



OCTOBER 2022
ISSUE NO.4

**HAUNTED HITMEN:
A GANGSTER GHOST STORY**

MISS MAYHEM: MIRTA

**I RAN FROM ASSASSINS
AFTER BATHING IN LSD!**



SPOOKY SEASON

It's mid-October and spooky season is well underway. To celebrate, this issue of American Pulps is our twist on the Horror Pulp genre.

We've got a story about an Uber Driver with a whole lot of ambition. He picks up the wrong fare and ends up taking a shitload of LSD. While running around Las Vegas (not the best place to be inadvertently tripping balls) he has a bit of a mental breakdown. There's also a story that answers the age old question, "what if the Pine Barrens episode of The Soprano's was a ghost story?" In this story from P.A. O'Neil, two gangsters get a visit from an old friend and make new ones along the way, which is nice.

We're also featuring the art of Mirta "Rigormirtis" Maria - our very first Miss Mayhem and featured artist. She was kind enough to take some pictures featuring our first novel, Under the Knife as well as share some of her artwork and Halloween wisdom with us.

This is a fun one, we hope you enjoy it.

Cheers,

Matt and John
October 2022

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THE BELLAGIO ROACHES

By: Joachim Forman



Tevon Jackson Junior was a young black man who knew the deck was stacked against him. He vowed to be smarter and more focused than a world that kept changing the rules on him. What he couldn't know was that he'd soon be running from cops and hired killers after accidentally bathing in LSD.

Tevon's father bounced back from every failure by saying, "Fortune is a fickle mistress. When she turns her back on you, that means she wants it doggy style." For Dad, every setback was a chance to change one's perspective.

Recently, Tevon was afraid his dad had been full of shit.

Unlike the freewheeling and dearly departed Tevon Sr., the younger Jackson was a nutrition-obsessed teetotaler who had nothing to show for his discipline but a string of failed businesses and a serious lack of fun stories.

His most recent venture had been a reverse osmosis company in Las Vegas. He dreamt of eliminating the need for bottled water. Within a year, he was out of business and bankrupt. Soon after, the debt collectors neatly

packed up his testicles and filed them away.

Tevon's girlfriend, Becky, was fond of publicly reminding him that he couldn't sell water in the desert. Although this comment was a bit unfair coming from an Applebee's waitress who was probably fucking her boss, Tevon kept his mouth shut. After all, they were living off of her tips. She made sure he never forgot that little factoid either.

When Tevon was a child, he would watch a cartoon about two mice planning and failing to take over the world. That cartoon became less funny the closer he crept toward his self-imposed deadline for being the next Elon Musk. That deadline was age thirty. Soon he would be officially too old to be a wunderkind, too old for the "Forbes 30 Under 30" lists where he belonged. Life sucked.

Just to survive, Tevon started another "business" driving an Uber car during the Vegas night shift. This involved shuttling drunk people around while they argued in the back seat or snuck clumsy sexual favors with each other. The strip was annoying, congested, and full of people that pronounced his name "Tay-Von" or "Tuh-Von" when it was actually pronounced "Tevon"...like "Kevin" with a "T."

He couldn't resist telling each of his passengers, "Driving Uber isn't really what I do. I'm an entrepreneur."

When he told his life story to one fare, a degenerate gambler who just lost his mortgage at The Luxor, the guy handed him a twenty and told him, "Thanks for making me feel better about myself, Tay-Von."

More than the drunks and the broke gamblers, Tevon dreaded the calls that would take him out into the Vegas suburbs. Those were prime opportunities for cops to stop him for "driving while black."

He drove marathon sessions thanks to Uber's diabolical "dollar goal" feature. By the time he was even close to his precious target, he had driven four hours longer than he had planned. Working under such an ingenious and ruthless system made him feel very small indeed.

It was his fourth fare after what should have been his ending point that he picked up Maron, the human embodiment of white privilege in patchouli oil. Maron wasn't the first "customer" who was also a drug dealer. He'd driven drug dealers into the suburbs almost as often as he had driven hookers to The Venetian. However, Maron

was the first drug dealing customer to get shot trying to rip off a supplier. Of course, Maron didn't have the decency to die in the supplier's house. He jumped back into Tevon's car and wheezed out "Drive man!"

Tevon sped off while two gunmen followed in an SUV. Maron coughed up blood and urged him to "Hit the strip! They won't shoot us there!" Tevon abided, but the strip kept them about as safe as it did Tupac. As bullets pummeled his car, Tevon panicked. His Camry tumbled off the strip and splashed right into the Bellagio's fountain.

After a brief blackout, Tevon found himself upside down and completely underwater. The fountain's lights flashed and the jets pulsated in time with some Andrea Bocelli ditty. Maron was dead. The hippy's bag was open and several hundred sheets of LSD danced in the water that filled the car.

Tevon recoiled at the sight of giant insect legs clawing his windshield. The javelin-sized appendages multiplied and hammered against the car. The glass spiderwebbed and the car's steel dented under the ferocious attack. Tevon didn't know how many hits of acid those floating sheets equalled altogether, but unless the Bellagio kept a policy of placing eight foot long cockroaches in their fountain, the LSD had already started to kick in.

Tevon grabbed the hippy's revolver and a money belt filled with two hundred grand. Two hundred grand! A fresh start! A new venture! He shot his way through the Camry windshield (which, according to his current perception, was melting anyway) and braved the roaches. After two gulps of air, Tevon swam under the water to the edge of the fountain. The fountain's jets and strobe lights camouflaged him from the cops and paramedics on the scene.

Being totally inexperienced with drugs, Tevon was surprised to discover that he could now taste colors and weave through the music's vibrations like they were stalks of bamboo. The pistol had transformed into an angry, shining rodent, and he dropped it into the water out of instinct.

He had read about Silicon Valley CEO's taking "micro-doses" of LSD to liberate their thinking. This, however, was one hell of a mega dose, and Dr. Gonzo himself would've prescribed Thorazine to ride it out.

Tevon sprinted off the strip and into the increasing anonymity of the side streets. His

wet shoes slapped against the pavement and carried him more than a mile away from the casinos.

Now the streets were dark and the homes looked like rows of standoffish faces. Over his shoulder, Tevon sensed the scratching whisper of cockroach wings and the "click click click" of their mandibles. The Bellagio Roaches were coming for him. He ran, staying one step ahead of the giant papery bodies. Maintaining speed was difficult. His legs felt like they were made of wooden blocks. The sensation crept further up his body like he was a reverse Pinocchio changing into a wooden puppet. Fear alone kept him moving.

"Of course they aren't real" He thought, "But what will they do to me if they catch me?" He remembered when he was child and Chucky Kiefner came to school with roach bites. Social services investigated Chucky's parents. There is nothing more humiliating than a roach bite, and these roaches were big enough to crack walnuts with theirs. By the time Tevon got to his apartment (Becky's apartment, really) the roaches were groping at his back. Their bristled feet felt like toilet brushes.

Tevon got inside the apartment and slammed the door, breaking off one of the roach's antennae in the process. Roaches scraped and scratched against the outside window. Tevon cowered in the kitchen and thought "Why am I hiding in here? The kitchen is the best room in the house for a roach!" Several sets of antennae were already poking through the drain in the sink.

Tevon wept. He imagined those roach jaws crunching his bones. Then a gunshot erupted from the bedroom.

The roaches scattered. A Ferret-Featured Man stepped out of Tevon's bedroom holding a gun. The Ferret aimed again. Tevon was no longer frozen. He was now fueled with the confidence that both nothing and everything was real at the same time. He suddenly had nothing to lose.

Tevon grabbed the George Foreman Grill off of his kitchen counter (Becky had always hated that thing) and hurled it at the Ferret's face. The Ferret's nose crumpled like a dixie cup.

Tevon Tackled the Ferret, forcing the gun out of his hand. The Ferret pushed Tevon up against the stove. In a wild grab for any advantage, the Ferret turned on the burner and set Tevon's shirt on fire. The surge of pain from Tevon's cooking skin made him quite inventive. He grabbed the chef's

knife from the cutlery block and stabbed the Ferret repeatedly in the neck. The Ferret backed up, his eyes were wide. Tevon's arm was a blur as he kept stabbing. The Ferret fell to the kitchen floor, butchered. A calm washed over Tevon. People needed his help, they just didn't know it yet.

