

# Geneva Shore Report



## OKTOBERFEST

The downtown businesses are getting ready for this big fall event. The residents are excited to attend the fall festival but also bracing themselves as traffic and people will flood the city. Visitors are planning to attend in great numbers as always and have usually booked the weekend when they checked out last year. Why wouldn't they? Lake Geneva hosts great events. This Saturday and Sunday October 11th and 12th the streets of Lake Geneva will be filled with traditional German festivities. This wonderful event is being held mostly on Broad and Geneva Street. Both roads will be closed and filled with live entertainment, delicious traditional food, a beer garden, vendors, kids, activities, and so much more. The event will start at 11 a.m. for the Ribbon Cutting and a major announcement and stay open until 8 p.m. Sunday opens at 11 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m. Both days will include the favorite Dachshund and Corgi Races Stein Hosting Competition. Eating competitions are included in the fun. Oktoberfest is one of Lake Geneva's biggest events and draws many to the area. Be prepared for heavy traffic and dense crowds all weekend long. To help save some frustration the very convenient shuttle will be running all weekend in twenty-minute intervals. Everyone is encouraged to utilize this service. Parking and shuttle pick up is available at the Home Depot parking lot on Edwards Boulevard and at the city lot on Sheridan Springs Road next to Serve Pro. Shuttles will drop off at the US Bank on the corner of Center and Geneva Street making anywhere in town accessible by foot. The entire family will have something to enjoy.

It is not local, at least not yet, but is certainly deserving of the front page of every news outlet.

The President and his Secretary of War spoke to the military leaders of all the services on Tuesday. Both spoke about the



'unfettering' of the combat forces of all the military units and men (they do not want women in combat ever). The way both men put it is comparable to the expression "letting loose the dogs of war." The war is to be against an internal invasion, but not directed toward immigrants like one might think, given what's going on with ICE and all that. No, the internal invasion, as stated by the President, is democrats, although he did precede that word with radical. His intent is not to send in this force of military men to use the democratically governed cities as training spots for the forces to get combat training. What is apparently going on here is a tipping off of the civil war that so many have

feared might occur since both political parties are so polarized. Why would the President want a civil war to erupt, because if the 'training' troops start shooting then eventually who they are shooting at will begin shooting back, cannot be about the opposing party platforms. It has to be more avoided than one subject that is ever on that man's mind. Only one subject that cannot come to light. Epstein. The reason this is part of the front page is because the author of the article has been to real wars, and his torso is covered in scars from the bullets received. He knows that once a war begins there is absolutely no way to calculate where and when it will come to one's doorstep and worse. Read all the news channels you can because your life and your family's may become part of the front lines.

## OUR PLACE

**In March of 2025 Alderperson Ames started the dialogue regarding concerns about the safety of the Broad/Dodge intersection.** That's for both pedestrians and vehicles, especially once the state highway 50 project begins. Broad Street has a lot of traffic at several different times of the day and almost every day during the busy season and crossing or turning from Dodge Street is very difficult. In order to do either vehicle's need to pull out very far onto Broad Street to see beyond the parked cars. Pedestrians are also taking a risk as the crosswalk at this intersection due to the visibility issues. Ames offered a few suggestions for improvements. Bump outs, flashing lights, or a four-way stop. Ames believes a four-way stop is the best option. Bump outs are not popular with the public works department or the parking department, as they make plowing a little more difficult and parking stalls would be lost. Ames had support from the committee as traffic patterns will change with the state 50 construction coming and safety issues will need to be discussed and at the least some temporary changes may need to be done. The item will be scheduled for further review and discussion at several meetings. The issue is still unresolved but is moving forward. Recent signs at the intersection have been placed on both sides of Broad to bring awareness to residents, and those driving by, on the issue.

**What's new under the sun in Lake Geneva?** Well, they are not doing free samples anymore at Kwik Trip. That wonderful experience is now over, sort of like their new electronic tag pricing (note with this system the prices go up every day and sometimes sooner) has decreased customer satisfaction, ambiance or happiness in their stores. Whole Foods did the same thing and they are suffering overtime for concentrating on maximizing profit while quietly and subtly distancing from customer appreciation or participation. Meanwhile, the only local radio station, 96.1 run by Nancy, is adding a half hour to her show and that will be put on by Alex, the managing director of the Business Improvement District (the BID). It will be all about downtown Lake Geneva and what's going on. Sort of like a radio GSR, if you will. Good move Nancy, the station's leader. Nancy's tough as old rawhide but sure knows what's she doing and the GSR welcomes Alex and that kind of reporting. As the national media has almost totally abdicated its role in providing real national news, the local media has tried to do just the opposite. Nice work 96.1!

