was from the future. Tanya tossed Richie a giggle.

"Sorry about the steak. The cook went home drunk, so I'm the best you got. Cooking like that must be why I'm still single, huh?"

Richie cleared his throat. "You're still single 'cause it's hard to tell when you're kidding or being a bitch."

Tanya exhaled an impressed laugh. It wasn't the first time she'd heard that.

"I'll get you another steak, on me. Let me just tell my manager."

She walked into the back room and called out to an unseen protective male.

"Hey Troy, I'm buying a steak for the handsome guy in the booth."

Tanya stood in the diner's walk-in freezer. It was empty. Her smartphone buzzed with an alert. A severe storm warning was in effect. The roads were washed out. There was no way the cops would get here in time. A shadow etched its way into Tanya's view. Richie stood in the doorway. She could almost hear him salivating at the sight of her all alone.

Tanya's voice cracked. "You can't be back here."

Richie licked moist lips.

"Oh no? I thought you might be lonely, since there's no manager." He continued in a voice he knew she would obey.

"I'm gonna need that cell phone."

Tanya couldn't respond at first. Richie closed in. His body was actually radiating heat in the cold.

"Come on darlin'. We both want this to go easy."

As if caught in a trance, Tanya handed over her phone. She uttered the next statement like it would grant her gentle treatment.

"My daddy did a ten year bid."

Richie snorted, "Shit, that's a holiday. I did twenty."

Tanya reloaded her smirk and cocked her eyebrow.

"Oh yeah? That's a long time with just your hand. Unless you found somebody up there to keep you company."

Richie didn't even get mad this time. He had to hand it to her. This little twist was a real fuckin' carnival ride.

Richie placed his arms against the wall, pinning Tanya between them.

"You like trouble don't you?"

Tanya slinked out of the arms expertly.

"I like whiskey, and the cook left some back here."

She grabbed a bottle from the shelf, took a long sip, and closed her eyes as she swallowed. The whiskey burned her throat and warmth swelled from her center. She passed the bottle and locked eyes with Richie.

"You know, we could make a real night out of this...unless you're the type that doesn't let a lady enjoy herself."

Richie had to smile. "And what would your daddy say?"

Tanya pulled on the whiskey. "If he was still alive, he'd know that my taste in men is his fault."

Richie meant this next statement, but only because he must have been her father's age.

"I'm sorry he passed."

Tanya rubbed her shoulders and spoke through chattering teeth.

"It was a long time ago, and he ain't looking down from the clouds if you know what I mean."

Thunder and lightning shook the diner. The rain on the ancient tin roof sounded like the tape of a football stadium. The lights flickered on and off. Tanya rubbed her arms harder and hopped up and down.

"I'm freezing my balls off in here. Let's get you that steak, and then we'll do whatever you want."

In the flickering light of the electric storm, Richie wasted no time ripping the landline out of the wall and emptying the cash register. He pocketed all the money from the till. Richie grinned at Tanya.

"You said whatever I want."

Tanya just shrugged. It was the gesture of an unimpressed girl on the playground. She set her glass on the counter. "Freshen me up, darlin'."

Richie poured a robust helping of whiskey. He ogled Tanya's breasts, legs, ass, and neck while she worked the grille. Tanya spoke over her shoulder, completely aware of the X Ray eyes piercing her.

"I'll get us some rolls."

Tanya drained her glass and headed to the refrigerator. Richie poured her another three fingers and called after her.

"When did your daddy do his time? Maybe I knew him."

Tanya pondered her funhouse mirror image in the fridge's stainless steel doors. She spoke, watching her distorted mouth reflection make the words.

"He died on the inside. They thought he was snitching, but they got it wrong. He was too much of a bastard to be a snitch."

She turned away from the reflection and fired every syllable of the next few words with precision.

"They drowned him in the laundry room."

Tanya's words hit their mark and Richie's face lit up with recognition.

"So, you're Wallace's little girl? You grew up real nice."

Richie winced. That was too fucking bad.

"It's a shame I gotta do this..."

Richie stood up, went behind the counter, and grabbed a chef's knife. As he walked back into the refrigerator, a shotgun blast rippled through the diner.

Richie's body launched backwards and tumbled over the counter. When he landed, his stomach was a split trash bag leaking gore.

Tanya swung her hips as she sauntered towards Richie. She brandished a double barrel Remington Model 1889. One barrel was smoking. Tanya taunted the twisted pile of animal fear that Richie had become.

"This was my daddy's favorite gun. I imagined this moment a million different ways, but always with this gun."

Richie's spaghetti dish of entrails spiraled and sprung around him. He sputtered and gurgled. Terror gripped his voice.

"It wasn't my fault! I liked your old man!

Tanya smiled like a hungry vampire.

"I know...but he had it coming and you were just following orders."

She closed in on Richie. She was a feline toying with her prey. The steak burned and smoked on the grill.

"That's what your cellmate said when I scrambled his guts with this gun."

Richie's vision was an epileptic swirl of shapes.

"I'm not the guy you really want. I'm just a soldier. Wait, I can tell you who gave the order. I can..."

Tanya shoved the shotgun barrel into Richie's mouth, reducing his pleas to garbled sucking sounds. His muffled pleas barely overpowered the crackle of breaking teeth. Tanya's eyes melted into dark pools of rage.

"I know who they are. They're already dead. You're my last one, Richie."

She cocked the second hammer back.

As Richie was about to have his final thoughts painted onto the wall, a lightning bolt struck the diner, knocking out the power.

The sudden darkness distracted Tanya.

Richie grabbed the shotgun barrel and yanked it away from his face. Tanya pulled the trigger, but only put a hole into a nearby booth.

In a fit of animal fury, Richie lunged at Tanya, pulling her down to the ground. He choked her while she struggled to get free from his grasp.

The only light in the diner came from the flames of the burning steak and the strobe effect of lightning flashes.

The two scratched, punched, and clawed on the ground. Richie tried choking the hope out of Tanya, but she reached the chef's knife and plunged it into his shoulder. The pain sent Richie convulsing like an electric shock.

Tanya wriggled free, but the convict seized her ankle and she tumbled to the floor. Richie pulled the knife out of

his shoulder and crawled towards her.

Tanya smashed the whiskey bottle on Richie's head. The whiskey splattered on the burning stove and Richie screamed as he caught fire. His skin bubbled and the odor of burnt hair thickened the room. The flaming diner swelled with an orange glow.

Tanya grabbed the skillet full of home fries. The palm of her right hand sizzled with the heat of the cast iron. She brought it down on Richie's head. She swung again and again, smashing Richie's head until it split and crumbled like a rotten melon.

Tanya stepped back, gasping with relief. Her eyes pulsed and her chest shuddered. She pushed out syrupy, irrational tears. This was it. This was the end. The fire spread to the rest of the diner and she watched Richie's lifeless body blister in the flames.

She snapped out of her tears and recomposed herself. Nobody was allowed to see this side of her. Tanya opened a broom closet, revealing an imprisoned waitress and cook. They were bound and gagged together. The waitress was missing her uniform. Tanya used the chef's knife to cut them loose.

