

October 27, 2012

Dear Mr. Buckley,

Thank you for your message that was intended to help me track Abraham Lincoln. I have known about his vampire status for some time. The problem is, since my children were born four years ago, I had pretty much retired from my vampire-hunting days. I had pursued them as much as I could under the guise of “late-night hockey games.” I found this to be the perfect cover for vampire hunting, as it was easy to say I was “running out to a hockey game,” and my wife would expect me to come home covered in sweat and blood. The stench of the equipment also served as an excellent excuse to hide the putrid smell of vampire fluid. Furthermore, you’d be surprised at how well goalie equipment helps to protect you during a clash with members of the underworld. I found the throat guard alone to be particularly valuable.

The truth is, after chasing vampires for years, I had found that it was impossible to keep up with their exponentially increasing numbers. In New Hampshire alone, the trend has become so rampant that I believe there were thousands of day walkers by the year 2007. On any given night, I could walk into any Wal-Mart in New

Hampshire and see them in packs. Salem, New Hampshire even opened a twenty-four hour store around the late 1990's, I'm sure with the sole purpose of accommodating vampires in the midnight hours. I have been to Chicago earlier this year as well, and saw firsthand a bar, in which some Canadian band was playing, absolutely flooded with vampires. So I believe the infestation has crossed into Canada as well.

Given the futility of trying to control the vampire population, I hung up my hunting gear and moved to a safer neighborhood in Massachusetts. These days I usually only see vampires on my evening commute, on route 93 along my way home from Boston.

Nevertheless, your message arrived at a very timely time, because I also received a recent phone call from my former fellow vampire hunting partner Willy Hide. Yes, he is the same Willy Hide of the legendary reggae band Willy and the High Spirits.

I first met Willy many years ago after an Eddie Money concert, which at one time was an ideal event to stalk vampires. (These days, the vampires that attend his shows are so pathetic and harmless to others that you feel sorry for them.) I had followed a group of them from a venue in New Hampshire, back in my early days of hunting. I was about to unleash a tirade of whoopass onto them, when I realized that they were actually baiting me: a second, even larger group of vampires, snuck up on me from behind. I was doomed, especially since these were the days before I learned how to use goalie gear.

As I was fending them off, they knocked me down to my back. There were at least fifteen of them surrounding me. One pounced on my chest, revealing his dagger-like claws, raising it, about to finish me off.

That's when I heard someone with a thick Jamaican accent shout, "Vampppyyyyerrr!!!"

The vampire on my chest looked towards the sound and squealed as something struck its forehead. Instantly it disintegrated. Within seconds, three more vampires were struck by these same objects, all disappearing into dust. As the other eleven scattered, I jumped to my feet and chased one. As you know, those bastards are damn fast and I lost chase quickly. The mysterious hunter who had saved me managed to take two more vampires out before the rest of them scattered into the dingy neighborhoods of Hampton's main beach area.

I walked towards my savior as he surrendered his own chase. "Hey, aren't you..."

"Willy Hide," the enormous man introduced himself, extending a hand.

"Of...Willy and High Spirits?" I asked, shaking his hand.

"Yes mun, you gut it right."

“But that just seems so...”

“Randum?”

“Yes, that’s the word, ‘random.’”

“It depends on what you’re smokin’.”

“I...guess.”

“What is your name, mun?”

“Jimmy. Fallon.”

“You know what is really randum, Yimmy?”

“No.”

“I can tell you somthin’ really, really randum. You know Phil Gartner?”

I vaguely recognized the name of the actor from an old science-fiction television series from the sixties. “Captain Dirk?” I asked to confirm.

“Exactly mun. Captin’ Dirk once saved me from a vampire attack, the same way I just saved your ahss.”

“What? You’re right: that *is* random.”

“Yes. It was strange, you know. Very strange.”

“I can imagine. Was this before or after you were smoking?”

“Both. But it really happund, mun. It was so strange. He’s so heavy and slow, ya’ know? So when I saw him comin’ to rescue me, I thought, ‘This slow fool gonna’ get killed.’ But he’s gut this way about him: he shows up in a strange suit, then quotes po-etry. It makes no sense. But it freezes the vampires. I think they don’t know what to make of him. So while they tryin’ to figure him out, the mun kills them all.”

He was dead straight serious.

“Are you kidding me?” I asked, dumfounded.

“Not at all. Used to go hunting with him for awhile after that. But I had to part ways with him...eventually. He just so slow...and strange, mun. Gonna’ get himself killed one day.”