## SMALL GEMS

**Lake Geneva brush and leaf pick up begins Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup> of this year.** Please place piles of

small branches separate from leaves or garden debris only on the terrace by the side of the roads and streets. Also, October - Household Hazardous Waste Clean Sweep & Electronics Recycling Event Date, Time & Location for Walworth, Waukesha and Jefferson County Residents Only: Friday, October 3, 2025, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. (Household Hazardous Waste only, no electronics), Saturday, October 4, 2025, 8 a.m. to noon (Household Hazardous Waste, Electronics/Appliances -no tires). The location: Walworth County Public Works, W4097 County Rd NN, Elkhorn WI 53121.

**Man convicted of murdering newlywed couple at Elkhorn bar was sentenced Friday.** Thomas Routt was found guilty on June 27, 2025, for the murder of newlyweds Gina and Emerson Weingart, who were shot and killed during an armed robbery at the Sports Page Bar in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, on February 1, 2024. Gina Weingart was working as a bartender at the time, and her husband, Emerson, was with her at the bar keeping her company. Sentencing for Routt, who was convicted of first-degree intentional homicide and armed robbery, among other charges took place last Friday. Thomas Routt, 58, was previously convicted of two counts of first-degree intentional homicide, attempted first-degree intentional homicide, armed robbery, possession of methamphetamine and possession of a firearm by a felon for setting his ex-mother-in-law's home on fire in 1995. After being released from prison he ended up at Gateway which is what brought him to Elkhorn. He was sentenced to life in prison for each homicide count.

## SURPRISING STUFF

**The season is a changing.** Fall is here and with the beautiful weather it's hard to believe. The warmer than usual temperatures are making the season very easy to enjoy. Lake Geneva is just over 10% of its expected fall color. That is about to change as fall color is about to start popping. The third or fourth week of October is typically full peak in Lake Geneva. The wonderful Geneva Lake offers so many great ways to enjoy the vibrant colors. Looking out across the lake gives a splendid view of all the different colors and shades of autumn. The lake also has the best walking path that goes around the lake and has some of the most beautiful old trees along the shore that display the colors well. Get out and enjoy the colors before the leaves all fall and the cold weather really sets in. No matter where you go around the lake to soak in the beauty you are sure to be pleased.

## Elkhorn associate principal receives death threats after being falsely accused of negative post about Charlie Kirk.

Elkhorn's West Side Elementary associate principal Cindy Rehberg received threats after being falsely accused on social media of celebrating Charlie Kirk's assassination. It started when the Associate Principal Cynthia Rehberg was included in a post on X by conservative influencer Ryan Fournier. In the post, Fournier said Rehberg "celebrated the death of Charlie Kirk's assassination." The post, which was later deleted, included a photo that showed Rehberg's school employee photo underneath a Facebook post made by Cynthia Irene. Elkhorn Area Schools Superintendent Jason Tadlock said that the woman who posted it is not Rehberg. He also added that Rehberg does not have Irene as a maiden or middle name. The district received almost 1000 voicemail messages referring to the post. Many of the voicemails demanded that Rehberg be fired. A number of them even included death threats. Despite Fournier's retraction, Rehberg faced significant backlash. Elkhorn police escorted Rehberg home and has maintained a presence at the school. The district superintendent is collaborating with police and the district attorney to criminally charge callers and commenters who lobbed serious threats.

## THE BRIGHT SIDE

**Join The Friends of Hillmoor and the local library for a special presentation covering 14,000 years of history, from the retreat of the glaciers up to European contact.** The presentation will be given on Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup> from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Lodge Geneva National

(formerly The Ridge Hotel) five miles west of Lake Geneva on Highway 50. Dr. Amy Rosebrough has extensive experience in the Wisconsin and midwestern United States archaeology scene, and her work spans the public, private, and educational sectors of archaeology, including her involvement with the Wisconsin Archeological Society and Archaeological Research, Inc. Rosebrough is regarded as one of the top experts on Wisconsin's effigy mounds.

## The Lake Geneva Public Library was named one of the "10 Most Beautiful Libraries in the United States" by Fodor's Travel.

