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Our Town Eccentric

by

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to
The Greatest Small Town in America

Introduction

This book is based on *actual people and events* in the small town I call home.

Some names have been changed to protect *both* the innocent and the not so innocent.

Some events have been slightly fictionalized. So take them with a grain of salt. (Better yet, with a *pound* of salt.)

Nonetheless, friends and neighbors will recognize themselves. And *get the joke*.

Chapter One

Don't fret about it. No reason to hang your head in shame. (*Shake* your head? That's okay.)

Or move away. Won't do any good.

Every town has one:

The town eccentric!

We sure as tootin' got one here. All of us have spotted him at least once:

Mozying around town. And on the nature trail. Even hikes on the spur roads. (Don't mind that as much. Away from folks. Too bad he doesn't keep going. To the next county. Or the next state. Or the next country.)

Pity the poor shopkeepers! Barges in. No invite. Peppers the poor devils with dumb jokes!

Doesn't buy much. Not enough to justify the misery. I'd throw him out. Maybe call the police. It'd serve him right.

Heard rumors about him. Wild things. Adventures overseas. Interpol. Money laundering. Gun running. International terrorism. Witnesses disappearing without a trace. Luxury hotels. Hot women.

Heard rumors about other folks, too. Just as wild. Wife-swapping parties. Blackmail You name it!

The problem was plain and simple:

His dumb jokes were driving folks nuts!

So some concerned citizens did their civic duty. Formed a committee to deal with this menace to society. Talked with townsfolk. Said he might hurt tourism. They just shrugged it off.

Our committee's name:

Freedom Champion Committee (FCC)

I was one of the first members. Ain't rich. But it was for a good cause!

First thing we did was go to the sheriff.

Sheriff: "No law was broken."

Then we went to a lawyer.

Lawyer: "Not actionable."

Then we went to the looney bin.

Looney bin: "No way! We'd have to hire more staff!"

Then we went to the ministers.

Ministers: “Pray for him.”

Then we went to a whole slew of *state government* offices.

State government offices: “Not our department.”

Didn't go to the feds. (Everybody knows the *federal government* don't work no more. It's *dysfunctional*.)

Then somebody came up with an idea:

Give a howler to his kinsfolk.

Worth a shot. Gave it a try.

Easier said than done!

Probably hiding out somewhere...going by another moniker...far away. Or dead. Suicide, I'd reckoned. Couldn't say I'd blamed 'em. Better off dead.

What to do next? We had to do *something*.

The whole town might wind up in the looney bin!

Couldn't afford that. Taxes were bad enough already.

We were starting to get worried. Then lady luck smiled on us. Just proves it. *The Lord works in mysterious ways!*

Out of the blue somebody came to US!

Said he was...

The eccentric's EVIL TWIN BROTHER!

Said he'd keep an eye on him. Send us reports. Wanted money. Sounded fishy. Was he legit? Or a crook?

Told him had to *prove himself!* By golly, he did just that. Gave us a copy of a "Confidential Internal Memo" from an outfit linked to his brother: *REX Inc..*

My blood ran cold!

There it was. Plain as day. *My own name!*

Why? Was there a spy in our group?

That done it. We hired him on the spot!

They already had *their* spy. Now we had *our* spy! (“B” is too dangerous. Our wives might get the wrong idea. So we called him “Barney”. Even though that ain’t his real name.)

Figured we should learn how to conduct an investigation.

Read comic books. Watched James Bond movies. Enjoyed that. Especially the gals. Mighty good lookers.

But we paid the price. All that popcorn put on a pound or two. Didn’t notice. Until the scale broke. Foreign junk! Didn’t bother to get a new one.

But it was worth it! Learned something important.

We’d always *trusted* doctors. But there are *exceptions*. One in particular looks more and more fishy every day! Rumored to be a pal of a bigshot Italian politician named Julius.

If folks can't trust their *own doctors*, why should they dismiss the possibility that this newcomer's *dumb jokes* are an *experiment in psychological warfare*?

Was there a *connection* between this *psychological warfare experiment* and the *biological warfare experiment* that led to the pandemic?

Somebody had to do something! So we went to the authorities.

City wouldn't do nothing. County and state likewise. We weren't desperate enough yet to go to the feds.

What should we do next?

Reckoned we'd better trail him. Find out what he's up to. Maybe expose a *spy ring*.

Seen him go to the post office darn near every day. Mighty suspicious! Meeting someone? Staked out the place.

Spotted him there. Telling a dumb joke. Post office lady smiled at his first two dumb jokes. Laughed at the third.

Caught him in the act! *Witnessed a psychological warfare experiment!*

Smilin' at his dumb jokes is the *first symptom*.

Laughin' the *second*.

What's the *third*? The looney bin?

The poor gal saw him almost every day. No wonder she was infected. We prayed it wasn't already too late to save her.

We'd seen enough. Drew straws. The fella who got the short straw had to go the feds.

Wrote his will. Kissed his wife good-bye. Hopped the train to Washington.

Never saw him again. Disappeared without a trace.

