

FICTION, 2ND Place: Kyler Williams

Teacher: Meredith Baine, Jonesboro High School

The Case of the Muppet Murder

Author's Note: Since Popeye the Sailor has been known to mangle the English language when talking to a person, we had a professional translator translate what Popeye said when he recounted the tale, and then put it on paper, then handed it to Mickey Mouse, the neighbor, so he could read what Popeye was trying to say. This is a record of the documents the translator wrote down. We also made some edits to make it more professional but everything in the recount is true. Thank you.

“Well, is anyone going to fess up!?!?” The Lorax yelled.

“Who could have done such a horrible thing?!” Uncle Rich asked, yelling.

I was just speechless. I couldn't believe my eyes, but then again I had to.

Then Lance came out of the elevator with his wife, Estelle, bags in hand. But then he dropped his bags and turned his kids around. He later told them he didn't want them to see the horror. The dead body, on his own living room floor.

Let me back up, The night before we had a big party and stayed up till at least one- thirty. I was all to celebrate Lance getting a scholarship to go back to school to get his master's degree. He was, and still is super rich, his net worth being four-point-seven trillion. He may be the richest man on the planet, but he is humble. Anyways, the party was amazing! We had chips and drinks and watched movies. And even Uncle Rich decided to show up. By the way, Uncle Rich is nobody's uncle, but that's what we call him. His full name is Rich Uncle Pennybags, but we call him Uncle Rich for short. But when everyone started to head off to bed, Kermit (yes, Kermit the Frog) hung back. He said that he was going to watch some television and catch up on his shows. Nobody knows how long he stayed up. We never would have imagined this. But when we had all come down the elevator of Lance's ten story mansion, we had all seen the horror. Something I'll never unsee. My nephew's body, Lying on the floor. With a bullet through his heart. Kermit the Frog lying dead on the living room floor.

When Lance came down with his bags to go off to college again, his reaction was different than everyone else. He did the first thing a good father of four would, which was to turn them around so they wouldn't be traumatized, obviously. His wife, Estelle, however fainted about thirty seconds after seeing the body. I wish that was my reaction. Maybe then I might have forgotten what had happened and not had to see it.

Anyway, after we woke Estelle up, we had to figure out three things: What to do with the body, who killed Kermit, and what to do with the suspected killer. We all already had a good guess as to why he, of the bunch of us, was killed. Although Lance had given all of us a big part of his original wealth, he had given Kermit the most. Kermit was a really good older brother, and he

really did a good job raising Lance. So none of us were mad at him when he did. The most likely reason he was killed was because of the fact that he was the least protected and probably made Kermit write his will giving all the money he had to the killer. After Lance took the kids to the gaming/playroom and told them to go crazy, We had to narrow down the list of suspects. So far we had Uncle Rich, being the most suspicious because of the visiting time, an unsuspected intruder, The Lorax, me, and Lance, and Estelle.

“Ok, first we need to figure out what to do with the body, before we start pointing fingers.” Lance said.’

The Lorax responded really quickly saying “ We probably put the body in the basement, figure out who did it, then turn them in to the police.”

Everyone agreed that was the best option, but I was still suspicious. “I don’t think that he came up with that off the top of his head.” I thought to myself. I was trying to keep an open mind on who might have done it, but it was hard to do that, considering what happened the last time Uncle Rich and Kermit met up. They got into a really big fight and fists were thrown and words were said. We hadn’t even hid the body yet and I already had two suspects.

“Alright, here’s how I think this whole situation should be handled. Stop me if you disagree with something.” Lance said.

We had just finished taking the body to the basement and were trying to figure out what to do next.

“I think that we should list who is the most suspicious down to the least suspicious and then we search the rooms in order of suspicion.” Lance continued.

