

THE AMAZING “FLYING RYANONI” AND BELATED LETTER OF GRATITUDE TO TRUMBULL AND OFFICER MIKE DELVECCHIO

Heretofore, I have tried to keep a wrap on the infamous “Ryan Rap Sheet” and the sundry nefarious escapades chronicled in its gilt edged pages. Having obtained special permission from a channneler, whom I have it on best authority, tunes in J. Edgar Hoover- in digital no less- I will unburden myself of the tawdry details of my sordid past.

It was a blustery New England fall morning; penguins were wearing ear muffs and mighty oaks bent submissively to another Nor’easter. Having dreamt often of running away to join the circus, although I am told much of my childhood already was one thus traveling was unnecessary, I fashioned myself as The Amazing “FLYING RYANONI”- daredevil and tight rope walker, par excellence. The rope was the ledge on the outside of the Unity Road-Merritt Parkway Bridge overpass. The passion that drove my pursuit into the halls of idiocy was instigation issuing from the curled lips of the infamous, “Moose” Tobin. Moose had broken with all protocol and issued a “Double Dog Dare”. Not being one to suffer the ignominious pains of refusing a “Double Dog Dare”, The Amazing “FLYING RYANONI” began to tip toe and traipse across the outer ledge whose girth was happily more than a seven year old boys’ Buster Brown Oxfords.

In moments, all manner of hell broke loose as the ever vigilant “townies” spotted The Amazing “FLYING RYANONI”, whipped out a trusty bullhorn, (to me the voice of GOD), and ordered me to cease and desist. I would have, but at that age I had no clue what in the hell that meant. Nonetheless, I grasped the general concept that I had, indeed, “doo-doo’ed” in my knickers. I would forever be branded a heinous felon. I languished in the dread that I was to be incarcerated for life (or at least past puberty), and never again taste my Mommas Lasagna; (banned in three states due to addiction problems). I happily dismounted from my mighty granite and steel steed to the adoring hysterical laughter of what previously was my best ever pals.

Lesson teaching was quite the rage then. Thus it was off to the pokey with the young miscreant. The story of that journey and meeting the largest homo sapien known to man, a monumental hairy mound of masculinity, Officer Mike Delvecchio, remains too painful to relate at this time.

The tale is true and the lessons were learned. Thank GOD for growing up in a town where the police were ever vigilant, willing to intercede socially and teach, albeit painfully for a little tike, a number of wonderful lessons for life. Although this episode was rather dramatic, going off to the pokey was also a watershed and attitude forming event regarding sentiments held to this day. Furthermore it was fully sanctioned by my very well known Dad, the late Thomas Ryan, chairman of the building committee

during Trumbulls' Go Go days and the iconic, butt kicking first grade teacher, Gina Ryan, who smacks the snots out of little white balls, zips around town in her LL bean Subaru breaking gigolo Porsche jockeys' hearts, and surfs the web like a seasoned Tsunami wave warrior.

I have a deep and abiding respect and affection for the concept of the community officer who serves and protects; the ever vigilant officer looking a little longer around the corner or making the extra effort to be sure all is well. I formed an opinion early on of a policeman as a member of the community who participates as well as patrols from the mindset of an insider invested in the community, not an enforcer, per se.

Their apprehension of me was for the safety of many, principally beginning with me. There was also a healthy dose of understanding that what I perceived as harmless personal actions and acts of great bravado intended to win peer approval might have unintended consequences. Certainly, I was a dangerous distraction to motorists- both below on the rural but well traveled road and of course on the parkway just a few feet behind me. This was clearly and carefully explained to me and my world became much bigger that day. Furthermore, the potential bad dividend of succumbing to pressure from my peers was seen in a whole new and more mature light. There was as well a more refined understanding of who really is your friend. All the other kids ran like the wind (as would have I), and later swore it was all my idea

A big brother may cuff your ears and dress you down, but he also can be a safe place and a trusted friend. That was what it was like growing up in my Little Lake Wobegon. Trumbull, Connecticut. In later years, as I journeyed through many lands and much more dangerous and precarious settings-both in and out of uniform, there was always a sense of familiarity, approachability and respect for those who serve, as I once did myself.

Big Mike Delvecchio was a teddy bear- all bear when needed, and all teddy when appropriate. It was a good thing. Thanks Mike, thanks Mom and Dad, thanks Trumbull...and now ...about that Moose Tobin

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