Tevon rode his bicycle to Becky's Applebee's without changing his clothes. Instead of propelling his bike to Applebee's, Tevon felt his bicycle was actually the engine of a powerful conveyor belt that was pulling his destination towards him. He rode for miles with the sensation of staying completely stationary.

One can imagine Becky's surprise when her blood-soaked boyfriend stormed into the restaurant with dime-sized pupils and grinding teeth. Tevon pushed his way through the dinner rush line and hollered, "Get your shit and let's go! I'll explain in the car!"

Tevon expected disdain from Becky. He expected everyone in the restaurant to sneer at him like he was some common lunatic off the street. What he did not expect were the screams of horror that his presence evoked. Tevon didn't quite remember that he looked like a band-aid that had lost a long battle with a skinned knee.

Tevon saw Chip (incidentally the guy he suspected Becky of sleeping with, but he had no time to worry about that now) approach him with his hands out on the universal sign for "Easy buddy."

Tevon noticed little worms wriggling out of Chip's skin. It was like the man wasn't really in charge of himself and the worms were inside of him making the decisions. Tevon saw that the worms were infesting all of the beers and the plates of riblets and the apple cobblers on the customer's tables. The customers themselves were teeming with worms.

Becky was worm free and stood in an imaginary spotlight. Tevon noticed his bloody clothes and sprinted to the bathroom to wash off. He scrubbed and scrubbed. Then, he heard a rustling in the stalls. He gasped in horror when he saw naked roach legs under the doors with pants around their giant roach ankles. He looked up and saw roaches were waiting on the ceiling.

Tevon heard the police coming for him from inside the restaurant. The cops didn't have pig faces. That would have been far too pedestrian a joke for acid's sense of humor. But one cop did have the face of a water buffalo, and that was fuckin'

terrifying. The next move appeared to Tevon as a giant neon sign..."This way, sir!"

He hit the hand dryer, hoping that the noise would startle the roaches. It failed miserably, so he wrapped his hand in his jacket, smashed the glass of the bathroom window and squeezed out into the alley.

The roaches oozed out of the window after him and flew above the pursuing police like their wretched air force.

Tevon sprinted, trying to escape the cops, the roaches, and the hired killers that were after him. He made it to the entrance of the famous Las Vegas storm drainage tunnels. Conventional wisdom dictated that these tunnels housed the poorest and the most depraved of the Vegas population. But, now that he had seen the dangers that lurk above, Tevon figured these tunnels probably housed the most intelligent. Tevon looked into the vacuous hole and heard the scurrying and sucking breaths of what appeared to be eyeless mole people living beneath. God dammit! Can anything be simple around here?

A gunshot rippled through the night air. Tevon, startled, turned to see two ferret-faced men approaching. The short ferret was raving about how Tevon had killed his brother. Short ferret squeezed off another two shots before the police rounded the corner with their sirens. The cops exited their car and opened fire on the ferret men.

The roaches were swooping down like prehistoric vultures as Tevon heard the sucking breathing of the mole people get louder and more expectant. The roaches dive bombed, but they were caught in the crossfire and had to turn their fury on the cops and killers.

Tevon saw his chance to get to safety. He slid down into the tunnels. As he splashed into the damp caverns, nobody bothered him. The tunnels were quiet, but they pulsated with an organic life. Tevon kept a brisk pace as he ventured further into the depths of Sin City.

Now, this is the good news Tevon couldn't comprehend at that moment: Sure, there were man-eating roaches and hitmen after him, and now he was faced with mole people who were salivating over their next meal. But, if he kept it together for another 48 hours, the acid would wear off and he'd be two hundred thousand dollars richer.

Alas, Tevon did not have the benefit of that macro view. No, his next thought actually was,

"What if these mole people are in fact the Roaches' primary food source? What if they milk these people like ants do aphids, and I have been corralled down here to become one of them?!"

An experienced drug user would probably say he was peaking, but with this much chemical consciousness coursing through his veins, all bets were off.

Tevon's heart pounded as he weaved through the catacomb-like tunnels. Syringes and discarded vials crunched beneath his feet. He spotted a butane lighter. He lit it in a vain attempt to get his bearings. The small flame only seemed to reduce visibility by obscuring the moonlight coming through the storm drains. So far, there was no sign of life. Thank God for small favors.

Just then, Tevon felt an itching in his mid-section...right where the money belt had been attached. Tevon put the lighter's flame to the belt and saw the bills were crawling with the same worms that appeared to be controlling those jerkoffs at Applebee's.

He peeled the money belt off. It was positively alive with wriggling, razor-toothed critters. He tried to chase them away with the lighter's flame, but they only burrowed deeper into the stacks of bills.

Tevon was in a full panic now. He removed the money and burned every worm he could get to. He had to be careful not to let them burrow into his skin. If they got into his system, he would be under their control as well. He pocketed any worm-free currency.

He found several bills covered in a waxy film of worm eggs. *Jesus Christ, he had been carrying a fucking nest of these things!* Their red little eyes seemed to mock his efforts. *Well, he would show them!* He lit the egg-laced bills on fire, delighting in their screams. He was yelling out loud at them, "That's right motherfuckers! Find another home, 'cause I'll burn everything you got! Take that shit somewhere else, bitch!"

Tevon paused and looked up to find a sea of sunken eyes staring at him. He was surrounded by hungry, desperation-addled underground dwellers. He was kneeling in a puddle of piss mud and hundred dollar bills. He was caught in the lair of underground wolves and burning thousands of dollars in front of them. This was fucking bad. The lead wolf spoke, "Whattya you got there, boy?"

Despite the acrobatics his mind had been pulling, Tevon knew for a fact he wasn't hallucinating the faded Aryan Brotherhood tattoos on two of the men. Tevon's dad, who had spent more than a few nights in the clink throughout the years had told him to always be wary of white boys that had done long bids. Prison life is rigidly drawn along racial lines, and too many lifetime criminals have at least enough aryan sympathies to consider a black man expendable. Dad may have been over generalizing, but he taught Tevon how to spot the signs. These men had the signs, and Tevon was about to be their lunch.

Two of the white boys pulled knives. This was going to be a highlight of their wretched lives, and Tevon was going to end up dead in a sewer... food for the roaches no doubt.

The white boys advanced, and gunshots ripped through the darkness. Tevon could taste the sulfur-metallic sounds of the bullets exiting the barrel.

Several bodies hit the ground, bleeding. Every other living thing in that tunnel scattered. Tevon turned to see the ferret men aiming their pistols at him. Tevon raced through the darkness, his wide open pupils making the most of the moonlight. One bullet whizzed passed his ear and seemed to whisper "good luck" as it disappeared into the void.

Tevon glanced back in time to see the ferret men picking up the infected money. Soon the worms would be controlling their thoughts as well. He still had ten thousand shoved into his jeans pocket. It wasn't enough to start a new life, but as far as he could tell, there were no worms on those bills.

Tevon froze when he noticed the tunnel walls were alive with movement. They weren't doing that weird "melting" thing. He had gotten used to that optical illusion. This was a shimmering, papery movement. What he had previously believed to be darkness was now shifting. He thought the underground tunnels had grown so dark with lack of light that he was unable to see the concrete walls. But now, he realized to his horror that the darkness was actually caused by the densely packed bodies of the Bellagio Roaches. They were pressed together and neatly layered like individual scales on a skyscraper-sized serpent.

Tevon remembered how the roaches would

scatter from the stove of his childhood, and he had an idea almost too painful to comprehend. He folded about five thousand dollars into a makeshift torch and lit it. The roaches backed away from the flame, giving Tevon a chance to locate a manhole ladder in the distance. When the flames would die down, the roaches would advance, and Tevon had to add a few more bills to the torch. He was down to a thousand dollars as he climbed one-handed up towards the street. The dwindling flame kept the snapping roach mandibles a mere inches away.

Tevon pushed open the manhole cover and he was reborn in the Vegas night air. He slammed the manhole cover down, taking pleasure in crushing several antennae. There was no time to celebrate. A BMW was barreling towards him.