The Lake Geneva Public Library is one of the most architecturally unique libraries in the Midwest. The Prairie Style building, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright protégé James R. Dresser and built in 1954, overlooks the lake from its location in Library Park and features stained glass and original historic details, including a previously undiscovered fireplace from a 2022 renovation. Admire the stained-glass dividers, and above the lobby window, spot an original window from the now-demolished Lake Geneva Hotel (a Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building). Visitors can gaze at a view of the lake through the building from the Main Street side (an intentional design element created by Dresser) in this destination that serves as a spot for literature lovers and architectural enthusiasts.

## LIVING HERE

**Dragon Days are coming on October 3<sup>rd</sup> and will go through October 5<sup>th</sup>.** Lake Geneva is the hometown of best-selling author, Gary Gygax, and birthplace of the world's first roleplaying

## Person of the Week:



*Only a few more weeks to see this guy and eat his delicious skordia at the Lake Geneva Farmers Market.*

## Place of the Week:



*The Lake Geneva Public Library celebrated their 130th anniversary with the ribbon cutting of the new Traveling Library van.*



game, Dungeons & Dragons. It is also the home of Gary's original game company, TSR, that produced not only D & D but scores of popular games and hundreds of fantasy and sci-fi novels until selling out to Hasbro in 1997. Events will be held at several venues throughout Lake Geneva, including Library Park, Geneva Theater, Geneva Lake Museum, 330 Center Street, Birthplace of Dungeons and Dragons and the Lake Geneva Public Library, American Legion Hall, and Horticultural Hall. Attendees and children of all ages will be able to experience our Fantasy Faire in the local park along the picturesque shores of Lake Geneva. Here you may explore our Fantasy Village, enjoy trick-or-treating in our Enchanted Bazaar, adventure in our hay bale, Dragon Days Dungeon Maze, or dress-up for our Fantastic Costume Contest! There will also be face painting, circus performers, Medieval musicians, demonstrations of Medieval craftsmanship, archery, and swordsmanship, and an Enchanted Bazaar with Medieval crafts, clothing, jewelry, and fantasy and gaming merchandise of all kinds. The local library will be the site of fantasy and sci-fi book signings and a magical children's fairy tale story time. The town theater will present screenings of the movies and Saturday morning cartoons (for kids of all ages). The historic gaming venues will have tabletop gaming of all sorts, including special introductory games that teach anyone how to play Dungeons and Dragons. And finally, the local museum will present its Wizard of Lake Geneva exhibit about Gary Gygax, as well as tours of Lake Geneva's historic D and D sites, including the Birthplace on 330 Center Street. Food and drink will be available nearby at the many local ice cream shops, candy stores, cafes, coffee shops, and restaurants in the charming downtown area, all within walking distance. Opening Ceremony and Library events is free. Admission, for all other venues combined, is \$30 for the weekend and \$20 for one day. Children 12 and under are free. Advance tickets are now on sale to avoid lines on festival days. Only \$15 for one day, and \$20 for the weekend.

**Yerkes final open house for 2025 is on Saturday, October 4 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.** The observatory is celebrating International Observe the Moon Night, which is an annual world-wide program that encourages observation, appreciation, and understanding of our Moon and its connection to NASA planetary science and exploration. The observatory will be joined by their friends from NASA who will be providing engaging hands-on activities in the Drake Family Library. They will also be joined by the Northwest Suburban Astronomers, who are volunteering their time to provide observing outside on our South Lawn if skies are clear. Other activities will include special guests for you to meet, engaging in science demonstrations and activities, a scavenger hunt with prizes, and more for

your family to enjoy. The open house will take place rain or shine. Reservations are required. Tickets for this event cost \$5 per child and \$10 for adults and are available online only. There will not be parking onsite at the Observatory. Ticket holders must park at Williams Bay School and board an accessible trolley that will run a continuous shuttle between the school and observatory during the Open House.