"Time to go."

The waitress and the cook ran out of the diner. Tanya walked off into the thunderstorm and let the rain cool her as the diner burnt to the ground behind her.



Drink like a colonial



John Lewis Krimmel's "Village Tavern" (1814)

America was born in a barroom. Not just one, but multiple taverns and public houses helped usher in American Independence. This is not only because colonial era men drank like fish (which, they did*), but because the tavern, inn, grog shop, house of ill repute — whatever you call it — was usually the main gathering place for social entertainment and civic duties.

The Sons of Liberty was born in Boston's Green Dragon Tavern on Union Street. This was also where they planned the tea party and then had their after-tea-party, party. The US Marine Corps was born in the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. Also in Philly, City Tavern, with its close proximity to Independence Hall was where all of the Continental Congress members (even the Quakers**) would go to tie one off. Fraunces Tavern in New York City took a direct hit from the HMS Asia, which sent an 18-pound cannonball through the roof during the war. When Paul Revere (and others) took their midnight ride to warn the militia, they went to taverns like the Munroe Tavern in Lexington and the Wright Tavern in Concord to get the word out.

(All of these, except Tun Tavern, are still open. The Green Dragon is not in its original location but it's across from The Bell in Hand, which was est. in the 1790s).

With all that in mind, since this magazine is going out on Independence Day, here are some mixed drinks you can whip together like a Son of Liberty. Cheers.

RATTLE SKULL

Not only is this a great name, but it also has ingredients we understand and directions a present day bartender wouldn't be confused with.



I will also say, whiskey came along when America moved west into the frontier. Before the war for independence, rum was the spirit of choice and beer was mostly porters and ales, not lagers (which use yeast that require cold temperatures). These recipes will reflect that.

Ingredients:

5 oz dark beer (porter, brown ale)

$\frac{3}{4}$ oz dark rum

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp lime juice

Ground nutmeg

Brown Sugar Syrup (optional — probably not traditional)

Combine the rum, beer, and lime juice in a chilled tumbler (and brown sugar syrup if you're using that). Stir gently. Garnish with the nutmeg if you're fancy.

The recipe (sans brown sugar syrup), comes from Chowning's Tavern in Colonial Williamsburg.

THE COOW WOOW

(Pronounced coo-woo) Claimed to be America's first cocktail — older than an old fashioned!

This is another easy one to make, (if you can find the ginger brandy). It was out of fashion by the 1860s when Jerry Thomas came out with *How to Mix Drinks* or the *Bon-Vivants Companion*.

Ingredients:

2.5 oz white rum

1.5 oz ginger brandy

Pour rum and brandy into a cocktail shaker with ice. Shake well. Strain into a chilled martini glass (or pewter tankard if you want to feel authentic).

SYLLABUB

This was a fancy dinner party drink, as Abigail Adams wrote in a letter from London in 1785, "It is usual at large entertainment to bring the solid food in the first course. The second consists of lighter diet, kickshaws, trifles, whip syllabub." So basically this was like a desert.

Ingredients:

5 oz floral white wine (Riesling, Pinot Gris, Muscat, etc.)
2 oz. heavy whipping cream
1 tsp. Maple syrup
¼ tsp. Lemon juice
2 egg whites
½ tsp. Sugar
Shaved Nutmeg

Combine wine, cream, syrup, and lemon juice into a mixing glass. Stir and pour into a rocks glass.

In a separate bowl, combine the two egg whites with a pinch of sugar and beat until frothy.

Spoon froth over the cocktail, and garnish with shaved nutmeg.

FLIP

One of the more popular drinks in Colonial America. The flip, aka a "bellow-stop," was not only a cocktail but also used as a meal replacement.

Sounds more fun than a SlimFast shake.

Ingredients:

3 oz eggnog
1 tbsp brown sugar or molasses
10 oz beer
1.5 oz rum
1 tbsp of dried pumpkin, apple, nutmeg, or cinnamon

In a small bowl combine eggnog, rum, and sugar or molasses; whisk until frothy and pour into a pint glass

Pour the beer into a saucepan and heat over medium flame until steaming. Do not boil

Once steaming, pour the heated beer back and forth into the pint glass with the eggnog/rum/sugar mix and back into the saucepan several times to blend (once fully blended in the pint glass, the traditional recipe calls for a red hot iron to be plunged into the drink to froth the egg).

Garnish with the dried spice.



“Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam” by John Greenwood (1755)

PHILADELPHIA FISH HOUSE PUNCH

The colonial version of jungle juice. As you can see from the picture above, these guys could party back in the day. Also, in the painting above is a signer of the Declaration of Independence, Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island. No idea if he's the guy getting puked on.

It wasn't uncommon for people to drink straight out of the punch bowl. Remember, this was before they knew about bacteria and germs.

Ingredients:

1 lb.(!) demerara sugar (pure cane sugar)
3 qt water
1 pint lemon juice
Peel of 3 lemons
Mixture of:
3 oz sweet peach brandy
27 oz (3 ⅓ cups) brandy
18 oz (2 ¼ cups) rum

You might want to scale this one down if you're gonna make it. Because, if it tastes like ass, that's a whole lot of booze, lemon juice, and sugar for a disappointment.

With that amount of sugar, I'm sure the next morning would be hellacious.



Poor Bastard



"Smithfield Sharpers of The Countryman Defrauded" by John Keyse Sherwin, c. 1788.

This depicts a tavern scene in London. The guy in the middle is so drunk he's seeing other dimensions.

COLONIAL BOOZE HOUNDS*

Hangovers suck, but dysentery is much worse. Food Historian Sarah Lohman recorded her "Drink Like a Colonial American" day where she "drank the quantity of alcohol commonly consumed during the course of an average day in Colonial America." She was drunk by noon and tapped out at 5:48 PM.

John Adams would start each day with a "gill" (3-4 oz) of hard cider as an eye-opener. And here's an excerpt from a letter to his wife Abigail while he was in Philly serving in the First Continental Congress in 1774 — many of his letters to her involved alcohol:

I drink no Cider, but feast on Philadelphia Beer and Porter. A Gentleman, one Mr. [Robert] Hare, has lately set up in this City a Manufactory of Porter, as good as any that comes from London. I pray we may introduce it into Massachusetts. It agrees with me infinitely better than Punch, Wine, or Cider, or any other Spirtuous Liquor.

**Adams also wrote in his diary about drinking with all of Congress at City Tavern on October 20, 1774 — a toast was given and two or three "broad rims" (a derogatory term for Quakers) joined in after saying it was more of a prayer than a toast and therefore, ok.