Tevon rolled out of the way and narrowly escaped with his life. The rush of adrenaline kick-started a flurry of calculations in his mind. He rapidly analyzed the odds of his being able to avoid that car, and concluded that divine predestination must have been saving him all night.

A brain chemist would say that Tevon's close call and serotonin overload was causing a state of euphoria. But, Tevon was in the middle of it, and he was convinced that God was protecting him specifically. Not only was the big guy looking out for him, but God was telling him to take advantage of that fact.

Tevon was carried magic-carpet like back to the Bellagio casino. Well, first, he bought a T-Shirt at a tourist shop that said "What happens here..." After all, he couldn't very well win a fortune while wearing a shirt covered with blood and scum.

He felt destiny pull him to a specific roulette table, and he felt the divine hand of lady luck illuminate the first bet he was to make. Numbers and odds beyond human comprehension were cycling through his brain with frightening clarity. He was positive that his harrowing night had unlocked some dormant genius ability. He would continue betting everything on the right numbers until he had made his initial two hundred thousand back...if not more. Tevon surrendered to the fact that he was merely a vessel for The Universe's divine plan, and the outcome had already been ordained.

The dealer spun the wheel...and Tevon lost everything in his first bet.



God probably got a really good laugh, but Tevon shrieked like wounded prey. He dropped to the floor and cursed The Universe like a one hundred sixty five pound toddler.

He was so wrapped up in being the butt of this cosmic joke, he didn't see the men grab him from behind. He was too distraught to understand what was happening when the authorities put him on a fifty one fifty hold. He frankly didn't understand anything until he regained consciousness in a bed at the psych ward.

Tevon experienced a small dollop of mercy when they injected him with an elephant's dose of sedative. Thanks to the medication, terror's icy grip loosened for the first time in twelve hours.

With his body and waking mind catatonic, Tevon and the LSD strolled hand and hand through his inner thoughts. For the first time in his adult life, Tevon was looking inward and confronting a very unsettling prospect. His life had been a quest for "specialness," and he was facing the undeniable

reality that he was merely part of a collective consciousness. His existence was no greater or smaller than a spec of a neuron in a society that was a mere imagination of its own self.

He had always secretly entertained the notion he was the reincarnation of great men like Marcus Aurelius and Shaka Zulu. But, as he finally applied his brilliant powers of deduction to himself, he had to accept a painful truth. Mathematically, he had most likely been a *cockroach* many times over. That was the only analytically sound conclusion. If reincarnation was a real thing, most people were cockroaches most of the time, and would continue to be cockroaches once they've had their current lives as systems analysts or homemakers or whatever. His mind swirled with the sheer amount of cockroaches he had been and would continue to be. His attempts at subverting that universal truth had been the source of all this suffering. Tevon's battered psyche felt the soothing balm of acceptance, and he finally slept. He woke up with a baseball mitt-sized hand covering his mouth. Another set of hands was pressing a sharpened toothbrush into his wrists. It was the ferret-faced men, and they were staging Tevon's suicide! He tried to scream, but the hand over his mouth seemed to drain the air from his lungs.

The shorter ferret man (the one who's brother Tevon had killed) was really having a hard time cutting the wrist.

"Goddammit you said this would work!" The fat ferret retorted, "It fuckin' will. I knew a guy in the joint who killed himself like that." The short ferret threw his hands up in exasperation and drew the knife back in a stabbing gesture. Tevon kicked his legs, knocking the short ferret back. Short ferret lunged at Tevon. His rage overtook him and he momentarily forgot that he was supposed to be staging a suicide. Fat ferret stopped shorty from stabbing Tevon, giving him a chance to squeeze out of the bed and out the door. Tevon screamed for help, but the hall was suspiciously quiet. Were the staff paid to look the other way? As the ferrets entered the hall, Tevon smashed the glass case that housed a fire extinguisher. He slammed the metal cylinder into the fat one's head and discharged the extinguisher into the short one's face before braining him as well.

9 The alarm blared through the building and

people were running into the hall. The short ferret pulled his pistol but his aim was off and he hit an exit sign down the hall. Plastic rained on an old man in a walker who had gotten up to take a piss. Tevon turned the corner, sprinted down the hallway, and came to a locked door. He could see the short ferret's shadow approach. Tevon spotted an opening labeled "Trash Chute" and dove in without thinking.

He pressed his arms and legs against the interior of the chute in a desperate attempt to shimmy down without injury. Fear of predators had forced him to hide behind the walls of a building and crawl through refuse. Perhaps he was a cockroach in this life already.

Tevon knew that he couldn't risk being spotted. So, he waited, perched inside the trash chute until the garbage truck came. That was no picnic, because discarded bags continued to pile up on top of him. Finally, in the early morning hours, he heard the most beautiful sound of his twenty nine years on this earth. He heard a garbage truck pulling into the loading dock.

Tevon slid into the dumpster, allowing hours of accumulated hospital garbage to fall on top of him. At least he hadn't jumped down the biohazard chute. The accumulated bags insulated him against the truck's compactor, and he survived without being crushed. Thank God for small favors.

The garbage truck dumped its load at a local landfill around five AM. Tevon pushed himself out of the muck, took a gleeful breath of rancid air, and walked toward the rising sun. Several cockroaches scurried beneath his bare feet. Everyone agreed to mind their own business.



BLOOD SCOUT

YOU'RE DEAD. SCOUT'S HONOR.

