

Blast from the Past

Mick Piontek

Co Luu

June 16, 2020

The name on the work order stated Mrs. Berk 312 Elm St Shawano Wisconsin. I install and service window blinds and drapery and this job appeared to be like any other. The blind was purchased by a Jerry Berk for his wife's business so on Monday I took a trip to Shawano. Locating the address I was presented with what years ago was a ranch style home on a large lot on the outskirts of the town. The lot contained several small buildings perhaps at one time gift shops and storage garages. Many elderly people milling about but a lack of automobiles. I proceeded to find Mrs Berk which turned out to be quite difficult asking the seniors for help brought looks of confusion or over zealous responses resulting in "She's around here some place". I pressed on and started with the ranch home well it had been a home at one time and may still be but the covered porch was consumed by what I call "garden junk" the attached garage loaded with tables covered in small articles ranging from kitchen ware to collections of shot glasses apparently a long term garage sale. Milling about at every turn were the seniors but it did not look as though they were shopping more like they were socializing and passing time. Still no Mrs Berk so I entered the first small building after being told Mrs Berk might be in the back kitchen this space consisted of two rooms with the promise of a kitchen in the back but getting to the kitchen door proved to be a challenge as the front two rooms were filled with furniture, round tables set with dinner ware and surrounded by stuffed chairs with side tables and lamps and a menagerie of "stuff" every where. The second room was decorated similar but there was a large old fashioned radio cabinet along one wall and on the two opposing walls were large windows draped in a sheer fabric tied back. The small room were overpowered by the furnishings but the seniors liked to congregate in this room and while disguising their curiosity about me continued to carry on. "Have you seen Mrs Berk? Is she in the kitchen?" as I tried to negotiate the small isles between the tables hoping to get to that kitchen door. The table nearest the the door appeared to be set up as a card playing table so I asked what card game they played and the group in the room immediately responded "shun—hun" Sheep Head ? I responded "shun—hun" they confirmed "one two three"? They looked confused.

Carefully opening the kitchen door I encountered Mrs Berk and two other women and explained my purpose Mrs Berk instructed me to follow her and we proceeded to the next building this one had one large room with a small office in

back. Mrs Berk wound her way thru the narrow aisles left between the abundant furniture as I tried to keep up and I almost did till an elder woman stepped into my path. She wanted to know who I was ?...why I was here?.. was I married?.. how many children I had?.. I tried to answer her questions and keep an eye on Mrs Berk but she disappeared behind the door to the office I hoped there was not a back door and Mrs Berk would notice I was not behind her before she got to far. It was becoming apparent to me that there was a assisted living home very near and these people were using these small buildings as community space.

I never did get that shade installed or catch up with Mrs Berk because just then I awoke.I screamed saying "what is going on? Why is there a lump on my skull?" I got up and sat on the driver side seat and thought to myself "what had just happened? Did I forgot to do all my to-do-list?" Then I have a second thought of confidence that I did finished all my to-do-list that Mrs. Berk had assigned for me to do. The question then struck me, and I quickly realized that this red Ford pickup truck wasn't mine. If it isn't mine then who does this truck belong to? I search around the dashboard and glove compartment for the key to ignite the engine of red Ford. All the sudden I spot it on the floor by the passenger seat. I reached for the key, grab it with my right hand, and place it into the keyholder to light up the truck. I waited for a bit to warm up the engine because winter here in Shawano, Wisconsin can be brutal if not taken precautions to care for it.As I waited for a couple of minutes to warm up , Mrs. Berk comes running out yelling at me to get off her property. I got scared and decided to get out of there. I drove to where I parked my own work truck and left the Ford by the side of the road with the keys in it. I drove across town to meet up with my partner in a coffee shop on the south side of Shawano.

My name is Myka Collins and I work for the department of Homeland Security special agent for telephone scams.I've been doing this for 5 years usually under cover. Today's assignment was no different. We were responding to tips about abnormal activity around the Berk property and unusually large telephone usage. so we decided to take a look.My partner (you fill in the name you want to use) provided backup and communication channel to the office she was also very good with a gun. Todays adventure suggested we had hit a nerve perhaps those seniors play a big part in their opperations. I was anxious to get feed back from my partner.