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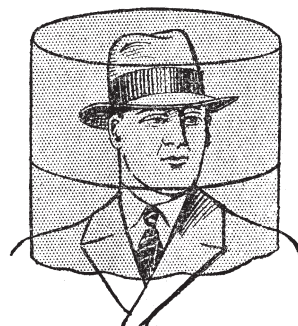
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PACO PRIVADO

IN '(UN)FRIENDLY HELPERS'

BY *Larry Kovaks* P.I.

I'M FILTHY AS A TOMCAT ON THE MUELLE. SMEARED WITH MUSTARD AND DIRT. SITTING IN A CRAMPED DIVE AT THE FOOT OF PARK GÜELL. PUFFING ON A NEAR-DEAD DUCADO. I KNOCK BACK MY THIRD SHOT OF MASCARÓ, REACH FOR MY WALLET. IT'S GONE.
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT.
THE GYPMEISTER GOT THE FAKE ONE.

EARLIER TODAY I GOT THE DOPE ON SOME LOUSY CROOKS IN PARK GÜELL. TAKING ADVANTAGE OF PEOPLE GETTING CRAPPED ON BY PIGEONS. WHAT THEY DO IS OFFER TO WIPE THE CRAP OFF, THEN SOMEHOW SWIPE THE VICTIM'S DOUGH.
SO I WAS UP IN THE PARK, WALKING BY A FANCY-SCHMANCY GINGERBREAD HOUSE. GUIRIS WITHOUT A CLUE EVERYWHERE. PHOTOS HERE. PHOTOS THERE. IF I WAS A GYPMEISTER, I THOUGHT, I'D START HERE. I FOLLOWED FLAGSTONES THROUGH A PRETTY FAIRYTALE GARDEN. WINDCHIMES WENT TINKLY TINKLY.

THERE WAS A FOLIAGED ARC. BUNCHES OF PALOMAS. BUT I STOPPED EYEBALLING THE FLYING SHIT MACHINES WHEN I SAW SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY... RIGHT PAST THE ARC WAS A MAN WITH TISSUE POISED. HE WAS ABOUT TO WIPE BIRD GOO OFF A POOR OLD LADY. HE WAS DRESSED IN GREEN CARGO SHORTS. WORE A FISHERMAN'S CAP. A CAMERA HUNG FROM HIS NECK. I THOUGHT HE WAS TRYING TO FOOL ME. INTO THINKING HE'S A GUIRI, THAT IS.

I TACKLED HIM. HE WHELPEL LIKE A SICKLY PUPPY. WE WERE IN THE DUST. MY HAT FLEW OFF. THEN SCREAMING. HYSTERICAL SCREAMING. "TONY!!!!" I ROLLED THE PERP OVER AND HE WAS BLINKING, STUNNED. THE LADY SCREAMED, "MY HUSBAND!!!"
I GOT UP, MY FACE DRIPPING EGG. I GALLANTLY HELPED TONY UP, THEN BENT DOWN TO PICK UP MY DUSTY HAT. LITTLE TONY WAS IN A DAZE. I'M A BIG GUY.

RELLENO AS THEY SAY HERE. MY LOCOMOTIVE FORCE MUST'VE KNOCKED HIS WIND OUT.

"MY APOLOGIES, MAM." I DID MY BEST TO GENUFLECT, DESPITE MY BUDDHA PAUNCH.
I HANDED HER A BUSINESS CARD.
LARRY KOVAKS, P.I.

"YOU NEED ANYTHING. CALL ME." PEOPLE WERE STARING. THE LADY KEPT SCREAMING. I GOT THE HELL OUT. WALKING AWAY, DOWN A DIRT PATH, I HEARD FUNNY-SOUNDING ENGLISH.
"MISTER. HAVE SUMTING ON COAT."
I TURNED AND SAW THIS LEVANTINE MIDGET IN A DIMESTORE SUIT. HE HAD TISSUE POISED.