The first movie we ever pitched. We're still shocked nobody bought it

MISS MAYHEM

Mirta Maria

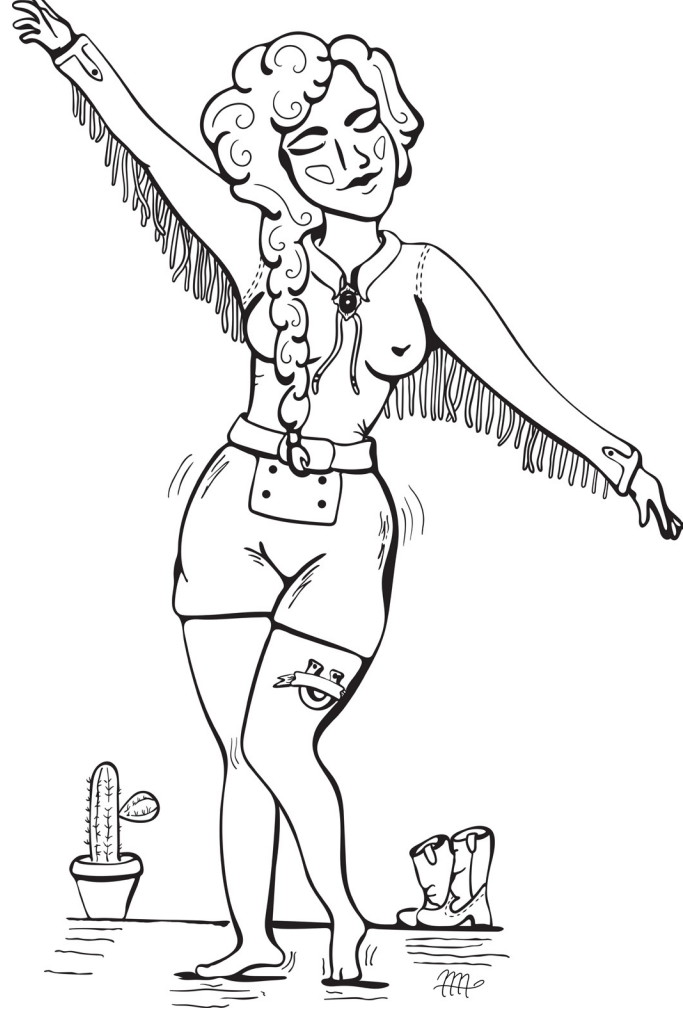


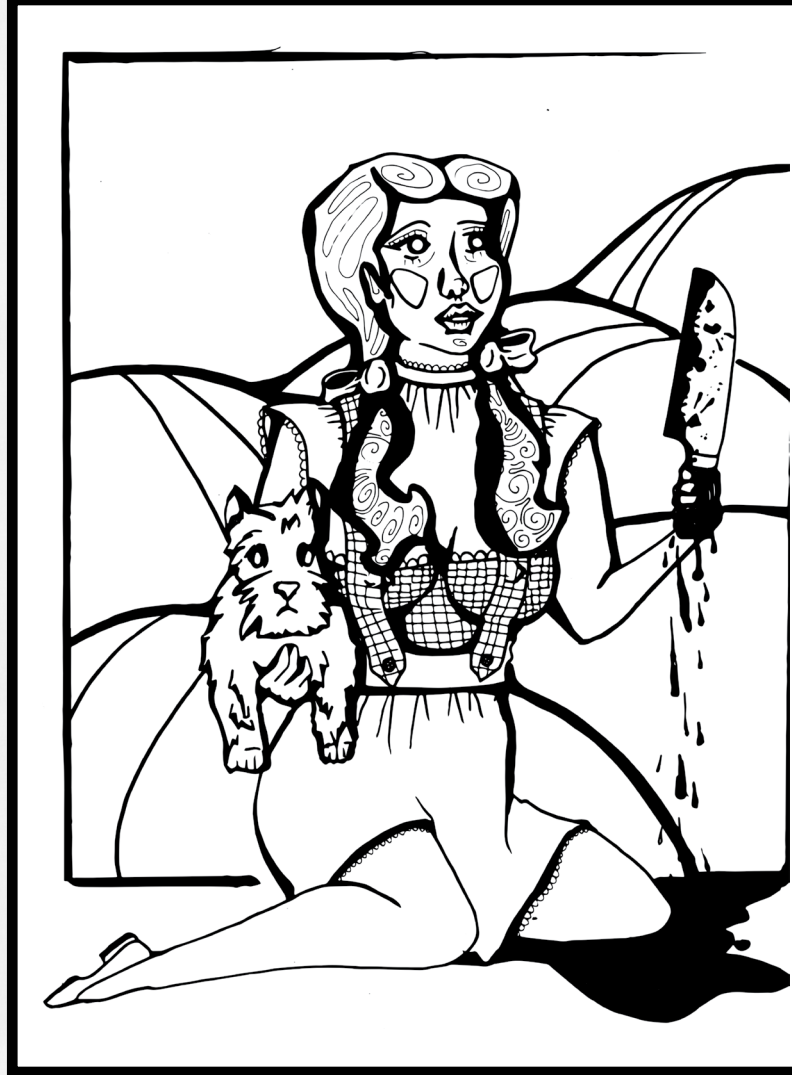
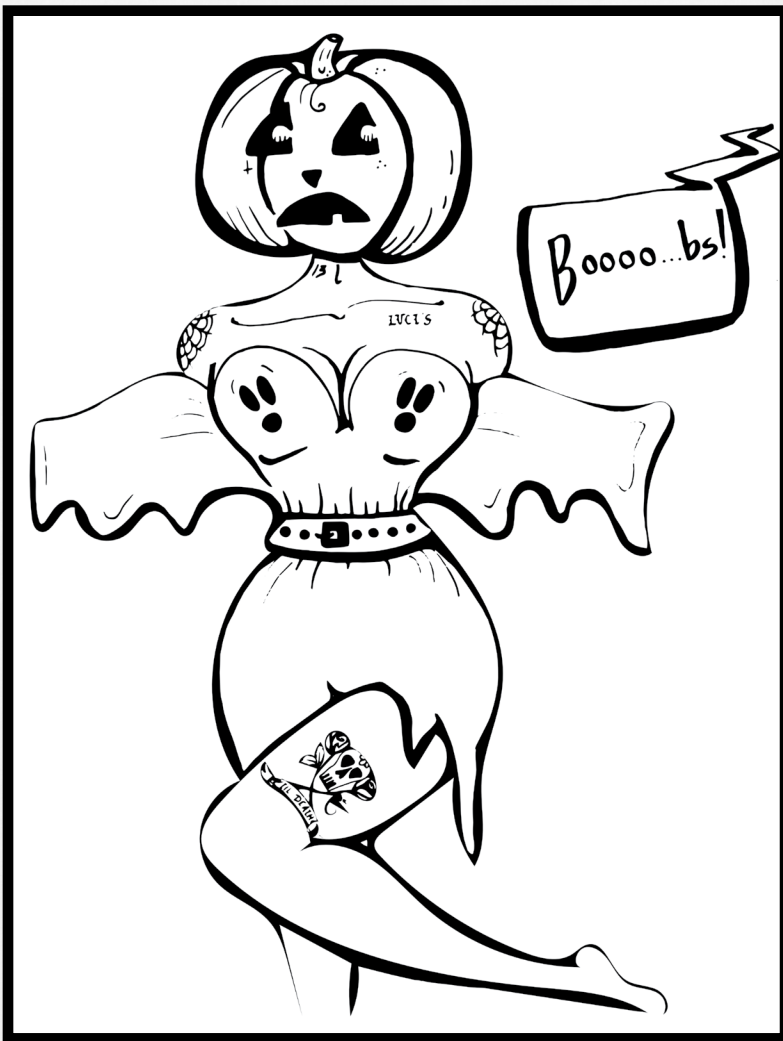
Mirta; artist, Floridian, and all around great person has been a friend of the pulps for about as long as we've been calling ourselves American Pulp. So, it was kind of a no-brainer to make her our first Miss Mayhem. And because she's our resident spooky girl, we figured the October issue made the most sense.

We asked if she would like to showcase her artwork in the magazine and she did one better, scheduled an Under the Knife themed photo-shoot.

Photos by: Laia Gore
Laiagorephotography.com
Instagram- [@laiagorephotography](https://www.instagram.com/laiagorephotography)

Artwork by: Mirta Maria
Instagram - [@postmirtam](https://www.instagram.com/postmirtam)





Q&A

Top 3 Halloween Movies:

Halloween movies are a year-round event in my home, as I'd hope they are for everyone, but there are a select few I save for the season.

"The Blair Witch Project" is an all-time favorite. When you think of witchy cult icons, your mind goes to the sex-bomb, the old hag, or the hideous monster. The absence of an actual "witch" in the footage leaves it to my brain to create the perfect evil, and, therefore, the perfect witch. Every time I watch it, I'm doe-eyed and desperate to piece together something I might've not noticed in years past.

"Sleepy Hollow" is my kind of romantic tale, so I usually save it for a cozy night closer to Halloween. I have a fixation, of sorts, with the Headless Horseman, and Burton's rendition nailed it... on the head, if you will.

"Night of The Living Dead" is a must and my favorite to leave on in the background on Halloween night, whether I'm sitting with the candy bowl or in the middle of a party. "They're coming for you, Barbara..."

Q&A (cont)