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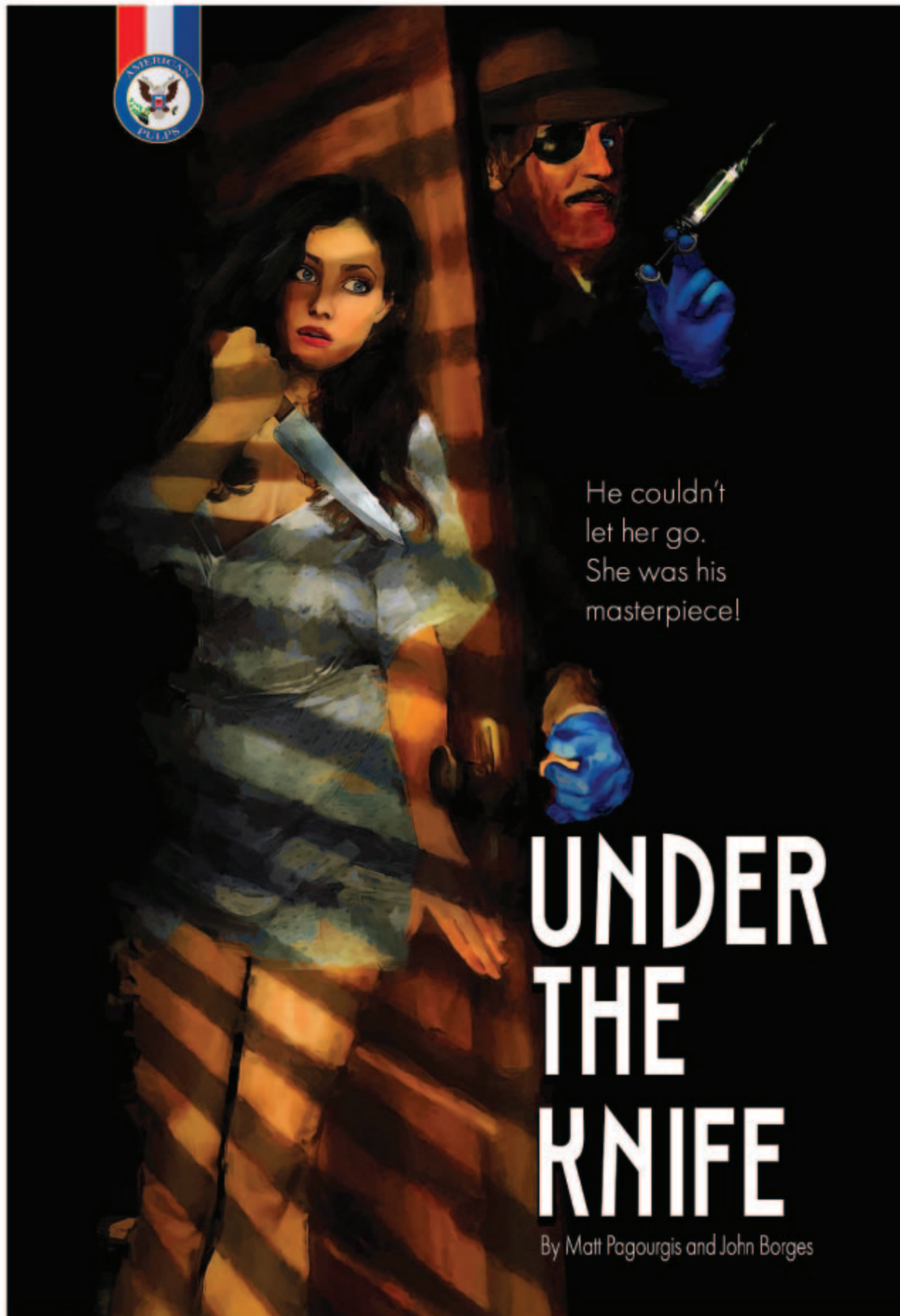
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Hey, wait a minute, we wrote a book!



And it's kinda bonkers.

In 1950's Hollywood, Kate Ulrich is a desperate starlet who doesn't have "the look." Plastic surgery is the answer...until she wakes to discover the doctor has turned her into his dead wife! Kate endures unspeakable horrors as a prisoner in his mansion. She fights to get free, yet learns that escape will bring certain death. Not only is her captor a wanted Nazi surgeon, but the wife he's recreated in Kate is none other than Sofie Strauss, "The Demon Doll Of The SS." As a dead ringer for Germany's most savage war criminal, she becomes the target of ruthless Nazi hunters. She also realizes she has an inescapable responsibility. Looking the way she does, Kate is the only person who can infiltrate and destroy the burgeoning Fourth Reich. From struggling actress to mankind's last hope, she is cast in the role of a lifetime.

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THE APARTMENT

BY: P.A. O'NEIL

The Body

The dead man's apartment was small and spartan. It was masculine but only so because it was a mess. A building across the street blocked out the sun giving the whole place a mancave vibe. The distinct smell of cordite wafted through the dingy studio apartment.

Detective Frank Crocetti took a deep breath, the smell took him back to his childhood on the beach where fireworks blasted every Independence Day as if a foreign foe was bombarding Morton City. With this year's Fourth being two days away he thought maybe he'd get a last-minute Air BnB on the beach, light a cherry bomb like old times.

The night was humid, Crocetti's tie — always loosened — was off at this point, his sweat-drenched collar long ago devoid of starch. His white buttondown gripped his back. Even at 2 am it was "hotter than Satan's nutsack" as his partner Dave Cole eloquently put it when they arrived on scene.

Crocetti made a spiral sweep of the studio apartment, starting at the body and going counterclockwise like a machine. Frank was tough to work with, it took him and Dave Cole over a year to warm up to each other. But just because he rubbed people the wrong way, didn't mean he wasn't respected in the Morton City PD. Crocetti was old school. Tough. Dogged. Thorough. But even being thorough, he knew there wasn't much in the apartment.

His partner, Dave Cole came back from talking to the neighbors down the hall. It was his first time in the room seeing the blood splatter and the crater of an exit wound in the poor bastard's skull. "Jesus Christ, look at this mess. What'd they shoot this guy with one of those pilgrim guns?"

"A blunderbuss," replied Crocetti.

"Huh?"

"That's what those pilgrim guns are called, blunderbuss'."

"The kind with the muzzle looking like a bell at the end?"

"Yeah."

"Huh." Dave thought that one over and repeated it so it would stay in the ol' brain bank,

"Blunderbuss. Great name for a gun."

Cole was tall, lanky, and baby-faced. Opposite Crocetti in every way, the yin to Frank's yang. Crocetti was short, grizzled, and serious with three days of stubble on his chin that would have taken Cole three years and some Just For Men beard dye to obtain the same effect.

"What were the neighbors like?"

"Not home. And the ones who were seemed cagey. Never saw this guy..." He checked his notebook, "Gil."

Crocetti wasn't surprised that the victim Gil didn't know his neighbors. Judging by the food in the fridge and overall decor he didn't seem to spend a lot of time in the apartment.

"According to this guy's key card, he works at Tatum and Miller." Crocetti held up a baggie with Gil's ID badge in it. He handed it to Dave, the card said GIL ROWE, and beneath that, SENIOR COORDINATING MANAGER. The intertwined T and M circled with "Tatum & Miller Corporation" was above the name and job title. To the left of the company logo was a picture of Gil Rowe, back when his head was intact. It looked like a mugshot.