*The city would like the public's input about the intersection of Broad Street and Dodge Street.*

## SPORTSLINE

**Brewers.** The final day of the regular season has arrived, with the Milwaukee Brewers already securing the best record in baseball. In 56 regular seasons of Milwaukee Brewers baseball, no team before it ever accomplished what this one just did. Starting in less than one week's time, the push to do the same in the postseason begins. By triumphing, 4-2, over the Cincinnati Reds in game 162 on Sept. 28, the Brewers set the franchise record with their 97th win of the season, surpassing the previous mark set in both 2011 and 2018. The Brewers send out their ace, Freddy Peralta, to finish off the season. One of the better pitchers in the league this season, Freddy Peralta leads the NL with 17 wins, and the All-Star has a career best 2.68 ERA through his 32 starts this year. His consistency should be commended. He's only allowed more than one earned run twice since the start of August. The Brewers announced a few roster transactions before their last regular game. Both LHP DL Hall and RHP Trevor Megill were reinstated from the 15-day injured list. To make room for these moves, RHP Erick Fedde was designated for assignment, with RHP Carlos Rodriguez being optioned to the Rookie ACL Brewers. Fedde had a solid run with Milwaukee this season, providing a 3.38 ERA over 16 innings since his arrival in late August. Milwaukee (96-65) won the NL Central and has clinched the No. 1 overall seed with the best record in the majors for homefield advantage throughout the playoffs. The Brewers will be idle until the first game of the NLDS on Saturday, Oct. 4. **Bucks.** The Milwaukee Bucks will start the season with their franchise star, Giannis Antetokounmpo, but trade rumors will probably keep going. Even with Antetokounmpo voicing that he has every intention of staying in Milwaukee the rumors still swirl. The forward appears completely focused on the upcoming season and is targeting an area where he needs to improve. The Greek Freak is seeking help from Hall of Famer Carmelo Anthony on his biggest weakness, his jump shot. Antetokounmpo is one of the few players who has managed to win an MVP award and establish himself as an elite NBA player, despite lacking a consistent jump shot or the ability to space the floor. His explosiveness and 100th percentile length give Antetokounmpo enough juice on offense to score, while also defending at an elite level. Throughout his career, Antetokounmpo has shot 28.4 percent from three-point range, with last season being one of his worst at 22.2 percent on 0.9 attempts per game. He still averaged 30.4 points while shooting 62 percent from the field and a 60.7 effective field goal percentage. Center Myles Turner was labeled as a notable upgrade over Brook

Lopez, who was the team's anchor last season. This will be a great advantage for the team and Antetokounmpo. The Milwaukee Bucks have finalized their 2025 Training Camp roster. Training camp will take place in Milwaukee at the Froedtert & Medical College of Wisconsin Sports Science Center from Sept. 30-Oct. 2 before continuing in Miami from Oct. 3-5. **Packers.** The Green Bay Packers have strived to play complementary football, especially these last two weeks. Before giving up 40 points to the Dallas Cowboys on Sept. 28, their defense had played dully to start the season. Their offense has had some bright moments. But the special teams have yet to do their part. The Green Bay Packers' special teams have struggled, including having a kick blocked for the second consecutive week. In addition to blocked kicks, the special teams unit has committed six penalties this season. After Jordan Love connected with Romeo Doubs for their second straight touchdown to make it 13-0, Brandon McManus' extra-point attempt was blocked. While the blocked kicks get magnified, there have been other issues with special teams. According to NFLpenalties.com, the Packers are tied for third in penalties at 35, with 18 from the offense, 11 on defense and six from special teams. Early in the second quarter, Golden fielded a punt and, as he went to make a spin move, he took a big hit from Marist Liufau. Golden was replaced by Doubs as the punt returner. In the new NFL kickoff rules, there's the landing zone – the area between the receiving team's goal line and its 20-yard line. Kicks that hit in the landing zone and go into the end zone must be returned or downed by the receiving team. If the ball is downed, it's a touchback at the receiving team's 20-yard line. For kicks that hit in the end zone and stay inbounds, they can be returned or downed. If it's downed, it's a touchback to that team's 35-yard line. That being said, rookie Savion Williams last was a kick returner in his freshman year at Texas Christian and now he's in the role with the Packers alongside Bo Melton. He's returned seven kicks for 171 yards. Sunday's game's finish – a 34-yard field goal by Brandon McManus as overtime expired – felt underwhelming after a second half filled with explosive plays. It also exposed what's become a growing concern for the Packers: the conservative decision-making of head coach Matt LaFleur.