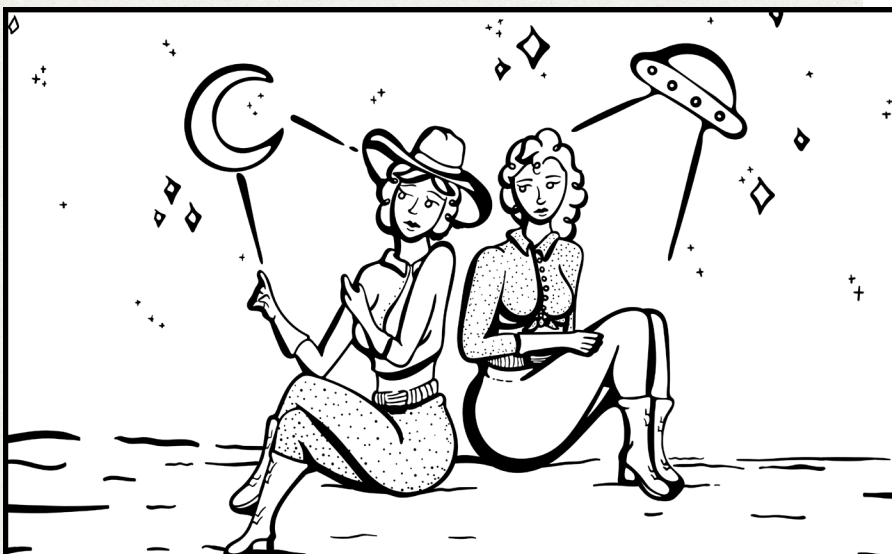
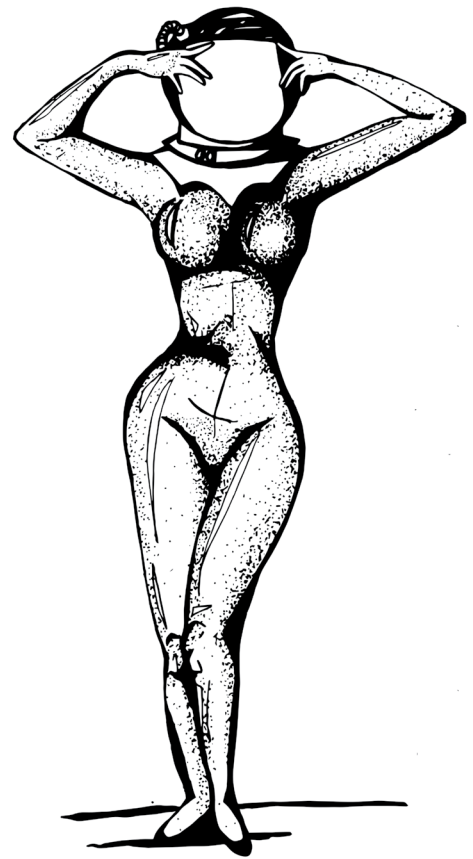
Book Recommendations:

"The Autumn People" Feldstein & Bradbury

Halloween's forgotten collection of tales.

When I worked in Tampa's Book Swap of Carrollwood (RIP), I was taking in hundreds of books every week. Coming across this little treasure was exactly what my young, bookstore-girl soul needed. From the Frazetta cover and the EC tales that led me down the rabbit-hole of horror comics, to Bradbury doing what he always does to my heartstrings, I'd say this is one of the books whose spine I love to see worn. Despite the complications in the printing itself, it's a treasure worth finding and would do well in any young (or seasoned) horror-lover's hands.

Editors note: ["The October Country" by Ray Bradbury](#) is also a great read this time of year. It's a collection of short stories



[Here's a link](#) to the full article on our website with more artwork and Under the Knife photos of Mirta



DEAD GANGSTERS

BY: P.A. O'NEIL

“Did you have to shoot him in the basement?” The words hissed out of Paulie “The Count” Iannucci’s large mouth like a disappointed father. They called him “The Count,” because he had a bit of a widow’s peak and shellacked his hair back like Christian Bale in *American Psycho*. He also had a massive mouth so, when he smiled he very much resembled The Count on *Sesame Street*.

Paulie looked down at the body of their former associate, Jimmy “Yo-Yo” Lombardo. They called him Yo-Yo because he was dumb as a stump, which is part of the reason their boss wanted him to take early retirement.

“Boss man wanted him gone quick. I didn’t wanna take no chances,” said Mikey Palermo, who incredibly never had a nickname in his life, and although dumb, knew not to call Paulie “The Count” to his face.

Paulie thought Mikey was a bit of a Yo-Yo himself. He looked at Mikey, mouth breathing after the trip upstairs to get the tarp from the garage. He looked down at Jimmy’s body, laying spread out like he was sleeping on his stomach, head to the side with blood leaking out of a significant hole in his head. He looked at the staircase behind the body and contemplated whether he was going to throw his back out bringing the body up the stairs — dragging it through the dining room, kitchen, out the garage, and into the trunk of the car. He got more annoyed the more he thought about it so he just decided it was best to get it over with and get down to business.

“Whatever. Just roll him onto the tarp. And get a mop will ya?” Paulie wanted this done, he was annoyed Mikey called him for help, he should have told him he was on his own. But Paulie, a company man, would not leave another guy in his crew hanging like that.

Mikey, for his part, did as he was told and went to get a mop. Paulie tried to fold the tarp at the edges, so no blood would get out on the trip upstairs. Mikey came back from the laundry room with a Swiffer Wet Jet.

“I said a mop! That’ll just smudge the shit around.”

“It’s all I got.”

“Get some towels then.” Paulie was starting to suspect they capped the wrong Yo-Yo. “I hate those fuckin’ wet jets.”

With Paulie grumbling, they cleaned the floor as best as they could. According to TV shows,

if CSI came in there with blacklights it would have shown some horrendous phosphorescent gore. But since it wasn’t his house, and Mikey was a nobody, Paulie figured they might as well just call it clean and get on with moving the body.

The body was now wrapped up like a mummy in the blue tarp with twine holding the tarp together. The twine was of the Hobby Lobby variety and, again, “all Mikey had.” They both stooped over the body next to each other, dragging it up the wood stairs one step at a time.

Step. Stop. Breather.

Step. Stop. Breather.

With each step blood pooled out the sides of the tarp, this could not be helped. Not with the shitty twine provided in wrapping the body, anyway. Paulie was in his fifties and not the most healthy of men, Mikey was much younger but he had a blood type of marinara and a “gland problem” that rendered him rotund.

It took some maneuvering when they finally got to the top of the steps, they both got stuck in the door jam at the top of the stairs in a Three Stooges moment. Mikey, knowing this was his party and Paulie was more than annoyed at this point, offered to take the body up the last few steps.

He then dragged the body through the living room, out to the garage where Paulie’s car sat idle. Half-in, half-out of the garage — with its ass-end indoors. The car was running, the whole garage had fumes that when combined with the glow of the car’s brake lights looked like a vision from hell.

“Turn off the fucking car we’ll all die of carb and bioxide.” Said, Paulie. Mikey wanted to tell him that it was Paulie’s car, not Mikey’s that was left on, and therefore Paulie’s fault if they caught bioxide and died. But he knew it was best to leave Paulie be when he was in one of his moods.

With their cargo secure Paulie got behind the wheel while Mikey grabbed some shovels. He tossed the shovels on top of Jimmy’s mummified corpse and hopped in the passenger side of the car.

“I know a place in Jersey.”

And so they took the Holland Tunnel into the state of New Jersey, never to worry about Jimmy Yo-Yo Lombardo again until:

The Star-Ledger

A proposed “greenway” would connect The Pinelands to The Shore.

OCEAN COUNTY, NJ — Imagine hopping on a bicycle at Barnegat Light House, crossing Manahawkin bay, and riding all the way to a campsite in the Pine Barrens — all without touching a road.

For now, that’s a cyclist’s fantasy. But public space and environmental advocates have proposed a way to make that feat possible: a public walking and biking path, called either the Ocean County Greenway or the more ambiguous Pan-Garden State Rail Trail — they intend to take an abandoned section of NJ Transit rail line and across the state of New Jersey to the Delaware River.

“This proposed bike path could be part of a greenway connecting New York and Philadelphia to the Jersey Shore. It would be a huge win for the Garden State. And with it re-using old and long-abandoned rail lines such as the one in North Pemberton, it will not cost the taxpayers much money, which is always a good situation,” said State Congressman Mitchell Weinberger.

Earlier this month, that proposed path got one step closer to becoming reality.

On June 19, the Massachusetts-based Worcester & Providence Railway Company applied to begin the process of selling the unused section of the railway to a conservation group.

W&P is proposing to sell the rail line to the Garden State Open Land Trust, a nonprofit that works to acquire wilderness and public land for conservation and recreation. The organization would eventually turn the greenway over to Ocean county, according to the Worcester & Providence application.

A spokesman for Ocean County stated “We will be breaking ground very shortly. We’re excited for another opportunity to bring the shore to the people.”

On its website, the nonprofit Garden State Bike and Walk Coalition said the greenway project “would provide recreational and commuting options in an otherwise congested northeast corridor, connect people to communities, parks and other destinations along the route, increase property values, and provide a safe, off-road place for people to ride and walk.”

According to the Coalition’s website, the trail would connect with other bike and pedestrian routes, including the Barnegat Branch Trail, September 11 National Memorial Trail, Manasquan Reservoir Trail, and the East Coast Greenway, a 3,000-mile network that

Paulie was in his kitchen counting his collection money. Every week he compiled his collection money at home instead of going to the club to count and then hand it over to his boss, Jimmy Comelo. He wasn’t oblivious to his nickname and always heard people snickering when he counted his money.