I WHIPPED MY COAT OFF. SURE ENOUGH THERE WAS A PISS-YELLOW STAIN STREAKING IT. LOOKED LIKE MUSTARD. THE GUY STEPPED IN WITH THE TISSUE. HE MADE IT WORSE, SMEARING THE MUSTARD SUBSTANCE WITH THE DIRT. I TOLD HIM TO BUG OFF. HE LEERED, SPIT OUT:
"I JUST TRY TO HELP. BUG OFF TO YOU!"
MY COVER WAS BLOWN. I WALKED AWAY, DOWN TO THE CITY.

SO NOW I'M IN THIS DIVE. SCRATCH IN HAND, DESPITE THE ATTEMPT AT CROOKERY.

SEE, I KNEW I WAS GOING TO GET FLEECEC AGAIN. THE CREEP IN THE DIMESTORE SUIT MUST HAVE SQUIRTED MUSTARD ON ME. THAT'S HIS M.O. HE SQUIRTS CRAP, THEN OFFERS TO CLEAN IT SO HE CAN LIFT YOUR WALLET.

BUT THIS TIME HE GOT A FAKE WALLET, WITH A LOVE LETTER I LEFT INSIDE:
"LOUSY GYPMEISTERS. KOVAKS IS ON YOUR ASS."
SOMETIMES I AMAZE MYSELF. I KNOCK BACK MY FOURTH SHOT OF MASCARÓ AND ORDER ANOTHER... BEER BACK.

THE NAME'S LARRY KOVAKS, AKA PACO PRIVADO. I FIGHT VICE. IT'S ALL OVER BARCELONA. AND I GOT THE DOPE ON IT.

THE CHICA'S GUIDE TO FUTBOL

UNA PORRA DE FUTBOL BY *Gaby Strelzyn*

So, my main mission here in Barcelona is getting chicas interested in football. I am telling you: it's not easy. But the fact that the World Cup is here helps. Football is all around. You girls, however, tend to only watch the games of your home country. *What a waste!* Unless you are from Italy, you miss out on a lot of, well let's say, interesting things to watch.

Trying to turn things around here, I am offering you to play in the BCN WEEK *Porra de Fútbol*.

What's a *Porra*? Don't worry, you won't have to actually go and buy yourself a pair of cleats. Basically, you predict who is going to win the World Cup. It goes like this:

At the start of the tournament there are eight groups consisting of four countries each. The two countries that win the most games in their group get to the second round — and so on to the final. You just let us know who is going to beat who *y ya esta!*

But ehm, why make the effort? Well, joining the *Porra* makes watching the games much more exciting: there's something at stake! You might not know the teams, but suddenly you're in favour of one of the two! And believe me, football is more fun that way.

How? As I'm always saying: I don't know everything about the game. Let alone about the qualities of Trinidad &

Tobago — although I'm pretty sure they are not as good as Brazil or Argentina (who I predict to be in the final). But who now is going to be the *weltmeister*?

Riquelme for example, this Argentinian midfielder is Cancer and will probably meet Brazil's Kaká in the final, who's a definite Taurus. Prediction for Taurus is that they will be successful around the 10th, because of their analytical abilities. Argentina-Brazil: 0-1.

Let's move on to striker Cruz and *portero* Dida. They are both Libra so they will stay in balance. A tie.

Then there are striker Tevez and Brazil's Roberto Carlos: Aquarius vs. Aries. February-born Tevez is able to show off his skills while Carlos is having problems with his libido. Argentina-Brazil: 1-1.

One last pick: Argentinian surprise Saviola (Sagittarius), will most likely come across defender Cris (Gemini). In July, Gemini have Mars in their sign at odds with Pluto, and get blamed for every mishap. At the same time Sagittarius are not tolerating consistently bad behaviour. Argentina-Brazil 2-1.

See? It's not that hard to predict a score! Have a go at bcnweek.com and join the BCN WEEK *Porra de Fútbol*.

Prizes to be won, eternal fame to be earned at our site, and loads of football to enjoy for you this month!