“Then based on what we find we either cross them out or if it happens to be the killer then we will isolate them and take them down to the police in the morning because it is way too late at night.” Everyone seems to agree on the plan, so we went with it. At the top of the list is Uncle Rich at the top, because of the fact that he decided now to show up and we had to consider the fight he and Kermit had, and his only defense was he wanted to come to the party and see his little cousin go back to school. Next was the Lorax, because of the fact that he and Kermit never really just got along and they had just got back on speaking terms. Then there was me. I always liked Kermit, but I had to be put next so Estelle could be second to last. She just never really talked to Kermit so that was a little suspicious. Lance was last. You could tell he was staying strong but he was hurting like the rest of us.

So after we made the list, we went on to the next step which was searching rooms, and that’s when things took a turn for the worst. We started to search Uncle Rich’s room and we found the usual bags full of money, in case he wanted to buy something and then there was the usual gold bar or two. A change of suits and hats. And the gold-plated toothbrush. The platinum plated comb and brush. You get the idea. But then the Lorax went under the mattress, like he knew what he was searching for. And “found” a piece of paper. The paper looked important then Lance took

it from the Lorax, telling everyone to stop searching. Then he read it out loud. I'm not going to go into detail about what it said. But we had found what we were looking for. Kermit the Frog's will giving everything he owned, including the money, to Uncle Rich. A.K.A The Monopoly Man.

After we isolated him in the second room in the basement, we all went to bed. But that's when things started to get weird, for me anyways. I went to bed, and slept peacefully. Then I started to hear footsteps. Loud footsteps. The thumps and the creaking of the floorboards. It sounded like the person making the footsteps was headed straight to my room. I grabbed my spare can of spinach and started to slowly walk to the bedroom door. I stood beside the door, to where the mystery person won't see when or if they open the door. I tried to hold my breath, so that the person wouldn't hear me. That's when the door quietly and slowly opened. I quickly, but quietly opened my can of spinach and downed it. Now that I was stronger, I was ready to attack. But then the mystery person did something strange. That's when I saw the gun. It looked like a Glock 19 with a silencer. They were here to kill me. But why? They moved the blanket, but when they saw that there was nothing but a couple pillows, they started to panic. They turned around quickly and tripped on their own feet. The moment they recovered from the stumble, they were out the door. I decided to follow. They must have heard my footsteps, because they sped up. They took the stairs and it seemed like they sped even more. By the time they got to the bottom I had lost them. I did remember one thing about the mystery person: A big, puffy mustache.

I decided to go back to my room and stay there and wait to see if they would come back. They didn't. When I immediately went to Lance's room to tell him what had happened. Lance told his kids to go hang out in the gaming room again so the adults could have another family meeting. Lance and I went down to the basement to handcuff Uncle Rich and bring upstairs.

We sat Uncle Rich and The Lorax down in the living room and told them to stay there, because Estelle, Lance and I need to talk in private.

"I'm telling you! I didn't kill him!! I didn't kill Kermit!!" Uncle Rich tried to tell us.

At this point, I didn't know who to believe.

"We will be right back!" Lance reassured him.

"Please, don't leave me with him!! He'll kill me! Please!" Uncle Rich begged and pleaded.

At this point, I was worried for his health. Although I doubted that one night of isolation could make someone go crazy, I didn't know everything.

"I have no idea what he's talking about. I would never kill anyone. Unless they messed with the trees. Then we would have a problem." The Lorax said.

At this point, I was worried we had handcuffed the wrong guy. And that's when I noticed something. Something important. I looked at Uncle Rich. His face was pale with fear, and that's

when I noticed how smooth his mustache was. I remembered that the mystery person's mustache was big and puffy. That's when I figured everything out. Who the mystery person was. Who killed Kermit the Frog. And who the next target was. I had to Lance and Estelle out of there. And fast. It was too late for Uncle Rich.

"Alright, let's go have that talk now. We'll be right back." I said, trying to play it cool. "I will be right back."