"What do you think a Senior Coordinating Manager does?"

"Probably manages the managers who manage the coordinators."

"Sounds sad."

The Office

That afternoon they went to Tatum and Miller headquarters. The building took up five floors of a high rise in the financial district. The AC was blasting in the lobby, trying to blow the Summer heat back to March. The lobby was filled with people in respectable attire, all wearing the same expression on their faces, a look that said they'd rather be anywhere but there. A majority of these disgruntled looking people didn't know Gil Rowe, a select few recognized him but only to say they shared the elevator with him. The poor guy spent forty hours a week in that building and hardly anyone knew he existed. Just a cog in the wheel.

Crocetti was right about what a Senior Coordinating Manager's job was, he managed five Coordinating Managers who coordinated the client-facing technicians. That was at least what Crocetti gleaned from Gil's boss, a man named Steve Wilde. Wilde's position was Director of Client-Facing Operations — whatever that is. Crocetti was happy to be simply, "Detective."

Wilde had a gray beard and long flowy white hair. He looked like the kind of guy who spent his weekends drinking Wild Turkey at his favorite bar after playing eighteen at "the club."

They looked through Gil's office, Wilde told them Gil had just gotten promoted and the small office was an upgrade. It had a giant load-bearing pole right in front of the window, so only skinny people and children could look out at the grey skyscraper across the street and the hotdog stand below.

Cole let out a boy-howdy whistle, "Nice view of the roach coach."

In this sad man's sad little office they booted up his computer. Aside from a Dentist appointment coming up, the calendar was empty. But it did have an entry that said, "Gatsby Party" with the address in the town of Highland Shores — a very affluent community on the ocean outside of the city.

After interviewing a few people above and below Gil in rank, they talked to HR to see if the Gatsby Party address existed in their records. They had a hit with a guy in the C-Suite, Peter Alexander.

Peter Alexander's office was stately, about five times the size of Gil Rowe's office four floors below. Light pooled in from floor-to-ceiling windows on two sides with some more beaming through a skylight. Behind his ornate and wooden desk was a killer view of City Bank, established in 1889 and housed in its original Second Empire style building, with gargoyles and statues dripping off of the building's façade. A wet bar was to the right of the door, next to his own personal bathroom. On the wet bar was a picture of Alexander's wife, a woman who looked like she belonged on an HGTV show or in some Good Housekeeping article about interior decorating. Next to her picture was a bottle of Pappy Van Winkle.

Peter Alexander was tall and smug. Crocetti immediately disliked him. He sat at his desk with a vapid and intrigued look on his face, looking amused to be seeing the police, but too dumb to be surprised. As if they were stand-up comedians and he was a few steps behind the punchline, smiling and nodding while everyone around him laughed.

When Crocetti and Cole told him that Gil Rowe was murdered he looked genuinely surprised. Alexander didn't deny knowing Rowe. He said they were friendly.

"His calendar had a party at your house a few days back, a Gatsby-themed party?"

This question made Alexander look surprised for a second time. "Yes, I had a party, but it wasn't Gatsby-themed. My wife doesn't do theme parties, she thinks they're tacky."

"It said Gatsby Party in the calendar."

"I don't know what to say, maybe it was a joke for him, I throw some lavish parties from time to time."

"But never any theme parties," said Crocetti.

Alexander didn't like his condescending tone. "No. Not since I was in a frat."

"Did you work with Gil often? I don't see why a CMO would be in contact with middle management. But then, I'm just a cop."

"No, we didn't work hand in hand but as the Chief Marketing Officer I take great pains to understand the customer's journey, and since he managed the people who spoke directly with the clients, I found him to be a good resource and soundboard." This guy is polished, thought Crocetti.

"Is that why he got the promotion?"

"Partly, I'm sure. I put it in a good word. But his boss, Steve Wilde would be the best person to talk to about that."

"Can we have a guestlist for this Gatsby Party you had?"

"I don't understand how this could bring any leads your way but, sure. I'll have my wife email you the list."

They left Alexander's office and called it a day, looking at the Pappy Van Winkle on his wet bar made Crocetti thirsty so they decided to stop by The Muse, a swanky cocktail bar across the street.

They talked over Gin Rickey's and compared notes. It took Cole years to figure out how to keep his partner Crocetti happy — alcohol. After a few rounds, they decided it would be best to re-walk the crime scene and see if anything stood out after talking to the corporate drones at Tatum & Miller.

The Friend

Forensics found what was presumed to be bodily fluids in a few places but they wouldn't know for sure until the results came back from the lab. Other than that, the place seemed clean.

He had a few books of the airport bookstore variety. Thrillers you could read in the span of a plane ride or two. Crocetti surmised Gil read them on the subway on his way to work. There was also classic literature, Ulysses by James Joyce, The Count of Monte Cristo by Alexandre Dumas, Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen, and Bleak House by Charles Dickens to name a few.

After going through every drawer and item with a fine-toothed comb all they discovered was that the guy was a bookworm. Right around when they were about to call it quits there was a loud knock at the door.

Cole opened it. The man looked at him and Crocetti, and had a very confused look on his face. "I'm sorry I —" he looked at the number on the door to make sure it was the right apartment number, "I'm looking for Gil. I have his laptop but I'm not sure I have the right place." Crocetti and Cole looked at each other and then let the guy in before they told him the news, they both had experienced people bolt when they told them they were police and they didn't want him taking off with that laptop.

"What's your relationship with Mr. Rowe?"

"We're old friends. I was in the city and I — we made plans to meet up, we grew up together. Why? Is he in trouble?"

"I'm really sorry but Gil is dead. He was killed very early yesterday morning."

Before Crocetti could ask him what he was doing between the hours of 11 pm and 3 am last night, and why he had Gil's laptop, the man went white as a sheet and fainted on Gil's sticky linoleum floor.

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Greg Willard — that's what the guy's name ended up being — was sitting on Gil's couch with a glass of cold water in his hand getting more color to his skin. He was sweating and seemed to legitimately be in shock about the death of his friend.

"What'd you do when you hung out the other day?"

"Shot the shit, you know. We met up at a bar near where he worked. Ate some burgers, drank some beers."

"How'd you come by his laptop?"

"He was having issues with it. I told him I'd check it out. He brought it to the bar and gave it to me there."

"What do you work in IT?"

"No, I'm just techy like that."

Turned out Greg Willard was in town for some convention. He reached out to Gil, they were both in a band in high school, a fact that shocked Crocetti and Cole to the core. This guy Gil seemed like he was born in a Dilbert cartoon and never remotely cool. But other than the fact that Gil said he got a promotion and he was doing well, the two mostly talked about old times, and how nowadays it seemed one-half of their old schoolmates are politically far-right and the other is far-left. And perhaps it was because of

this that they didn't fit in with anyone when they were younger.

They took Greg's contact information down and told him they might be reaching out in the future, he told them where they could find him while he was in town (The Edison Hotel) and where he'd be after he left, (back in Glastonbury, a town near Hartford Connecticut).