One of the younger jokers, Tony Fratelli sometimes would do his Count from Sesame Street impression “One. Two. Three. Three stacks ah-ha-ha-ha.” The other people would end up in stitches while Paulie would feel his pride wounded. He couldn’t help it if he looked like a muppet.

He got a call from a friend of his in Elizabeth, New Jersey. After some niceties, his friend got to the point.

“You seen the paper? The Newark Star-Ledger.”

“Why would I get a Newark paper?”

“Well you have interests in Jersey, I figured you would want to keep track of your interests.”

“I don’t have interests in Jersey. Interests?”

“Real estate.”

“Real estate?” Paulie was truly confused. He’d lived in the same apartment in Bensonhurst for over twenty years.

“You inherited a parcel of land in the barrens. By the old train tracks. You wanted me to keep an eye on it.”

“Oh, yeah.” *The body he got rid of with Mikey, of course.*

They buried the guy near these long-disused train tracks in North Pemberton, not far from a museum that has been closed for years for the same reason the train station was closed. Who the hell would go into the middle of nowhere to see a decaying train station?

According to his friend, a new bike path is going to break ground right around where they buried the poor bastard.

Paulie called Mikey, the start of the conversation went much the same way:

“Hey Mikey, you read the paper out of Newark today?”

“Why would I get a Jersey paper? Why would I get any paper with the innanet?”

“Start readin’ the paper, you don’t wanna succumb to fake news.”

“OK, should I go to CVS and buy the paper.”

“No, fuck the paper. Listen, we have to go back to our friend in Jersey.”

•••

"So you didn't read the paper neither?"

"Why the fuck would I read a Newark Newspaper? No, a friend of ours called. I told him about Yo-Yo and a good thing too because he told me about this fucking bike path."

"Where in Jersey is he from?"

"Does it matter?"

"I got an aunt in Toms River's all. Just wondering if they'd know each other."

Paulie starred at Mikey as if that was the dumbest thing he'd heard in his whole life and then exaggerated an exhale before he said, "He lives in Elizabeth."

"That's the name of the town? I knew a girl named Elizabeth, Elizabeth Zambetti, we called her Betty Zambetti" Silence. "So how does this guy know they're gonna build a bike path right where we dug this body."

"He doesn't"

"So why are we digging him back up?"

"You want to take the chance?"

Silence. The car ride remained silent until the radio station went out. Mikey fumbled through some bible stations and settled on a classic rock station mid-Steppenwolf song.

By the time they were out of range of that radio station, they were hopelessly lost. And although Paulie had seniority, Mikey was hungry and annoyed.

"How can you be lost? We been on the same highway the whole time."

"I dunno it was dark when we went last time, but I think we passed the exit. We need gas anyway, I'll ask for directions there."

"And I'll get food."

It wasn't long before they found a Wawa, parked at the pump, and were startled by an overzealous gas station attendant knocking on the glass of Paulie's car.

"Oh! What you doin'? You'll get your greasy fingerprints all over my car."

"Sorry sir, you want me to fill it up?"

"Get the fuck away from my car."

"Sir, we have to pump your gas. It's the law."

Paulie and Mikey looked at each other as if they just stumbled into the Twilight Zone, but the man was correct. After the Retail Gasoline Dispensing Safety Act of 1949, pumping your gas in New Jersey is against the law. And statute, N.J.S.A. 34:3A:10, imposes penalties ranging from \$50 to \$250 fine for the first offense. Of course, Paulie and

Mikey, members of La Cosa Nostra, on a road trip to dig up a dead body of a former associate they murdered, didn't care much for any New Jersey state statutes. Paulie however, didn't want to rock the boat, he told the kid to fill it up.

Paulie went up to the register inside the Wawa to ask for directions while Mikey ordered a panini.

"Hey, I'm trying to find Route 70? I think I missed the exit on the Parkway."

"On the Parkway? You missed that exit probably about an hour ago. But you can catch Route 70 from Route 72, just take that west and when you get to Byrne State Forest, you're about there."

"Thanks." Paulie paid for the gas, Mikey's panini, and a bag of chips.

"Watch out for the Devil. Out there."

"Huh?"

"The Jersey Devil."

"I ain't a-scared of some shitty hockey team mascot."

"It's not a great name for a hockey team, I'll admit that. But The Jersey Devil is said to inhabit right around where you're going."

"Is it like a guy?"

"It's like a dog-sized horse. But, it's really just bullshit I was just trying to be friendly."

"Yeah." And with that Paulie and Mike left the Wawa and traveled west down Route 72—towards the Jersey Devil's stomping grounds.

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The directions from the man at the Wawa did not help Paulie or Mikey. With miles upon miles of trees, they were out of their element. Paulie would second guess that they missed the turn, take the wrong turn, and proceeded to get hopelessly lost in the Brendan T. Byrne State Forest.

Paulie's Caddy beeped, the gas light went on, and it started coughing like the Tin Man with emphysema. Suddenly, it came to a slow, sad, stop. "Ooh! The fuck just happened?" Cried Paulie.

"It's out of gas."

"No shit it's out of gas. But I just filled it up."

"Wawa must have some shitty gas then. The panini wasn't great either. I'm hungry again," Mikey said with a sigh.

"Will you shut up about the panini! The car just died."

After spending an hour fiddling with the car's engine and trying in vain to get a signal on

their cell phones to call a tow truck, they decided they'd have to hoof it to civilization. They picked the direction they thought looked promising and started walking.

Sun was setting when they found a street with no name. The only semblance of society was in the form of a small moss-covered hut.

The yard was overgrown weeds, the "fence" had collapsed in on itself many winters ago, and a thick coat of moss covered the stone walls and wood shingles like Wrigley's ivy-walled outfield. If there wasn't smoke coming out of the hut's chimney, they would have thought the place long since deserted.

Cold and hungry, they went down the flagstone walkway—also overgrown with weeds—towards the front door and warmth.

"This guy growin' hay?" Asked Mikey.

"Shut the fuck up. People living in the woods... you don't wanna piss them off."

"You shittin' me? This place looks like the Seven Dwarfs live here, I ain't scared of no midg-ets."

"Whoever lives here, this is their home. Shut the fuck up, and don't make fun of them. Now you knock."

"Alright. Alright." Mikey knocked on the wood door, fearful he might get a splinter on his knuckles.

The bearded guy who answered was almost exactly what Paulie had feared—he was nuts. The man wore a grey cardigan that was ripped at both elbows and tinged to a greenish hue. His hair was frizzy and wild, standing up as if he'd just been electrocuted. His pants were a dark green corduroy and smelled like piss. Paulie figured they were the only pants the man owned. Even the words he said we weird:

"Hello, travelers. How may I be of service on this fine evening."

Paulie spoke, "Eh-um. Hello Sir. We're uh, travelers—as which you say. And. Uh—"

"Can we come in? We're lost and it's cold."

"Ah yes of course, of course! Come in. 'Tis a cold night to be out on the open road. And dangerous," said the crazy man with an impish grin. He showed them inside the hut and motioned for them to sit on his couch. "Especially out here in Ong's Hat."

"Where are we?" Paulie sat down and a plume of dust and debris shot up like a shotput thrown in dirt.

"Ong's Hat. It's considered a ghost town, however, I live here. I thought ghost towns were uninhabited." The weird man chuckled and then grew serious, "But it's not that which is dangerous."

"You gonna tell me you believe in that Jersey Devil bullshit?" Said Mikey as he sat down more gingerly than Paulie.

"No. Not the New Jersey Devil, but a real source of evil, perhaps *the* Devil has been known to come around these parts."

"Spooky." Paulie looked around the hut. It was an "open floor plan" as in, it was one giant room. The fireplace served as his stove, the couch his living and entertainment area, the bed was in the corner un-made and lumpy.

The strange man with the Einstein haircut hit his forehead with an open palm. "Oh, forgive me. I don't receive callers often. Would you gentleman like some tea?"

"That would be great."

"Do you have any food?"