Learned our lesson. Never do *that* again!

Meanwhile, Barney had sent us more of their memos. Naturally, they used codes and code names. So we had to decipher them.

HH was easy to figure out. **HH** = *Howdy, Howdy*. Common greeting in these parts. Nutcase himself often said *howdy*.

NS was harder to crack. But we did. **NS** = *Nice Sex*. Was this a reference to the wife-swapping rumor?

BS took some thinking. Obviously, **B** = *Biological*. But **S**? Fortunately, **HH** provided a clue. **S** was an abbreviation of *SS*. And *SS* was associated *war*. Therefore, **BS** = *biological warfare*.

The fiends were indeed conducting experiments in TWO kinds of warfare! At the same time! Right here! In our town!

Had ‘em dead to rights.

Figured town and county wouldn't have enough deputies to round up the whole ring. Feds were out of the question. So we decided we'd try our luck in the state capital again.

This time we had better luck. Naturally, we got the run around at first. This took a few days. So we did some sight-seeing. Capital ain't too bad for a big city. Just too many people. Ain't natural. Livestock should outnumber people. Cause less trouble. Saw the capitol. Nice place. But too tall. Anything that tall should be put to better use. Hold grain.

Finally, we found a STATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL who listened. Quietly. Obviously, he realized the seriousness of this threat..

He made a phone call. Called in an expert in this field. A psychologist. We repeated the whole story. He listened. Quiet. Like the first fella. Then he made a phone call.

Another expert rushed over. Even faster. A psychiatrist. This time our report was recorded. Too important to trust memory or hen scratches!

The three of them conferred. Didn't understand much. Spoke expert lingo. Then they told us what to do.

Don't tell anybody outside our group. Gather more intel. Send it to them. They'd take it from there.

We gave them the code name **Pyscho Command**. **(PC)**.

Finally! The government was involved. We were no longer completely alone.

Thank goodness our great town is located in a great state. Even though it has two big cities. Ain't no state perfect. We trust our state government. Leastwise *some*. More than *most* states. *But stay away from the feds!*

We provided a lot of extremely valuable intel! **PC** appreciated our reports. Always thanked us. Asked us to keep 'em coming.

Our fears were confirmed.

The fiends had established an important secret base in our county. And a local network of operatives. How many similar bases existed around the world?

By this point we had long since stopped referring to him as “the eccentric.” We nicknamed him *Nutcase*. More accurate. Easier to remember than **NC**. Might confuse that with *North Carolina*.

**Nutcase’s exact role was unclear.
But he was definitely an important figure.**

Just about every day he’d “make his rounds.” Stopped at the same places. Talked to lots of people. Even dogs and cats. Came across as a friendly fella. Just a little odd. Maybe “little” ain’t the right word, if you get my drift.

But just maybe...

Some folks were cohorts.

Some talk was secret code.

Some dogs were couriers”

Quite possible!

Just maybe...

His canoe was actually a miniaturized u-boot! River nearby. Could escape to South America. Liked Southerners. Sometimes he'd skip his rounds for a spell. Maybe that's where he went.

UFOs? His paw had worked for NASA. These days even the feds admit they exist.

Sure, this sounds extremely farfetched! But stranger things have happened. *Like people laughing at his dumb jokes!*

One thing alarmed us most: *More and people were starting to laugh at his dumb jokes!* Obviously, they had been *infected*. This scourge was *spreading!* At the *same time* as the *other* pandemic!

What was the connection between the two?

Had their evil genius scientists bioengineered a combo weapon? The equivalent of a Bio-Pyscho “V3”? They’d had plenty of time since 1945.

On the one hand, that seemed *highly* unlikely.

But on the other hand, the pandemic involved a *man-made virus* created by *grafting*.

And it’s NOT as UNLIKELY as lots of folks laughing at his dumb jokes!

That Sirlock fella said if everything else gets ruled out what’s left over is likely right. Made sense.

Think about it:.

**The world’s gone NUTS!
Accident or intentional?**

Maybe we were getting a bit paranoid, but we had to ask ourselves:

Had these fiends wrecked our state government, too?

Made sense that SOMEBODY wrecked the FEDERAL government FIRST. Big Government = Big Idiots.

Ain't out of the question.

We asked ourselves:

Why did *our* town suffer more from the *dumb jokes* than it did from the *pandemic*? Everywhere else it was the *opposite*.

The answer was obvious:

Our town was the point of origin. The “Wuhan” of the *dumb joke epidemic*. An epidemic that would soon spread throughout the whole world! *Unless we stopped it!*

So we went to the capital for a second face-to-face meeting with **PC**.

For security reasons this meeting was held in the state regional center. Made sense they'd center psychologi-

cal warfare research there. Extra security had been mobilized.

Everybody was very polite. *Too* polite. This made us suspicious.

We didn't waste any time on sight-seeing. We went straight home. And asked ourselves:

What should we do?

We asked Pastor Bill. He said pray. We prayed. And God told us what to do.

End of First Chapter
Next Chapter in Preparation