*GSR Weather, News & Road reports appear on our Facebook page daily by 10:00a.m. & 4:00 p.m.*





*Public works would like to remind you to get your library card and support the local library.*

## Photos of the Week



*GSR: Animal of the Week...*

*This frog came out to play after a rainy day.*



*Snipers were out in full force in Delavan over the weekend.*



*GSR: Weekly Lake Photo*

*The shimmering Geneva Lake on a warm early fall day.*

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# THE REBIRTH OF A NATION

## Op/Ed

By James Strauss



That the United States that so many living citizens, particularly those of age, once knew is already gone. Not completely done in by the current autocratic dictatorship of attempted takeover but founded upon the technological developments of the Internet, lightning speed computers, cell phones, television and even surveillance devices and systems. Now the culture must accommodate robots that look and act better than humans, at least the sexual Caucasians (female of course, and in the twenty-year-old appearance range) ones displayed so far, plus work robots and finally, or maybe not so finally these artifices termed cryptocurrency and artificial intelligence. When high tech meets even higher theft, but all reserved for those living at the very top of the pyramid schemes while their computers keep absorbing energy and spewing out nonsense, because computers don't produce either money nor intellect unless investment in other more grounded devices are accessed and used.

The nation as it was could not stand this withering attack and what's going on right now is sort of like one of the old ships of the line in the 1700's coming slowly apart in massive seas of disinformation, lies, misstatements while winds of great deceiving velocity pull each timber, and each sail that made the entire ship able to navigate the oceans of the world. The United States is but one analogous ship on this vast planet referred to here as an ocean. There are 194, at last count, other ships, none as colossal, sleek, fast or armored, but they are there, nevertheless. As the great USS United States as a country follows the real ocean liner called also the USS United States to the scrapyard, others will be implored by the passing to step in and up to take hold. The U.S. itself may go down in tattered disarray and disaster, but some will survive, and the remnants of the U.S. will still be her to be rebuilt and reassembled. The question truly is not one of whether the breakup and carnage will happen, it is more about the 'crew' of that great ship. The current crew is broken and dedicated to following a captain who's steering the 'vessel' toward the

schools and rocks, closer every day. That the crew will not step in to redirect things is possibly the greatest causal factor helping to motivate the disaster occurring right before its very eyes. The captain, the executive officer, and all the appointed and elected other officers are gathering in everything of value, thinking that they will survive the ships' loss to move on out to get aboard the other ships that are left still afloat. But they've never, not one of them, ever been on the deck or inside such a magnificent sailing Titanic before and so they really don't know what's coming.

It is slowly becoming painful to observe the poor, the downtrodden, the street people, the prisoners, the old, the unhealthy, the demented and even the rapidly stupid creatures of humanity that are truly the lower below decks crew of this whole thing, none to be allowed on deck nor to sit in the padded lifeboats or to handed life vests. Those, by the way, are the men, women and children of Jesus Christ, who spoke about them to his apostles to forge and write the New Testament of the Holy Bible, and that fact is also being overlooked by the officers up top in and around the bridge. Jesus does not have to return to save or rebuild the United States of America. No. All he had to do was look down with displeasure to observe that America had chosen not to be of the New Testament.

There will be a new dawn but not before tumult and violence of an order never either witnessed or predicted will sweep the world. That prediction is easy to make, although it's not this writer's, as it is written in the very last book of that highly revered, but little followed book, called the Holy Bible.

"Yea that I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil, because Thou art with me." Kneel down this night, pray, and ask God to be on his team, part of his crew, and to be part of those who'll be left to rebuild according to His recommendations.

## TREVI FOUNTAIN

### AN ARCH PATTON SHORT STORY

By James Strauss



The day was a bad one and Arch knew it could only get worse. He and his broken-down alcoholic and hungover partner, assigned at the last minute from supposedly experienced embassy staff, had been following the ‘target’ all morning. The woman wasn’t a target for any contact or violence, but the tag was used by people such as ‘cowboy’ field agents like Willy who normally waited to receive either information or defectors while attending embassy parties or merely grousing around. Every embassy had at least one CIA cowboy assigned to it so locally indigenous assets would have a way to find the agency if they needed or wanted it. The cowboys had come by that descriptor because such agents never truly went out on missions or did any real fieldwork but acted like they were full-blown spymasters of the worst sort.