"I'm afraid I have nothing ready-made for food, I already supped. Would Darjeeling tea do?"

"I'm sure that's fine," replied Paulie. Mike sat forlornly on the moldy chair, angry that this man didn't have cold cuts lying in the fridge.

"Perhaps you can help us mister uh..."

"Flynn, Doctor Flynn." He came back with a pot of tea and a motley assortment of teacups. The only thing they had in common was they were all chipped. "Hot tea on a cold night, perfect."

"So Doc Flint, you got ready-made tea but not ready-made food?"

"It's Flynn, as in Errol. And I'm not a convenience store, I was going to have tea before you boys showed up." His face was stern and sinister. Paulie and Mike had met sinister men before, some would consider them sinister themselves. But this guy had a look about him that made those killers look like middle school guidance counselors.

"Look, we meant no disrespect Doc. We've just been on the road for a while and we're totally lost."

"GPS devices don't work well around these parts. Especially when the moon is full and the night is dark."

"No offense Doc but I don't think that's how satellites work."

Doctor Flynn gave a look at Paulie that reminded him of Sister Anne-Marie at Sunday school when he was a kid. It shut him up. Just as quickly Flynn's steely eyes turned kind, he smiled and said, "One of you may sleep on my couch tonight, the other may sleep on my bed, I will take the floor by the fireplace."

This time it was Mikey who spoke up, he was hungry and wasn't interested in any weird slumber parties. He wanted to get the hell out of there and find a place that sold chicken wings or chicken parm. "We really gotta get going. If you could just direct us to North Pemberton that would be great."

"Why would you want to go to the Rail Road Station Museum tonight? That closed years ago. Even if it was open it wouldn't be open at this hour?" He stared at Mikey with hypnotic eyes. Paulie came to the rescue, although he was kind of freaked out. *They hadn't mentioned the museum to anyone, and never even said a word about train tracks to this nutbag.*

"We just want to go to Pemberton, we didn't say nothin' about no train tracks."

"Your friend did. And I am not a nutbag."

"I think we should get going."

"Please, I've been an ungracious host. Enjoy your tea, sit down. Please don't go out tonight, it truly is dangerous."

"We can take a little danger, thanks Doc." Paulie was thinking about his .45 caliber Beretta and how many dangerous things it had cut down before as he slammed the door.

The Doc shouted to the peephole, "Guns won't help!" But it was no use, his weary travelers were in for it. And he knew they deserved it.

•••

Paulie slammed the door while the crazy guy who called himself a doctor was yammering on about guns. He took a deep breath and smelled fresh air, he never thought he'd be so happy to breathe New Jersey air but this was nice. Way nicer than the smell of mold, mildew, and pissy pants.

They walked in silence, the warmth from Dr. Flynn's hearth evaporated with each step. What felt like miles later—when they saw the dilapidated house—their teeth were chattering and their hands were numb.

Falling apart or not, it looked more up their alley. It was old for sure, probably pre-war. Paulie's mom, God rest her soul, used to watch a lot of HGTV, so Paulie knew the house 'styles' or as his mom called them, gin-ra's. His mom's favorite gin-ra being craftsman homes. And aside from HGTV her favorite gin-ra of entertainment was fat people doing things on TLC. In the HGTV parlance, this house would be "shabby chic," not quite mid-century modern, but slightly "Cape Cod." Whatever the architect had in mind, he was long dead so Paulie couldn't ask him what genre the house would be if he wanted to.

Jazz music wafted from the home, Paulie only knew Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew* and this was not it, but it had a horn section and a rhythm, and in his experience people who listened to jazz music typically didn't have old piss-smelling corduroys on.

Mikey didn't hear the jazz, he could only discern the distinct smell of roasted chicken with thyme and rosemary. He took off towards the shabby chic shack. Paulie had never seen him run so fast.

They knocked on the door and a shifty-eyed welterweight with five o'clock shadow answered and gave them a once over.

"What do you want?" In a tone that said, "I don't have any fucking time for your shit." *Finally, New Yorkers* thought Mikey.

"We're lost and it's cold outside, could we come in, warm up, and then we'll be on our way," said Paulie in as reasonable a voice as he could manage. He knew if he was in this guy's situation he'd tell them to fuck off, and he didn't want that.

"We'll pay you for any food you might have," added Mikey.

The guy gave them an inspection with his eyes. He didn't move his head, his eyeballs just darted up and down. He eyefucked them if you will. And then he didn't say a word, he just left the door open and walked back to where he was before they came; sitting at a table, playing cards with some other guys.

For a long while nobody talked, all of them had cigarette butts smoldering, aside from one guy smoking a pipe. They all sat smoking and looking at Paulie and Mikey, four guys were half-assed playing cards while another two sat by the fire. Most of them had suspenders on and looked like Civil War reenactors.

Hipsters, Paulie thought to himself.

Mikey was thinking the same thing, "I think these guys are Milleniums," whispered Mikey. Paulie didn't disagree, he'd seen his share of millennium hipsters in Williamsburg and Green Point. They were listening to obscure jazz. One of the guys by the fireplace was smoking a pipe for chrissakes! Who smokes a pipe?

All of a sudden Paulie and Mike must have passed some kind of test because one of the guys took out a Bowie knife and slammed it into the table like he was Daniel Boone.

"You look hungry, feel free to have some food," said Daniel Boone.

Mikey didn't need to be told twice, he ripped a drumstick off the chicken and took a bite like he was at a Renaissance Faire. Paulie had his first flash of concern, he'd never seen a millennium hipster with a bowie knife.

The vinyl record player finished so the guy smoking a pipe got up and flipped it over to the B side. The song was something he recognized, it was something his Grandmother used to sing. It was Eddie Cantor singing about a girl named

Susie. *These guys have got to be millenniums, listening to old records like this. But they're also the toughest damn millenniums I've ever seen.* Thought Paulie.

Mikey was coming to the same conclusion, now that he had some food in his stomach he watched the card game. None of them seemed to really be playing, they were going through the motions. No bluffing, no stopping to think. They just dealt hands and paid out to the winner like robots playing cards. No emotion, no fun—like the moneyball brand of baseball. They were not done sizing up Mikey and Paulie, that was certain.

"Hey Mac, you wanna play a hand?" This came from the guy with the Bowie knife.

"I don't have any cash on me," said Paulie.

"You's broke? What are you doin' with no cash on you."

"I got credit cards." The guys looked at Paulie like he had three heads.

"Play on credit then. We'll front you some greenbacks, you butter n' eggman.¹

Mikey turned to Paulie, unsure and a little freaked out. "These guys talk funny. They must be from Philly," he whispered to Paulie. Paulie figured they had to be from Philly, it was close by and these weren't any wiseguys he knew. The wiseguy community was fairly tight-knit. Sure there were subcontractors of sorts from outside the families, but once you were in you had a good idea who was who. It was like an Italian-American Country Club, instead of playing golf and eating bland food they played bocce and ate manicotti—and sometimes killed people.

"You boys from Philly? Maybe AC."

The funny talking gangsters answered with silence. The only noise was the man in suspenders shuffling the deck.

"Brooklyn," said Bowie knife.

"No shit. I live in Bensonhurst."

Nobody seemed interested in that statement.

"You guys don't seem like you're from Brookln. You, uh, run with anyone?"

"Run for recreation?" Asked suspenders. Then he pointed to Mikey, "we know you ain't runnin' with anyone."

"Runnin to the hash house², maybe," said Bowie knife. This got some laughs from around the room, but not from Paulie or Mikey. It was the former who replied, "See thats what I mean, you guys talk funny. But you seem like wiseguys."

"What are you? Some kind of snooper³?
What's with the questions?"

"Nah, I'm just. I'm a wise guy myself." He shrugged, "We both are."

"Well who do *you* run with?"

"Big Jimmy Comelo." Paulie always had a little pride when he said he was in Big Jimmy's crew, and if these guys were from Brooklyn, they'd finally show a little respect.

"Never heard of him."

"Get the fuck out of here. Everyone knows Jimmy. Who you runnin' with, honest." This time it was Mikey who spoke up, Paulie's pride was too wounded to respond.

"Charlie Luciano."