I felt really bad about leaving Uncle Rich, but I had to in order save everyone else, I had to. After we were out of sight of the Lorax. I rushed them down the hallway and into the elevator. When we made it to the kitchen floor, Lance and Estelle were really confused and worried.

"Why did you rush us out like that?" Estelle asked. "What's going on?"

"The Lorax is the bad guy!" I said frantically. "He killed Kermit and he is the mystery person that tried to kill me last night! He placed a fake will in Uncle Rich's room and placed the blame on him so we would have someone to blame. And now we have the wrong person handcuffed! So here's the pla-,"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. Slow down. We can't just go around and start accusing people," Lance said, trying to reassure me.

But I was too distressed. "I know this accusation is a little rough around the edges but I'm sure of it." I told them.

"You guys have to trust me and listen. Get the kids out the house. Go to Hijinx or something. I'll call you when I'm done with the Lorax. But first we need to go back in there and tell them something."

"Alright we can do that, but first I want you to tell us some serious, locked down, hard-nosed evidence that the Lorax is our guy." Estelle said.

I had to admit; she had a point. I hadn't really told them much, except that I knew the Lorax was the killer.

"Ok then, here is my evidence. The Lorax had said it himself. You guys heard him say it. He said that he would do anything to protect the trees, and then he started to beat around the bush about how he might even kill someone to do it!

"Ok, that's valid, but Kermit would never do anything to harm the trees! He knew how Dad felt about that. And we don't have a motive," Lance defended.

"But maybe he didn't harm them on purpose. After Kermit's tv show got canceled, he was out of luck. At that point he was living off of royalties from reruns of the shows and movies. At that point he was depressed and started smoking. Even though he was mindful about it, it was still

hurting the trees. Plus, the jealousy of Kermit getting more money from Lance, it was the perfect motivation.”

“Alright, that makes sense, but what about the attempted murder on you? How do we know that the Lorax was the mystery person?” Estelle questioned.

“Easy.” I answered. “When he came into my room, I noticed that the mystery person had a big mustache. That narrows it down to Uncle Rich and the Lorax. Then my eyes started to adjust to the dark and I noticed that the mustache was big and puffy. Uncle Rich’s mustache is smooth. That means it has to be the Lorax!”

“Ok, what about the will we found? How do you explain that?” Lance said.

“The will is fake.” I answered. “Here is what probably happened on the night of Kermit’s murder. The Lorax waited until everyone was asleep and crept downstairs and snuck up on Kermit while he was watching tv. He then forced him to write two wills. A fake one giving everything he had to Uncle Rich, and a real one giving everything he had to the Lorax. He then hid the fake will in Uncle Rich’s room. Now that he had everything he wanted, all he had to do was get rid of the evidence. Which was Kermit.”

“Ok, I believe that. What do you think, Estelle? Lance said. “Makes sense.” Estelle responded.

“So, here’s the plan. Lance said. “We confront The Lorax about it. Then we call the police and get him arrested. Then we tell the kids everything and take them out to Hijinx, and then we go with the flow, plan Kermit’s funeral, and live happily ever after. How does that sound?”

“Sounds good.” Estelle said

“Let’s do this!” I said, downing two cans of spinach, just in case.

Plan decided on, so we went into the elevator and went back down to the living room floor. And when we got one of the biggest shocks of our lives. Uncle Rich was sitting tied up and in handcuffs, like we left him. But now he had duct tape over his mouth and was being held at gunpoint by the Lorax.

“Put the gun down. It doesn’t have to be like this.” I said calmly.

“No, you’re right, it doesn’t have to be like this. But I want it to be like this. See I’ve won, and there is nothing you can do about it.” The Lorax responded, basically gloating at this point, at how long it took us to figure out that it was him.

“Now, I’ve got to admit. I’m impressed. I honestly thought that no one would figure out that I

was the mastermind behind Kermit's murder. You're smarter than you look." The Lorax went on.

He still had the gun pointed in Uncle Rich's general area, but now he was swinging it around like it was a toy or something.

