

Lady Marin

By Sheila Raphael

Chapter 7: Agent Lady

Greta Garbo and Carry Grant headed for the red P.W. Cabrio in the parking lot after washing their hands. It was too soon after lunch to celebrate with food, but not with drinks. They would drive by the home office on the way for a brief debrief on the sales win. They planned out the rest of their afternoon and evening on the way to the office.

Brad wrapped up his research reading and walked back to his small room for some reflections. Thinking about the Toxic Avengers brought up his relationship with Carolyn Glide, his technical talent agent. She had been instrumental in getting him the gig at Fauxboro, a process-control instrumentation company. (Process-control gear is used in big industrial chemical manufacturing, which is ueber geeky.)

Brad met Carolyn when he was shopping around for a new gig. The story of his lay-off from Hinky Hoinky Boink serves as fodder for a different framework. Let's just say it freed him up to look for a better opportunity. As he was answering want ads, he encountered the Manhattan branch of Carolyn's agency. They got him a wide array of interviews in the area. He had an eye-opening interview at Salmon Bros., a financial giant that tests its employees for drug use. This was how Carolyn's agency learned of Brad's opposition to drug testing. It was not only because of his mild cannabis habit, but because of the intrusiveness of the process.

Another interview had him consider working on the TauPhone product, a subsidiary product line of Tau Cojones, the people behind the Ball Street Journal financial rag. They were a highly unlikely employer for a radical such as Brad. The array of finance operations that Brad interviewed helped fuel his interest in New England, home of Carolyn's H.Q.

As Brad reminisced about his journey to New England, Greta and Carry were visiting the L.A. offices of their own employer. Their boss invited them to a conference room where the executives, including their own C.I.O., debriefed them. The boss popped the cork on the first bottle of celebratory champagne. The new contract meant expanding the sales staff, so the H.R. lady was invited to join them. It was a festive occasion, especially for Greta who would lead the new sales team. As of that day, she was in management. Carry earned the title Greta had earlier in the day.

Brad's job-search back in '86 included a couple of trips to New England to visit Carolyn's offices and hiring managers at a variety of industrial firms. It was during the second trip that he landed the Fauxboro gig. This set the stage for the move, first to Quincy, then to Dorchester. Quincy is a quaint Boston suburb with a colorful history.

The hunt for an apartment took Brad and Betsy, his first partner, to South Boston where they encountered pubescent middle scholars looking for help scoring beer. A very young lady was indignant when Betsy and Brad turned down her request to buy her and her young friends beer at the packie (packaged goods store). Doing so would have violated a law against supplying minors with the divine slurp. It would also have contributed to an early start on alcoholism. An experience with a racist landlady sent them up south to find a spot closer to Fauxboro, but accessible to Boston's Redline Train.

While working at Fauxboro, Betsy and Brad attended some parties at the Glide Family summer home in a North Shore gated community. It was during one of those parties when Brad intersected with some of Carolyn's gnarlier friends. Two of them were party animals who probably rented their bottoms to other guys. There was also a cuddly lady with graying hair who made an overt play for Brad's affections. He knows someone who is her spittin' image working at the Main Library (as of this writing).

When things started to go north at Fauxboro, Brad met Carolyn for lunch. She told him to hold out for another year. It would be better on his resume to not be a job shopper, but it would also fulfill her agency's contract with Fauxboro. Nine months later, they had another lunch together. He told her he was bailing and she could either help or cut bait. She committed to assisting him.

After their champagne party, Greta and Carry drove the red Cabrio back to her neighborhood. From her parking space, they strolled over to her favorite watering hole around the corner. "Hey, guys. The usual?" Their favorite mixologist got the nod to prepare a glass of zin for Greta and a pinto of Indiana Pail Ale (I.P.A.) for Carry. (It's a Prohibition thing – you just wouldn't understand.) Jeanette had been a Hollywood hairdresser back in the day. Not that she worked for a movie house, but for a variety of famous stars. Her styles earned her a cool \$600 per. She retired to mixology when young upstarts took away her clients.

Back in San Francisco, Brad thought back to his interviews for jobs to replace his Fauxboro gig. There was one in particular that stood out. An insurance firm was in the market for an engineer to upgrade their agent connectivity system. Each agent had a computer that could connect in to the central server by modem (phone connection). The job was relatively junior, and Brad would report to the guy responsible for the current system. The hiring manager wanted to put Brad in charge and make the current dude his helper. The V.P. admitted to criminal activity.

After the interview, Brad phoned Carolyn to learn that she had an offer in hand already. Brad told her about the hinky factor, and that he could not possibly work there. She was fine with that, but she wanted to hold onto the offer until she could leverage it for a different gig. That is how she landed him the position at BenchaCom, which took him to Japan. He was a perfect fit there because he was familiar with their sweet product in use at Fauxboro.