The Girl

Crocetti couldn't sleep. He was restless. He looked at the clock and it was a quarter past two in the morning, too late to go to a bar and too early to go to a coffee shop. He decided he'd head to Rowe's apartment and take a look around, soak in its sadness, and then head to the Tip Top Diner to get breakfast and read the paper.

He was only there for ten minutes when some woman was banging on the door calling him an asshole from the hallway and screaming that she would kill him. When Crocetti opened she closed her mouth mid shriek, looked at the number on the apartment to make sure she had the right place, and said, "Who the fuck are you?"

"I'm Frank. Who the fuck are you?"

"You one of Peter's friends?"

"You mean Gil?"

"I think I know whose place this is pal. I've been here enough times to know there's shitty coffee in the cupboard and a piss puddle around the toilet. This is Peter's city apartment so he can get away from his wife."

It was then that Frank flashed his badge. "I think you should come in, Miss."

"Oh my God is Peter dead?" This from the woman who less than two minutes ago was saying she'd kill him herself.

"Is this Peter?" Crocetti showed her the picture of Gil.

She squinted at it and shook her head. "No that's not Peter, you didn't answer my question. Is he hurt? Is he dead?"

"No, Gil is." This cheered her up a bit. She walked into the apartment, went to the cabinet, pulled out a bottle of tequila, and poured herself a lazy man's Paloma with some Fresca and ice.

"So you're saying this isn't Peter's apartment?" Crocetti liked this girl, for once he wasn't the one asking questions.

"No, I don't know who Peter is but the man who lived here, Gil, was murdered here. Where can we find your boyfriend Peter?"

"He wouldn't even give me his address, he said he was leaving his wife but didn't want to complicate the divorce with bringing me into the picture."

"Yeah. Sure."

"So we just talk on WhatsApp, but he's not replying. So I came here, he's usually in the city on Tuesday nights, that's when we have our dates."

She shared the WhatsApp info with Crocetti and sipped on her Paloma. "Did he take you anywhere else on these Tuesday dates?"

"We went to the theater a few times, I like musicals."

"But if you went to a place, you only went to this place. No other apartments or hotels or anything?" He was trying to delicately ask, *Where would you fuck this guy?* Without saying it outright.

"No just here. Like I said, I knew he didn't live here, but he said he was here during the week because he worked in the city and he had a long commute. So his wife just thought he was working late."

"I'm sure she did. Where did he work?"

"Oh I forget, it was something with two last names." She had just mentioned half the businesses in the city, thought Crocetti. "Tately & Morgan?"

"Tatum and Miller?"

"Yeah, that's it!"

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Crocetti told Cole all about Maria when they met at the Tip Top Diner. The Tip Top was Crocetti's favorite greasy spoon diner in the city, an old train car diner with a bartop counter going down its spine and four small booths port-side. They were in the last booth, Crocetti faced the front door, he always faced the exit when he ate out.

"Jesus, that place is like Grand Central. We should just hang out there and wait for the killer to knock, everyone else we've met on this case has," said Cole with a forkful of scrambled

eggs in his mouth.

"Yeah, well, speaking of people we've been talking to I think we should pay Peter Alexander another visit. I wouldn't be surprised if he was the Peter who was taking this girl to Gils for a little rendezvous."

When they got back to the precinct they found out he wasn't the only one.

The Keys

"Nine guys!" That was Cole, forensics came back, and they discovered that there was a shitload of semen in every corner of the apartment, and the results from the lab told them it was from at least nine different men.

"What's with this guy? Did he have fuck parties over there?" Asked Cole.

"I don't think so, he doesn't sound like the fuck party type."

"He must have been in the closet."

"No, doesn't seem that way either. And his laptop had straight porn on it, all very plain-vanilla, and upsettingly boring," said Officer Walsh, the guy from forensics.

"How do we get jizz stains from nine different men in his apartment?" asked Cole.

Crocetti too was dumbfounded, "I just can't comprehend how much semen is in this place. We always joke about how we wish we had some damn semen in a crime scene like they did on that show CSI. Now we've got too much."

"Did any of the semen go back to Gil?"

"Yes, we found one well-loved cum sock with his DNA, that was it," said Walsh. Again sounding disappointed that Gil Rowe was so basic.

"So everyone's getting laid in this guy's apartment except him."

"Maybe it was suicide," mused Cole.

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They went back to Tatum and Miller. Crocetti wanted to talk to Peter Alexander about Maria. Instead of letting him in their office, Peter's secretary had them wait on a blue couch. They sat facing an abstract painting that Crocetti figured probably cost thousands and he could have done himself.

After twenty minutes of staring at the

painting, three people in their twenties walked out of the office looking like they just got reamed out. Cole and Crocetti took that as their cue to go in and meet with the boss man.

Peter had the same lost expression as the first time they met him. "Haven't I given you people enough?"

"What, your guest list? Your wife still hasn't even sent it over. Maybe we should talk to her, ask her if this Maria girl's on it."

"What was that?"

"Oh, don't tell me you didn't invite Maria. She seemed so upset when we talked to her, you don't want to get her angry, believe me."

"You talked to Maria?"

"Yeah, she thought Gil's place was your place. A fancy guy like you in a place like that. Huh. So, should we talk to your wife about this?"

"No. Um, what do you want to know?"

"We can start with why the fuck Maria thought Gil's place was yours. Then we can touch on why you had a brain fart and didn't talk about how you would frequent his apartment to schtup her there when we last spoke." "Gil would offer his apartment as a place for men in the office to have a tryst, I'm not the only one. I held that information back because you could imagine what a hornet's nest that kicks for me here at work."

"Murder kicks an angrier nest, believe me," said Cole.

Crocetti interjected before Alexander could respond to Cole. "You're telling me this guy just lent his apartment out to other guys at the office so they could fuck their secretaries?"

"Well, not always secretaries. Maria's not a secretary she doesn't even work here. But, yeah."

"Did you pay him?"

"Well, Wilde kind of promised him he'd get promoted."

"Did he?"

"He got that office and a title bump."

"That shitty office?" Said Cole, more outraged about that than the guy getting murdered. Alexander only shrugged.

"So they paid him." Said Crocetti, reeling it back to the subject at hand.

"No, he didn't get a raise, just an office, and a title bump."

"WE ALWAYS JOKE ABOUT HOW WE WISH WE HAD SOME DAMN SEMEN IN A CRIME SCENE LIKE THEY DID ON THAT SHOW CSI. NOW WE'VE GOT TOO MUCH."

"Fucking Corporate America," said Crocetti disgusted. "Where were you three nights ago?"

Alexander looked at Crocetti like a kid about to be scolded, "I was at Gil's apartment with Maria — But I didn't kill him!"

"That's a pretty shitty alibi."

"I wish I had a better one, but it's true."

"Yeah, I suppose if you were lying you'd come up with a better one than that."

"I'm telling you the truth. I went to his apartment with Maria, we left around eleven. I went home after that."

They grilled him for another ten minutes before Alexander figured he should probably have a lawyer present. That ended the conversation.