The woman was a difficult tail. She went into every shop around the plazas of Rome, which meant that Arch, having only Willy to be his team, had to go around each shop to make certain that if it had a rear exit, it was covered so she would not give them the slip if she caught on the rolling surveillance. Willy refused to do the rear-guard work, and it was beyond useless to attempt to gain more control over him in the condition he was in. Back at the front of the Hermes shop, Arch had tried. Willy had stared back at him, fully erect with the sun shining so brightly on his face that it disguised the livid red nature of his alcohol-infused skin. He wore a Burberry trench coat. When Arch had asked about the coat being worn on a sunny eighty-degree day in downtown Rome, Willy blurted out the truth.

“I want to look like a spy. It’s so cool to actually be out here and doing this. Women are looking at me.”

Arch sighed so deeply he thought he might pass out from lack of oxygen. That not being looked at or noticed at all was exactly what the mission demanded escaped Willy completely. He was a cowboy. Non-combat types, non-field trained, agents who never left home, or the embassy, could not be made to understand real fieldwork. It was useless to try. No matter how many times real field agents attempted to describe what fieldwork was really like, it never worked. The home office, and affiliated

field offices, making up ninety percent of the CIA’s personnel, were penguins. Field people called office people ‘penguins’ while the office personnel referred to field agents as players. The word ‘player’ sounded, initially, better than penguin at first hearing, unless the tone the word was said it was taken into account.

It took hours for the woman to finally stop at a small deli, get a sandwich wrapped in white paper, and then walk the short distance from the deli to where the Trevi Fountain sat, pumping out its clear cool water into the pool that was attached to it. The Trevi had become famous from a song and then movie using its name, and Rome loved to take advantage of that fact. The woman didn’t take a seat by the pool, instead, walking all around the fountain to sit down on one of the stone benches that were set up between the back of the fountain and a beautifully constructed white office building just a few meters away.

Arch didn’t like it. There were too few people near where the woman sat, slowly unwrapping her sandwich. They really had no choice, however. To wait around the edge of the fountain was to lose sight of the woman and that they could not do. The woman was an embassy employee and not one of the local ones. As an American, she could not be electronically ‘tagged’ without a warrant. Even her cell phone location was protected. In Arch’s sixteen years with the agency, he’d only conducted physical surveillance three other times, and those had not gone well either.

Arch and Willy took seats on a nearby bench. Arch glanced directly at the woman, sitting in profile, but quickly looked away before she could notice his attention. It was enough. She was athletically built, wearing low pumps. A skirt, no stockings, and a simple white blouse were what she wore. Short hair, but not too short. The woman was about forty, Arch gauged, and attractive in a sharp-featured way. She gave no indication that she might have noticed two men sitting nearby, with one dressed out rather obviously as a spy.

“Why are we following her?” Willy asked, hushing his voice, although the sound of the fountain’s rushing water covered almost all other sounds.



“The purse,” Arch replied, wondering to himself why he was replying at all. “The purse is what we’re following, not the woman herself. I don’t even know her name or her position at the embassy.”

“But she’s got the purse,” Willy replied.

Arch glanced at the woman again, noting the Dooney Bourke purse clutched to her left side.

“For right now,” Arch said, finally.

“So, she’s a spy too, maybe giving information to the enemy?” Willy asked, his voice even more hushed than before.

“There is no enemy, and I don’t know why we’re following the purse.”

The woman suddenly got up, turned, crushing her empty sandwich paper in her right hand, and walked right toward them. Arch and Willy stared straight ahead as if there was something intensely interesting up the stairs and on the façade of the office building located only a few meters from where they sat.

The woman continued to walk straight ahead until she exited from behind the fountain. Arch turned his head to follow her movement.

“Washroom,” he murmured to Willy. “She’s headed straight for the women’s restroom across the plaza.”

“We just wait here?” Willy asked.

“No, you go stand by the wall over there,” Arch said. “The restrooms are down two sets of stairs behind the railing. We don’t know where she’s going when she comes out. With me here and you there we can cover all directions.”

Willy stood or tried to stand.

“What the hell?” he said, his voice near a hiss.

Willy pulled on the coat but the back of it was held fast to the stone bench. He slipped out of the coat, turned and then bent down close.

“Gum, my coats stuck to the seat with gum,” he exclaimed in shocked surprise. “A huge wad of gum has got my coat. I don’t want to tear it getting it off.”

“Leave it,” Arch said. “You can come to get it when she comes out, besides, you’ve played the spy thing about as far as it will go.”

Glumly, Willy followed orders and headed across the small plaza to where the toilets (or *gabinettos*) were located. He stopped and stood next to the railing where the men’s room was, just aside from the women’s.