Wounded pride or not, this got a laugh from Paulie and Mikey. "Come on, you can say. Who's the capo in your crew?"

"We're not lyin.' Charlie Luciano is the guy we answer to. We've worked with a few other guys you might have heard of, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, Yo-Yo Lombardo—" Paulie cut him off.

"What'd you just say?"

"Oh, you know Jimmy Lombardo?"

"Well, uh. Yeah but he's been missing. We've been out lookin' for him. You seen him?"

"You must not have been lookin' too hard Paulie."

From the back room came another man, dressed in this century's clothing, and looking a lot like the dead guy they buried in the pine barrens, Jimmy "Yo-Yo" Lombardo. This sighting was so strange and surreal Mikey could only respond in a weird and strange way, he greeted the man as an old friend, "Hey, Yo-Yo." He even waived.

"This fucking guy shoots me in the back of my head." He paused, turned around, and pointed to a glistening crater for emphasis, "and he has the balls to just say 'Hi' like nothing fuckin happened."

"You're not really here," said Paulie.

"Oh, I'm fuckin here alright Count Chocula. I'm fuckin here."

"And you're all—"

"Dead? Yeah. We're dead." Answered Bowie Knife.

"So what are you plannin' to do?" It was a plausible question for a ridiculous situation. The man they shot and buried in the woods and his new friends—Depression Era Gangsters—were

conversing with Paulie and Mikey. And unless they took a wrong turn on the Turnpike and off this mortal coil, Paulie and Mikey were both very much alive.

"We want to exact revenge for our friend here."

"You're ghosts, you can't hurt us."

"You's sure about that?"

Suddenly, Bowie Knife ran towards Mikey, who braced for impact, cowering in the corner. But Bowie didn't tackle Mikey, he simply disappeared on contact. Mikey felt extremely cold and scared. Then he felt nothing at all. His face changed, his eyes went to the back of his head, and he grabbed an ax that was leaning against the wall at his feet. Paulie stood there frozen, mouth open at first, but he was able to dodge the blow and run to the side screaming, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!"

"They all gave up on you long ago Paulie," said Suspenders.

Possessed Mikey swung the ax like a baseball bat at Paulie's head. Paulie ducked, rolled, and knocked over the card table. The Dead Gangsters looked on disinterested as if this kind of thing happened all the time.

"Yo-Yo, we can work something out," pleaded Paulie.

"Sorry Paulie, for you it's purgatory," said Yo-Yo right before he went into Paulie's body and picked up an ax.

The Press of Atlantic City **Dead Gangsters with Ax to Grind** **October 13, Front Page**

Pemberton Township, NJ - Police were called to a grisly scene in an abandoned building where two people were found dead.

Officers were called to an undesignated stretch of road around 11 am, after the bodies were discovered by a local man on a hike with his dog.

Police said the bodies of two men were found in an abandoned house in what appeared to be "an ax fight" gone horribly wrong.

"You know at the end of Rocky III when Rocky and Apollo start to spar and the movie ends with a freeze-frame—they're both punchin eachother? That's kinda what this is like—but with axes. It's weird." Said Officer Tench, first on the scene.

Police have confirmed that the two men are known Mob Associates with the Comelo Crime Family in New York City.

"We can definitely say that foul play is involved. It's like these two guys drove all the way down to South Jersey to have an ax fight. Weirdest thing I ever seen," Said Police Chief Toby Murray. (story, "Ax Fight" continued on page 7)

The Star-Ledger

October 21, Page 9 (Local Section)

"Greenway to the Shore" Plans Stalled

Ocean County, NJ - Concerns for the Spotted Lanternfly, an invasive Chinese species now residing on the east coast, have resulted in the "Greenway to the Shore" rail-trail project being canceled.

Atlantic city councilor Arlene Johnson, said the Pan Garden State bike lane proposal will not go forward and \$1.7-million allocated from New Jersey's \$30 million Green Community Building Fund will be used for other projects in Ocean County, Monmouth, Middlesex, and Union County where the trail was to break ground. Direction on where to reallocate the money must be approved by State Legislature.

"It's very upsetting that we have to halt this greenway for a species that is not only non-indigenous, but it will also prove to be a serious problem for agriculture in the Garden State for years to come," Johnson said.

In a Friday, October 11 post on her office's Facebook page, Johnson announced the project was canceled. "I met with the EPA and PETA, and based on the feedback, the proposal ... will now not proceed."

The Press of Atlantic City

Historic Haunted Hut Lost in Fire

October 14, Front Page

Ongs Hat, NJ - The hut that birthed countless conspiracy theories has burned down in a "hideous raging inferno" according to Pemberton Township Fire Chief Tom Scottsdale.

Since it's owner, Dr. Thaddeus Flynn died in 1937, the hut has been purported to be haunted by the Doctor and his "experiments" (local poor people).

In the 1980s conspiracy theorists started a legend stating that a group of scientists were able to travel to parallel dimensions from a site in the ghost town.

Since the 1980s local teenagers—and the odd reality television show—have visited the hut and other dilapidated buildings surrounding it in hopes to find the parallel dimensions or at the very least, evidence of ghosts and the supernatural.

In 2014, the television show, "Ghost Bros" filmed an episode in the hut where one of the audio mixers suffered a sudden and fatal heart attack.

At the time of the incident, one of the Field Producers, Brandon Bennett was quoted saying, "We've been all over the country in places that say they are haunted, but I've never experienced anything like this. And I mean, I've seen shadow people. Last night in that hut—I don't know how to explain it but, I just feel really depressed right now. Maybe it's because we lost our sound guy, but I don't know." Bennett immediately retired from producing and now owns and operates a goat farm in Utah.

In 2018 the hut was purchased by Facebook (now, Meta) in an attempt to have an "emersive haunted experience" and "reinvent Halloween." Those plans stalled when the construction companies that were to build the theme park flipped union and an electrician died suddenly inside Dr. Flynn's Haunted Hut.

Footnotes (1920s Gangster Slang)

- 1. Butter and egg man:** The money man, the man with the bankroll, a yokel who comes to town to blow a big wad in nightclubs.
- 2. Hash house:** A cheap restaurant.
- 3. Snooper:** A detective.



Black Velvet

Because everyone likes Goth Drinks

It's said that after Prince Albert died in 1861, the steward at the Brook's Club in London wanted everything in mourning, even the champagne. Which is why we have this half Guinness half champagne creation.

Years later, during Prohibition the Black Velvet was the drink of choice for the Mayor of New York City, Jimmy Walker.



Ingredients

½ champagne flute – Champagne

½ champagne flute – Guinness

Instructions:

Pour in half a glass of champagne first, let the bubbles settle and then slowly top up with Guinness. It took us a while to top up, you have to do it slowly so it doesn't overflow.

Verdict:

It's honestly pretty good. Smooth as velvet and the aftertaste of champagne was nice. I've never had a half and half of Guinness and Hard Cider but I feel like this would be what it tastes like. Also, if you're having a fancy Halloween party or a Tim Burton soirée, this wouldn't be a bad drink for the menu.

Other easy to make Guinness drinks you should try: the Half and Half and the Black and Tan. William Randolph Hearst liked the Half and Half—Guinness and Lager—thinking it was good for your health. Errol Flynn agreed, saying what should have been the Guinness slogan:

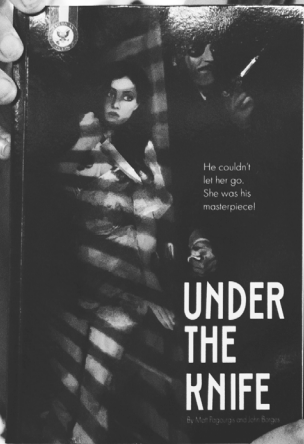
"Guinness Stout is good for the gonads."

It's worth noting that Flynn died of a heart attack in the arms of a sixteen year old. But, his gonads did not give out.



HOW DOES A DESPERATE STARLET BECOME THE WORLDS GREATEST NAZI HUNTER?

"Once I started reading 'Under the Knife' and realized how gloriously gonzo it is, I couldn't put it down." —Bob "Subtropic Bob" Deis, Editor of Men's Adventure Quarterly



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