"Don't leave town, we'll be in touch," said Cole as they left his office.

The next stop was Wilde's office, he was banging his secretary in Gil's apartment, and the odd escort. The way he talked about it, it sounded like his wife knew about the affair. But perhaps it just sounded that way because of the picture of her on his desk looking on as he talked about porking his secretary — and the odd escort — in Gil's apartment.

According to Wilde's secretary, he had dinner with a client at Chez Michaels then they went to a cocktail bar after, a swanky place called The Dean. This alibi, far superior to Alexander's, later checked out with a phone call to the client and a stop at both restaurants. They left Wilde and went next down the line.

Next up was Brett Gerritsen, he worked in sales, or something like that, Crocetti found him a little vague when asked about work. But when the discussion came to his sexual exploits; boy, could he talk. Gerritsen had a toddler and a pregnant wife at home, but his alibi was a 22-year-old socialite named Ariana. Since the apartment was occupied by other parties, Gerritsen and Ariana did not head over to Gils. Instead, they went to a club, The Gilded Lily.

According to both Alexander and Wilde, Gerritson got into a heated exchange with Gil Rowe at this "Gatsby Party" a few days before the murder. Gerritson was guarded about the argument, presumably because it was about work and not snatch. But Crocetti and Cole finally got it out of him that Gil, being the client-facing coordinator, teed up a lot of sales Gerritson's way. The argument was over sales commissions numbering in the thousands. "Did he end up getting those commissions?" Asked Cole.

Gerritson looked at Cole and Crocetti like they were a couple of dumb rubes, "No. He got a title bump."

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They ended up speaking with twelve different men, each had their own set of keys to Gil's apartment. Twelve men, all with access to the crime scene, all providing Gil with an opportunity to blackmail. And all of them, to a man, stiffed him when it came time to pay up. His reward was a shitty office sandwiched between the men's room and a printer overlooking a hairy man selling hotdogs.

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Alexander's wife sent over the guest list along with an invite to their Fourth of July party. Very sweet of her.

The list of the people who attended this Gatsby Party were people of the elite circles in the city, found on the pages of the Morton City Business Journal in the 40 under 40 lists and on the "about town" column in the Morton City Gazette. On top of the social and political elite, ten of the twelve adulterers from Tatum and Miller were also guests. As were some mobsters who, let's face it, had a few murders under their belts.

They checked Alexander's history. A very quick phone call to the Princeton University bursar's office told them he lied at least once on his resume, he never attended a single class. Further down his resume, they found out he had lied about every other job on there. The first job, at Putnam Lowe, where he said he was a Creative Director, he was a mail clerk. The more they dug the less they found about the guy, they couldn't find birth certificates, anything. He just seemed to appear one day in 2012 and bullshit his way into a job at Tatum and Miller in 2014.

They took their findings to Detective

Lieutenant O'Brien, figuring they had enough to hold this guy. Or at least bring him in for questioning.

"He didn't exist until 2012? Who is this guy?"

"I think we need to take him in and find out. Maybe Rowe called this guy Gatsby because he had a made-up past, all smoke and mirrors. Not because he threw crazy parties. He's also got some known organized crime members on that guest list." Crocetti was feeling pretty confident this was why a bookworm like Gil called him Jay Gatsby.

"What does that have to do with anything?" Asked O'Brien.

"Gatsby was friends with gangsters in that book. The guy based on Meyer Lansky."

"Whatever that means. You think Gil was gonna blackmail him?" Asked O'Brien, he didn't care about book reports, he cared that the Police Commissioner and every other elected official in the city was on this list.

"I don't know, but it's the best lead we've got."

"Go to the party, but handle this with kid gloves gentleman. If the Police Commissioner and the Mayor went to this last party, I don't want to catch heat over making a scene."

The Party

Peter Alexander's palatial home in Highland Shores looked like a scene out of Downton Abbey. The lawn looked manicured by hand with a T-square and a level. It was located on a "safe harbor" where millionaire's yachts go to escape the massive hurricanes and nor-easters that batter the nearby coastline. The windows had American Flag bunting like Ebbet's Field. The few kids who were there were running in the front yard with sparklers as nannies looked on, not a parent in sight. They were all inside getting tanked in honor of the red, white, and blue.

For Crocetti and Cole, two blue collar boys who grew up taking the train to the nearest beach, the house looked like Versailles. Cole was surprised to hear contemporary music blasting from inside the house, walking up the driveway with Teslas, Maserati, and Rolls Royce's he expected some Mozart or Bach, not a local band aptly named, "The Rich and Powerful."

Crocetti spotted the Mayor, the D.A., and the city's Police Commissioner all huddled together, drinks in hand, screaming into each other's ears over the blaring of T.R.a.P.'s song, *Wolfskin Suit*.

Just beyond them was Big Vinnie Cadillac and his right-hand man, Jimmy "The Grim Reaper" Grimaldi. With names like that, it goes without saying they didn't work for The D.A. Big Vinnie had his finger in every illegal pie in the city, and some legal ones too. Cole spotted them first and nodded in their direction, "Gang's all here."

"You think ISIS is over by the ice sculpture talking to someone in Congress?"

They went to check it out. Nobody from ISIS was at the ice sculpture, but the host, Peter Alexander was. When Crocetti made eye contact it was Alexander who approached them. "If this is about the case I'd rather it be discussed somewhere private."

"It's your house, lead us the way." Alexander took them to what he called his "study," it was more like a library that had more books than a Barnes & Noble.

"You keep interesting company, Mr. Alexander. Did you know Vinnie Cadillac before you changed your name?"

"Excuse me?"

"You didn't think we wouldn't do a little background check on you, did you?"

Alexander's million dollar smile evaporated. A cold icy glare replaced it. "I paid a lot of money to stop people from doing background checks on me. What do you know?"

"Just that on paper, you were either born in 2012 or you appeared out of thin air."

His icy glare relaxed. "I think I'd like to talk to you with a lawyer present."

"Would the D.A. do?"

"I don't think you want to bring him into this, it's an election year and he wouldn't want to... 'rock the boat' if it were."

He was right, they couldn't just drag him out in handcuffs. It's a sad fact that if you know important people you get the red carpet treatment. Crocetti hated that. If this guy was a nobody selling some minor drugs they would have cuffed him first and then started talking to him. But Alexander had every single important person in the city, from the respected James Beard award-winning chef to the top organized crime

boss to the mayor listening to loud rock music in his ballroom.

"Tomorrow morning, come on down to the Third Precinct with your lawyer, we'll talk it out while you nurse your hangover."

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That night, after Crocetti and Cole finished up at the Third Precinct getting their ducks in a row for the next day's interrogation, they got a call to a crime scene — the same crime scene — Gil Rowe's apartment.

The Second Dead Guy

This place was turning into weigh station for dead bodies and lost souls. They left the precinct and headed to the west side of town, where it was on the verge of gentrification and another body was waiting for them. The body of Peter Alexander.

"Well, that fucks that line of inquiry." Was all Cole could say when they were staring at the body of the enigma that was Peter Alexander. Crocetti wanted to yell at him, tell him to get up, he was fucking up their case.