Arch watched closely, waiting for the woman to come out to see what direction she would head in. Suddenly, however, Willy straightened up and ran toward the steps leading down to the women’s toilet. He said nothing, nor did he signal. Alarm bells went off in Arch’s head. He grabbed the Burberry and used all of his strength to jerk it from the bench it was glued to. He wrapped the coat around his right forearm, creating a huge cushion, and then ran at

full speed toward the woman’s bathroom.

He didn’t delay when he got there, plunging down the steps and thrusting himself through the open door. The scene that met him as he stopped was as shocking as it was patterned after other violent incidents from Arch’s past. Willy was down on his back, eyes closed, condition unknown. The woman was down in the corner with one man bending over her. The other man stood staring at Arch, his eyes big, surprise written all over him. The suppressed revolver in his hand didn’t move, so Arch did, stepping forward and ramming the tightly wrapped Burberry into his face. The gun went off twice, the rounds going through part of the wrapped coat but not hitting Arch’s arm. Arch twisted the revolver from the man’s hand, as he fell backward into the sink. Arch’s attack had been so hard and vicious that the mirror on the wall behind the sink shattered, sending shards everywhere.

Arch pulled his smoking trench-coated arm back and then slammed the man’s own weapon into the side of his head as hard as he could hit him. The second man stood up quickly, his head craned around to see his attacker. Slowly he stood, allowing the woman to quickly stand up too. Arch noted that she’d made no sound. No screams, and she didn’t give the appearance of being injured or attacked at all. The purse was still clutched to her chest.

Willy was moving. He slid out of the way as the unconscious man fell from the sink onto the tile floor. The second man raised his hands as if acting out a scene from an old American western.

“Help him up and then get the hell out of here,” Arch said to the woman, his eyes never leaving those of the second man. “Move as fast as you can to the business building behind the fountain. They’ll have security in a place like that. Call the police and wait. I’ll be along shortly.”

The woman did as she was ordered, Willy working to get control of himself and move through the open door. Arch stood waiting, most of his attention on the man with his hands raised. The shooter had not moved since he’d hit the floor.

“Non sparare,” the man said.

Arch understood. Don’t shoot. Slowly Arch brought the gun down. He unscrewed the large suppressor from the barrel, reached back and tossed it into the toilet behind him, then he pushed the small detent to open the cylinder and hit the loading lever on the left side of the revolver, noting it was a Smith and Wesson. He reflected on the fact that it was probably a .38 loaded with subsonic rounds. A quality weapon, two professionals and little question what should have gone down. The remaining four rounds spilled onto the tile floor.

Arch tossed the weapon down and then backed out the door. There was nothing in his mission about killing hitmen or settling scores. He ran toward the business build-

ing. He glanced behind him once, as he turned toward the center doors of the building. At the top of the stairs, he could see over the fountain but there was nothing to see. Tourists wandered about, taking pictures, selfies and then eating and talking as they sat about on the man benches placed around the pool part of the fountain. There was no sign of the two hitmen.

Arch went through the thick double glass doors only to be confronted immediately by two security guards dressed in well-made black security uniforms.

"I'm with them, are the police coming?" Arch asked, making sure his own empty hands were fully visible at his sides. The guards did not appear to be armed but such appearances could be very far from the truth in such situations.

"Minutes," one of the guards said in English, motioning Arch to put his hands on the counter to be searched. Arch complied. The guard unwrapped the damaged Burberry from Arch's arm and then carefully folded it and put it in on a nearby chair. The search was quick and professional. Arch breathed a sigh of relief. Losing the woman or the purse would have been a disaster for his already tattered and beaten career.

Arch walked to where the woman and Willy sat.

"They shot my coat," Willy lamented.

"Yes, they did but think how cool that will be when you make up a story about your exploits," Arch responded, before turning to the woman. He took the seat to her left.

"You're a player," he began, keeping his voice too low for the guards to hear, as they held the Burberry up to look at the blackened bullet holes all over it. It looked like the two bullets had made about ten holes because of the wrapping.

The woman said nothing.

"You're a player and you sure as hell don't work for State," Arch said. "What's in the purse?"

"They didn't get it," the woman replied.

"They didn't want it," Arch said. "They were a hit team. They intended to kill you.