"Hey man!! I understand that you are a psychopath and all, but watch where you point that thing!" Lance told him.

"Oh, what's the matter, scared or something?" The Lorax asked. "Anyways, I know you're wondering how I already knew that you figured out that I was Kermit's killer, so I might as well tell you now, that I have cameras hidden around the house. I have been spying on you. But not in the shower. Even I know that is not okay. But I got to say, you guys were spot on with your accusations of me. You even got the motive right. I am impressed. Really. But you guys are way too late. So now it's time for Uncle Rich to die" The Lorax ended abruptly.

And that's when the Lorax aimed the gun back on Uncle Rich fired. Do you know how fast a bullet shot from a Glock 19 goes? One thousand feet per second. In miles per hour, that is six hundred and eight one mph. I shouldn't have to tell you that's really fast. But when I've eaten my spinach, and I'm fully powered up I can jump to the moon in two seconds. And in miles per hour, that's three hundred and fifty seven thousand miles per hour. So you know I had to jump in and save him. I was more than fast enough, so I decided to showboat and catch the bullet too. By the time the Lorax figured out that I saved Uncle Rich, I had already untied him, took the duct tape off of his mouth, and put him in his car with all his stuff in the trunk.

"You too stick with the plan and go!" I yelled at Lance and Estelle.

They responded with a quick "Alright!" and "You got it!", and they were off to finish the plan.

"Don't even think about trying to shoot them. I'm just going to catch them, just like I did the last one." I told him.

Then I dropped the bullet I caught earlier to prove it. He froze for a second. You could tell he was shocked at how fast I had moved, but he did a good job of not letting it show.

"I know that you only have fourteen rounds left, so you better back off and do as I say." I told him.

"Absolutely not. Why should I believe that you can catch a bullet?! And even if you could, I'm still the one with the gun!" The Lorax said, shakily and nervously, thrusting the gun in my direction, trying to scare me.

"News flash, you're not going to scare me, so why don't you just put the gun down so I can take you to the poli-"

Rudely interrupting my sentence, he fired four useless shots at me. With ease, I caught them all.

But to scare him, I decided to run up behind him so fast that it would seem like I teleported. When he saw I wasn't in my original position, he turned around and must have jumped three feet in the air when he saw me! On accident, he fired another shot.

"Nine more left." I thought to myself silently. At this point, he was shaking, so I took a chance. "Just put the gun down and things won't get any worse than they already are." I said calmly to him. I also put a little sternness in my voice so he could understand that I was serious.

I knew that I had to wrap things up with him, because at any moment now, Lance and Estelle are going to come down the elevator with the kids. And if the kids see me and their grandfather fighting, it's going to be hard to explain. And really did not want to put them in the line of fire. But it might be the only way.

"Your grandkids are going to come out of that elevator any moment now." I told him, with the same tone. "Do you want them to see like this? Shaken up, gone mad? All because Kermit, your own son, smoked. That barely hurts trees! But you just couldn't take it. So you killed him? And then decided to take his money, while you were at it. Might as well."

I need all the guilt of what he has done to hit him all at once. That way he'll drop the gun and then I can take him to the police. That's when he did something unexpected.

"Your right, about everything." He responded as he dropped the gun. "Just know this. The only reason I'm surrendering is because I can't let my grandkids see this. If I had the opportunity to, I would kill Kermit again. My only regret is hiring Winnie the Pooh to do my dirty work."

"Winnie the Pooh is an assassin for hire!?!" I thought to myself.

Fast forward to the next week, we had Kermit's funeral and the Lorax is in jail for life. The police are still looking for Winnie the Pooh. And the rest of us got to live happily ever after. That was, until we got a call saying that Uncle Rich was in a hit and run leaving our house.

"Wow Popeye!!" Mickey Mouse finally said. "That was a great story!"

"That wasn't a story." I told him. "This just happened two weeks ago."