This time it was not a single gunshot wound but a frenzied and ferocious amount of stab wounds. Peter Alexander looked like Julius Caesar after meeting the Senators of Rome. But this wasn't the death of a tyrant, as far as Crocetti could discern.

"Whoever did this was pissed off, right handed, and left this apartment with a significant amount of blood on their clothes." Said the Medical Examiner, Dr. Larson. "It looks like he was face to face with his attacker, it seems very personal."

If it weren't for the fact that it was the same exact crime scene as before and Alexander was the number one suspect in the Rowe murder, they would have considered this a totally separate case. One was a single gunshot to the head, seemingly right when Rowe got home, he hadn't even turned the light on. This time, it was up close and personal. A frenzy of brutal stab wounds, many after the guy was dead.

They made sure Dr. Larson expedited the fingerprints on Peter Alexander, to see who he really was. When they were done at the crime scene they went to The Neutral Corner, a bar

owned by a trainer and filled with ex-boxers, like Crocetti. You never had to worry about bar fights at The Neutral Corner, a classic example of mutually assured destruction.

Over beers, they tried to string together how Big Vinnie Caddillac might be involved in this. Or God forbid, the Mayor.

It was neither, but they didn't know that until Alexander's real identity came back to them.

The Past

Peter Alexander's real name was Thomas Gibbs. When he was seventeen years old, Thomas Gibbs of Glastonbury Connecticut was arrested for drunk driving and involuntary manslaughter. His girlfriend was ejected from the passenger seat and died at the scene. He did eight years for involuntary vehicular manslaughter and got out of Mapleton Correctional in 2012.

Glastonbury, named after the Glastonbury in England is the home of 154 Colonial Era houses, the birthplace of Gideon Welles — Lincoln's Secretary of Navy, and Gil Rowe — former Senior Coordinating manager of Tatum & Miller.

Crocetti and Cole poured over the files on Tom Gibbs. He was a poor kid, he didn't come from the wealth Connecticut was known for, but he was a hell of an athlete and signed on to play baseball at Princeton University until he was arrested for vehicular manslaughter.

It didn't take long to connect the dots. Crocetti and Cole headed towards The Edison Hotel where Greg Willard was still in town. Willard wasn't just another son of Glastonbury, he was the brother of the dead girl — Gibb's old girlfriend — Leah Willard.

The Arrest

They flashed their badge at the hotel concierge who gave them Willard's room keys and requested they keep it quiet. Willard was in the hallway when they got off the elevator, he didn't get the message.

He was about fifty yards down the hall, on the far end. The elevator dinged when they



got out, Willard looked in their direction and then immediately turned his back on them, like a teenager trying to play hard to get with their crush.

Crocetti and Cole walked slowly in his direction, hands on their guns but when Willard turned around with his gun leveled he was able to fire off two shots before they could get their guns out of their holsters.

The first shot hit a wall sconce directly behind them, the light erupting in glass and sparks. The second shot hit Cole in the chest just as the light was going dim in the hallway.

"FUCK!" Crocetti looked at his partner holding his bleeding chest, then looked down the hall and saw the door to the stairs closing, an alarm buzzing from the fire exit being opened.

Cole already had his radio out, "Officer down, we need an ambo at the Edison Hotel, 14th floor. Officer in pursuit of suspect on foot. We need backup." With that last sentence, Crocetti gave Cole a nod and took off toward the stairway. The two uniform escorts in the lobby would be up in seconds, Cole was fine.



Crocetti blasted through the door, if he went in cautiously he would have been shot in the head. Instead, he went flying through and Willard's round hit a "Floor 14" sign behind Crocetti's head. Crocetti crouched and fired in response, hitting Willard on the shoulder.

Willard turned and ran through the "Floor 12" door. He ran down the hall, listing to his right like a shopping cart with a bum wheel. His left hand was up at the bullet wound in the shoulder, his right hand still holding his gun. Crocetti knew if Willard tried to draw he wouldn't be able to lift that arm and fire a good shot, but he also didn't want to take that chance.

Willard turned and took a wild pot shot at the carpeted floor behind him, meant for Crocetti but closer to a USA Today outside someone's room. All the shot managed to do was scare the shit out of the hotel's guests on the twelfth floor, and mess with Willard's equilibrium. He took a step, dragged his left foot, and then toe dragged his right resulting in him landing face-first onto the carpet.

Crocetti landed on top of Willard, punching him in the shoulder like a defensive back trying to strip the ball mid-tackle. It worked, Willard fumbled his gun and momentarily passed out from the pain in his shoulder. When he got out of his daze he was wearing silver bracelets that said "Crocetti" on them.



Howard Chandler Christy's *Scene at the Signing of the Constitution of the United States (1940)*

Here at American Pulps, we don't venture into politics all that much. We figure we're just two assholes who write pulp fiction, what are we going to bring to the table that hasn't already been said. But it feels that in America (perhaps around the world too, we don't know), the one thing we can all agree on is that everything is terrible.

It's times like this that I wonder what the people before us would think of today's America. People like our Founding Fathers, the framers of the Constitution, who so many elected officials act like they know what these men had in mind when drafting the Constitution 235 years ago in 1787. To us, these geniuses in Congress and the Supreme court talking about what the Founding Fathers would have thought about in modern day law is the equivalent of medieval theologians arguing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. At the end of the day, who gives a shit?

So we thought, fuck it, let's build a time machine. If that "wild-eyed scientist" Doc Brown could do it, why not us. The trick with this time machine is, that it only plucks people from the past. It doesn't allow us to go back in time and say, alter world events. Too bad. Anyway, we plucked a few guys you may have heard of, and decided to talk to them about the sorry state of affairs that is, the world today. Enjoy:

INTERVIEWER: Is it OK if I record this?

ADAMS: *Oh-kay?*

JEFFERSON: What is that object in thy hand?

FRANKLIN: How is there so much illumination?

INTERVIEWER: "OK" means, alright. As in, will you be alright with me recording this conversation. The object in my hand is the recorder, it records this conversation. The illumination is from light bulbs, they are powered by electricity, I think you know something about that Mr. Franklin [*chuckles*].

JEFFERSON: Electric candles?

FRANKLIN: Tis so bright.

ADAMS: *Re-cord-ing* device?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Here, watch.

I turned off the recording app on the phone (I didn't dare show them TikTok or any other apps) and played back a snippet of the conversation. They freaked out. Thomas Jefferson shit himself. I'm not exaggerating, we had to air out the room.

Ben Franklin and John Adams got drunk while we looked for new pants for Jefferson. Adams is a little man and a bit of a lightweight. Ben's old and well, also a bit of a lightweight.

INTERVIEWER: Alright we are starting over. How is everyone doing?

ADAMS: Marvelous [slurring].

FRANKLIN: [Inaudible chuckle]

JEFFERSON: These pantaloons are very loose. I pray, why are pantaloons loose in the future?

INTERVIEWER: The future! Let's talk about the future. There has been a lot of talk lately about what you all — the Founding Fathers — had intended when you wrote the constitution.