As it turns out, the objects that were hitting the vampires were small darts made of silver and a concoction that Willy had discovered extinguishes most vampires on contact. The darts were shot from a handheld gatling-gun-type weapon that Willy had designed himself. It was like something straight out of the movie “Blade.”

Gartner, Willy explained, had lost his wife to a band of vampires, former obsessed fans of the show who had botched a

burglary of his home. They didn't expect to find his wife there, and decided to kill her rather than risk the revelation of their condition.

After that Hampton incident, Willy and I worked as a team for a few years, slaying at least five hundred vampires along the east coast. Willy also saw the futility of our mission, however, and understood when I decided to surrender the cause. I was surprised that he called me last week. He flew up here to meet with me. As Willy enjoyed what he liked to call "a healthy smoke," we reminisced about some of the dumb-ass vampire punks that we'd slain in the past. Then he told me, as you did, that Abraham Lincoln's influence as a vampire was becoming too powerful. He begged me to help him track him down. When he mentioned that Lincoln was believed to be traveling in New Hampshire in an attempt to influence that swing state's vote in the upcoming 2012 general election, I couldn't refuse.

As you know, vampires are not the most clever beings on the planet, so I was not all that surprised that I had no trouble finding Mr. Lincoln. New Hampshire is full of weak-minded walking dead who will turn on each other merely for a half-pint of blood. From my sixteen years of living in New Hampshire, I am well aware of the haunts trolled by these pathetic slugs. It only took me a few pints of blood before I was able to learn the exact location of Lincoln's whereabouts.

I found Lincoln in the bar of a hotel in Salem. The problem was, I forgot my tools as well as my wallet, and didn't realize this until I was approaching the entrance of the bar. There was no turning back at that point, however, as I did not want Lincoln to slip through the cracks again as he had managed to do for centuries.

Unlike most vampires, Lincoln was exceptionally intelligent, and I believe he may have even sensed me coming for him before I even entered the bar. From the very moment I opened the door, I saw him standing tall from across the bar, shoulders square to the doorway, his beady, black eyes studying me. He was alone, a martini in one hand. He didn't move, instead remaining still as a statue, watching me coming towards him.

Lincoln is about a foot taller than I, and looks even bigger with that hat of his. I am sure that he was not frightened of me at all, only curious.

“You're the hunter?” he questioned me in disbelief as I stood near him at the bar.

“Yes.”

“Are you for real? You're Fallon? But you're...practically a dwarf? How can that be? So peculiar!”

“I know. They all say that.”

“You look like hell. Even worse than a vampire.”

“My wife tells me that all the time.”

“So...how is this going to go down?”

“Well, when you leave here, I am going to follow you outside and kick your ass.”

“By yourself?” he remarked, stupefied.

“Most likely. I was waiting on help, but everyone’s running late. You’re a wanted man, President Lincoln.”

“Yes, I realize that. And I am tired of running. I never wanted this, Fallon. So, I am ready to die. But I was hoping to at least stick around for the launch of the iPad Mini.”

“Not going to happen,” I said, knowing that the gadgets were not going to be available for a few more weeks.

“Well,” he sighed, “Sit down and have a drink with me then.”

I actually had a great conversation that evening with Abe. I told him that I thought he would be speaking with more of an 1800’s-era jargon. He laughed and said that if he had not adapted to contemporary vernacular, he would have been hunted down decades ago. We talked about the 1800’s, the strain of the Civil War, how

different the times were. He mentioned that he didn't understand why people get so vindictive these days during divorces.

“You know, in my day, it was fairly common for people to remarry. Damn, so many women died young, during birth and all. Men too. As a widower, you could just walk into town on any given day, say ‘Anybody want to get married?’ and walk out with a new wife. Much different urgency to relationships back then. These days, people don't get married until they're thirty, then get divorced seven years later. It doesn't make any sense.”

It turns out that Abe is also a big football fan. We talked about the recent struggles of the Patriots. He said, “Look, there are only three teams in the AFC with winning records. One of those three is New England, which is also the youngest team in the conference. They'll be the most improved by the end of this season. Don't worry about it.”

We talked about the election. “Congress today,” he explained, “is more over-run by vampires than when I was President. It's hopeless now. Presidents are practically powerless in the government process, paralyzed by blood-sucking Congress members.”

As the bartender shouted “Last call!” I reached for my wallet, but then recalled that I had forgotten it.

Luckily, Abe had a debit card on him and offered to cover my drinks. As he studied the bill, I slipped a spreading knife from Abe's appetizer dish into my pocket. Then, just as we were about to leave, I swiped the bartender's pen from the tab. It was a nice pen: a typical seven inches or so, rubber grip towards the tip, made from some cheap metal, and had the logo of the hotel on one side.