"Why would they want to kill me?" the woman asked, in seemingly sincere surprise. "They might have presumed that you knew about what was in that purse," Arch said. Whatever it has is of enough importance to have a hit on you ordered, probably at a pretty high level. Those were professionals, either ex-military or police. These people are not playing around. What's in the purse?"

"A flash drive," the woman finally said, the fact that she was still alive just beginning to dawn on her.

"What's on it?" Arch asked, wondering if the woman would say a word.

"I'm with the DEA and what's on that implicates the Deputy Minister of this country," the woman replied, every-

thing coming out in one breath.

Arch shook his head and leaned forward to note that the right arm of his expensive sport coat had two creases cut into the outer part of the sleeve.

"Where in the hell do you think you are?" Arch asked, trying to keep his voice down but his temper rising. "Have you seen the Godfather, for Christ's sake? This country is a sieve of information passing. No wonder they were going to kill you, and now maybe the two of us with you."

"What do we do?" the woman asked, her voice registering shock for the first time.

"What's your name?" Arch asked more to calm her down than because he cared.

"Virginia, like the state," she replied.

"Yeah, I might have figured that last part on my own if given some time," Arch came back.

"We've got to get out of here is what we're going to do and then get to the Embassy and get out of this country," Arch made the plan as he talked, laying it out for her as if he'd known all along what had to be done.

"When we're out of the country your DEA can ask my CIA to give you protection. The police here are going to be no help, and their protection will be useless. Half the police in Rome have contacts with the Mafia."

Arch stood up and walked over to the two security guards. "We're leaving and will be at our embassy when the police arrive, but there's not going to be much to report to them, anyway."

The two guards looked at one another briefly. There was no way they could stop any civilian who wanted to get off their property unless there was a crime on the property, and Arch knew from their look that they knew that. Arch went back and pulled Virginia out of the chair by her left arm.

"We're out of here," he said, walking her between the two guards, who seemed like there were still making up their minds.

The look between them had made Arch uneasy. Had the police, whom they had called, asked them to detain all three of them? Willy scrambled after Arch and Virginia, leaning down to grab his destroyed coat.

Finding a cab was easy. The three of them rode in silence toward the nearby embassy, Arch counting every second, in hopes that the police would not somehow interdict them, or maybe someone worse than the police.

They made the embassy in mere minutes. Arch guided Virginia and Willy to the Marine guard at the gate.

"Sergeant of the guard," he instructed to the Marine Lance Corporal, pulling out his military I.D. card. The Lance Corporal took the card and then looked up.

"Yes, sir," he responded. "That would be right now, sir," he went on, needlessly.

He quickly handed Arch's card back, as the sergeant

had overheard the exchange and walked from a nearby guardhouse to where they were.

“Welcome back, Mr. Patton,” he said with a smile.

“I see you have guests.”

“Two, both American’s, and we need to get inside the gate like instantly.”

The weird wailing sound of police sirens could be heard in the near distance.

“What a shock,” the sergeant said, pushing all three of them toward, and then through, the main gate, ahead of others waiting in line.

“What are we going to do?” Virginia asked. “I never want to leave the embassy again.”

“The ambassador will get us out, probably by transport to a U.S. base, likely to be Gaeta, and then flying out military,” Arch replied. “For right now, just find a place to sit and write your report. I’m going to write mine. Make yourself into the hero because I’m going to write that you’re an idiot and make myself into the hero.”

“What about him?” Virginia asked, causing Arch to turn.

Willy stood a few yards away, wearing his Burberry trench coat, covered in what were obviously many bullet holes.

“I can wear this, really, I think it’ll be fine,” he said, preening around and smiling grandly.

Arch stood staring, unimpressed by the coat but impressed by Willy. During and after what he’d been through the cowboy agent had remained unshaken and seemingly without much fear. There was more to the man than his wearing of the coat might indicate.

“Well, I’m certainly going to make him out to be an idiot in his own report,” Virginia said, before stopping abruptly and looking up into Arch’s eyes. “Will I see you again, ever?” she asked.

Arch looked away for a few seconds before bringing his gaze back. He tried not to lie to her, for reasons he couldn’t explain to himself.

“If you want to,” he replied. “I’ll make it possible for you to track me down but remember, this incident isn’t over for any of us. Not yet, and maybe never.”

Real fieldwork is that kind of business. He pointed over at Willy preening around in his bullet-riddled Burberry. “That trench coat took the rounds that were meant for you. You might look into buying one of them when you get to London again.”





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