JEFFERSON: I wasn't there for that.

INTERVIEWER: You weren't?

ADAMS: He was conveniently absent.

JEFFERSON: You weren't there either.

ADAMS: I was in England trying to tidy up the mess you were making in France.

FRANKLIN: Gentlemen, please. I pray we not waste future man's time. Truth be told, many of the delegates were in and out and few were there the whole time. Many who did help frame this constitution were so upset with how it turned out they didn't even sign it. You should really be interviewing James Madison and Alexander Hamilton if you wish to talk about the Constitution.

This is when Franklin fiddles with my time machine and figures out how to get both Madison and Hamilton into the room. For a decrepit old man who freaked out about the light bulb and doesn't know about dinosaurs, he's pretty sharp.

Hamilton and Madison appear.

HAMILTON: Mine eyes! 'Tis so bright!

FRANKLIN: You get used to it.

I get a call on my cell phone/recording device. Madison pisses himself upon hearing the ringtone (It's just a generic ringtone. You know, the one that goes, duh-duh-duh duh duh dunuh" — it's not scary I don't know what the big deal was). I start to wonder if all of the Colonial Virginians can't control their own bowels. It was my fault, I should have kept it on silent. We get Madison pants, the others get drunk. I find out Adams had a flask the whole time, I confiscate the flask. Its contents are "rum," and it smells like jet fuel.

After a long delay, we are back up.

INTERVIEWER: As I was saying, many congresspeople today cite you and what you intended when you wrote the Constitution as a reason to dictate law.

HAMILTON: How dare you people put words in my mouth!

MADISON: That's stupid.

JEFFERSON: I should have fought harder to have the constitution re-evaluated and potentially ripped up every 19 years.

ADAMS: We couldn't agree on what to eat when we went to a tavern. Do you really think that we all agreed upon the same thing when we wrote this constitution? As if we were one mind?

Unanimous laughter... if they only knew.

INTERVIEWER: So when congresspeople—

JEFFERSON: Why do you keep saying that? Congresspeople. It's Congressmen.

INTERVIEWER: Because there are women in congress now.

MADISON: Women can vote?!?

ADAMS: Finally a little change. Aside from the "recooter device," your funny little outfit, and those electric lightbulbs — it sounds like Americans didn't change anything we had written 200 years ago.

Laughter. Again. Adams is a real cut-up.

INTERVIEWER: We've made some changes. There's no slavery anymore for instance—

ADAMS: Thank the Lord.

MADISON: Ugh.

INTERVIEWER: But by and large it's untouched with only 27 amendments.

HAMILTON: Twenty-seven?!?

INTERVIEWER: Well, really 26. One of them was repealed.

MADISON: We gave you 12 during my lifetime! That's slightly less than half!

HAMILTON: What the hell have your elected officials been doing with their time?

INTERVIEWER: Inciting their base so they could raise money for the next election is basically all that they do.

JEFFERSON: The earth belongs to the living generation! ² A document like this can't stand the test of time! There needs to be changes. How can you create a more perfect union without fixing the mistakes we made and adapting to the current times?

INTERVIEWER: Valid point. One thing that's in the news right now, um, you left abortion out of the constitution—

MADISON: We left a lot out! You were supposed to update it!

JEFFERSON: That's what I'm saying!

FRANKLIN: I wrote a book about how to do at-home abortions. ³ What's wrong with abortions?

INTERVIEWER: Well, it's more about religion than anything.

JEFFERSON: Religion!? But how? We had set up this government to have a "wall of separation" between church and state! ⁴

Jefferson gets up and walks to another room to "get some air." He comes back in with a vacuum in his hand (I don't know how he found it). He asks what is it and I tell them all about vacuums, Benjamin Franklin is very impressed with the ingenuity.

INTERVIEWER: OK, back to the Consitution.

HAMILTON: What's there to go over? You haven't changed the thing in 235 years.

MADISON: Truth is. Not a single delegate was happy with the final outcome of the Constitution. We all had things we disliked that were in it, and liked that were not. But we were a nation on verge of collapse and needed to compromise. Quakers in Pennsylvania wanted to abolish the slave trade. This caused representatives from Georgia and South Carolina to threaten to leave the convention. ⁵

HAMILTON: I wanted a much stronger central government.

JEFFERSON: Can't we talk about something more fun? Tell me about France? Did it surpass England as the most powerful country in the land?

John Adams, seething the whole time, stands up and points at me like it's my fault Congress can't agree on anything.

ADAMS: What the hell have your Congressmen been doing with themselves?

FRANKLIN: Congresspeople

ADAMS: Yes, sorry, Congresspeople. What have they been doing this whole time?

INTERVIEWER: Mostly bickering.

JEFFERSON: Sounds like us. I knew party politics would ruin the day.

ADAMS: It's your fault there are party politics.

MADISON: That was inevitable.

ADAMS: Oh, yeah, Tom can't fight on his own. He needs his little lapdog to fight for him.

MADISON: You're not so tall yourself, and a good deal more round!

FRANKLIN: Gentlemen, gentlemen. Let's finish this interview so the young man can introduce us to those cheeseburgers he was talking about.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, it is about lunchtime. Last question. So, when someone says, "this is what the founding fathers wanted" is it safe to say you all disagreed on everything, much like our politicians today, and never had one common thought.

HAMILTON: Yup.

ADAMS: Always.

JEFFERSON: Of course not!

FRANKLIN: Isn't it obvious?

MADISON: Not always *[a step behind Jefferson's answer]*.

FRANKLIN: We all disagreed on everything, Alex-uh writing all the Federalist—

My Amazon Alexa chimed in and started playing my "writing playlist" on Spotify. Surprisingly nobody evacuated their bowels this time. We have a long discussion about Jazz music which I will not transcribe on here. Thomas Jefferson likes it, particularly Miles Davis' version of "My Funny Valentine" while Ben Franklin finds Thelonious Monk "unnerving."

ADAMS: Enough of this boring stuff about the Constitution, let's discuss this Alexa voice box.

JEFFERSON: We were already done talking about the Consitution, John...

We spent the rest of the day catching them up on the last 235 some-odd years. The few things they could all agree on were; that burgers taste good, IPAs are too bitter, life moved very fast, we all talk funny, and Twitter is a waste of time.

They also found it hilarious listening to clips of today's politicians arguing about what the Founding Fathers wanted. To quote Thomas Jefferson, "as if it matters." After some clips on YouTube were played featuring today's Congress, Adams quipped, "Dumb as stumps, some things never change." Hamilton then said, again, "Stop putting words in my mouth." Which I will do now.

FOOTNOTES

1. <https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/thomas-jefferson-james-madison>
2. He said this word-for-word, here - <https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/thomas-jefferson-james-madison>
3. <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/18/1099542962/abortion-ben-franklin-roe-wade-supreme-court-leak>
4. <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/godinamerica/people/thomas-jefferson.html>
5. Ellis, Joseph J. *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*. New York: Vintage Books (2000)

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