When we walked outside the bar, Lincoln turned to me and said, very calmly, "Fallon, I don't want to get violent with you tonight. I just want to have a few more weeks before the iPad Mini is available."

But it was too late. He was completely unaware that I was already wielding the spreading knife, brandishing the entire one-and-a-half inches of its blade. "Sorry, Abe, no can do," I said as I surprised him by driving the knife into his chest.

Lincoln stood still, staring at my hand, which was holding the knife embedded into him.

"Fallon," he growled, seizing my hand and pulling the blade out from him, "I will not be dying tonight!"

With his free hand, he struck my forehead, dazing me. He withdrew an ax from his cloak, preparing to end my existence. However, once again, as I had heard so many times in the past, a bellowing voice with a Jamaican accent shouted, "Vammmpyyerrrr!!"

It was Willy, finally arriving to help me, running through the lot towards Lincoln. Unfortunately, the dart-firing gatling-gun jammed this time. Lincoln whipped his ax across Willy's hands, knocking the gun at least twenty feet away.

With one motion, Lincoln managed to take advantage of my haze by kicking my chest, knocking me to the ground in the process, and planted his boot on top of me to restrict my movement. I could feel his powerful foot crushing my ribs. In the same instant, he wrapped the long, strong fingers of his free claw-bearing hand around Willy's neck, lifting him by his throat off the ground. Lincoln then flashed his long, sharp fangs, hissing at both of us.

"Yimmy," Willy squeaked through Lincoln's stronghold, "we in big, big trouble mun!"

Just then I remembered that I still had the pen and frantically scrambled my fingers through my pocket to retrieve it. Lincoln saw this action, stared at the pen for a moment, and then huffed, "What are you going to do with that?"

"I...have...no...idea," I wheezed, beneath the mercy of Abe's weight.

Then, something came over me. I'm not sure why. It was perhaps the only use I could think of for that pencil-sized weapon, I was desperate, and given my predicament there wasn't much of Abe I

could reach: I took a firm hold of it and swung my arm upwards, driving the pen straight into the Presidential vampire's ass.

He shrieked, in a ferociously piercing pitch, and immediately released Willy. I slid out from underneath his foot, which had lost all of its leverage as Lincoln fought the pain. Willy struck Lincoln across the forehead, while I kicked one of his knees as hard as I could, causing it to collapse at a grotesque angle. Lincoln fell onto his back, landing first on his ass, driving the last couple of inches of that pen into no man's land. Willy, who is even bigger than Abe, jumped on top of him, pressing a knee against Abe's chest, pinning him. He pulled one of his special darts from his ammunition bag, preparing to destroy the demon once and for all.

“Wait!” Lincoln gasped. “I can get each of you an iPad Mini!”

Willy froze. As did I.

“Really?” Willy asked.

“Yes,” Lincoln coughed, “I have connections.”

Willy looked towards me, considering the offer. “What do you think?”

“He's honest Abe,” I replied. “I say we let him be for a few more weeks, until we all have our iPad Minis.”

At that moment, an authoritative voice declared from the shadows, “Common people see trees but not the road. Common people view their lives from rearview reflections. Their stories become untold. And from this world, they become rejections.”

It was Captain Dirk himself. Dressed in some glistening-blue, much-too-tight suit.

“What in the hell?” is all I could think, trying to make sense of the spectacle and the delivery of the nonsensical poetry.

Lincoln was also speechless, holding his breath as he stared blankly at Gartner, who was posed poetically, his head tilted as he looked skyward toward the bright moon, emitting a sparkling effect on his clothing.

Willy was the first to break out of the trance instilled by Captain Dirk. “Oh, Phil, no!” he shouted.

It was too late. Before Willy could finish his exclamation, Gartner had flung a set of vampire-killing Chinese stars towards Lincoln. Most of them missed, and one hit me in the leg, but one of them implanted itself between Abe’s eyes. A fiery plume shot from his mouth and eyeballs as Abe released one last gasp. Within seconds, the only remnants of the legendary Rail Splitter were speckles of charred dust.

“Dammit Phil!” Willy shouted.

“What?” Gartner retorted, “I just saved your lives, and now you’re angry at me? How...incredibly...unappreciative of you.”

“He was going to get us iPad Minis,” I explained.

A silent, still pause gave Gartner a moment to grasp the weight of his mistake.

“Oh!” Gartner said, “Sorry about that.”

And so, Mr. Buckley, I’m not sure we’ll be getting our iPad Minis for Christmas this year. I am sure, however, that the magnificent vampire, otherwise known as President Abraham Lincoln, is dead.

Happy Halloween.

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