

VICTOR HENRY

The Trick Shot Artist

Elmer and Mildred, recently retired for the past couple of years, had been a vaudeville trick shot team for over forty years. He had thrown thousands of knives to outline her comely figure. Countless times he had shot pieces of chalk from her ears. He was dubbed the sensational, astonishing, amazing Mr. Pure Shot. In their late seventies, his eyesight failing, her body reaching its elastic stress limit, they made a cameo appearance at the annual Bulls-Eye homecoming celebration on a fun filled Saturday night. His memory muscle was perfect during their knife throwing act. In the second part of the performance, the shooting act, Mildred placed chalk pieces in her ears and ruminated on the new indoor privy they would add to their small but comfortable cabin on the plains. Elmer raised his rifle, his arms never wavering or quivering, took aim and fired. Fifteen hundred spectators gazed in stunned surprise. Sinking to the floor, Mildred's thought of remodeling vanished, the bullet passing through her head, raising a slight puff of chalk dust. After the inquest the coroner pronounced the shooting accidental.

Three Men Facing North

Three men facing north stare across the invisible border, a river of indifference a million times wider and deeper than the Rio Grande. They have seen el Norte's sterile families on sitcoms and watched relationships prosper and deteriorate on soaps, the perfect world crumbling internally. They watch helplessly as corporate kings such as Coca Cola and McDonald's invade their landscape. And their feelings are mixed. They struggle against internal colonialism dragging them down deeper into a misunderstood cultural abyss, their Third World plague. They stand by like understudies in an audition at the post-modern version of West Side Story. Bigots and racists call them illegal aliens, as if they were a subhuman species from another planet. The politically correct address them as undocumented workers. To the north, in the land of the lotus eaters, wise men bear gifts of exploitation, death squads, and cultural violation.

Henry Kissinger and Pol Pot Reminisce About the Good Old Days

At an afternoon luncheon for mass murders, mobsters, criminals, crooks, gangsters, and goons, Henry the K, known as the Butcher of Cambodia and remembered for the Christmas bombings, and Saloth Sar, aka Pol Pot, architect of Cambodian genocide, sit across from one another at a table reserved for the despicable, the detestable, and the disgraceful, drinking dry martinis, reminiscing about the good old days, when killing was sport, when it was fun and games, when it was, well, shall we say, an imperial joie de vivre.

All the gods, pagan and holy, sit at tables reserved for the morally bankrupt. Henry the K nonchalantly waves to Genghis Khan, Hitler, Stalin, and George W. Bush, sitting at a table across from them. Each superstar, a lifetime member, responsible for the death of, at least, a million souls, is basking in self-admiration, the intoxication of hatred, the pleasure of the past.

K snickers to himself. I used to say this at meetings and get guffaws galore: The illegal we do immediately; the unconstitutional takes a little longer.

Pol says he circled the masses. I killed the intellectuals first, the ones who spoke for the masses of illiterates. First, you mute their voices. Second, you promise them death. In four years I murdered over a million in the killing fields.

K, about to reply, stops abruptly.

In the background they hear applause. Shouts. There's stirring amongst the honored guests. The din becomes louder and louder, until...

The main speaker, the one they have all been waiting for, has arrived, decked in armor like a Praetorian Guard, wearing a Kevlar Vest.

Tonight's topic: Shadow Governments.

Oliver North, America's favorite traitor, bulletproof vest manufacturer, book author, conservative radio commentator, who collaborated with FEMA on plans for martial law and concentration camps in the homeland, steps to the podium, and in a saintly voice says, I was authorized to do everything that I did.

Victor Henry's work has appeared in various small press magazines, anthologies, and Ezines. He holds two earned master's degrees, enjoys working as a reference librarian, is a Vietnam veteran, and a member of Veterans for Peace.