



MEMPHIS BRIDGE MURDER*

by

B. K. Barry

A Charles Earl Short Mystery,

Featuring the Earl Family Brain Trust

(For an interactive reading experience, please read with a smartphone equipped with a QRcode reader in hand—you might even read it with a child or grandchild and have a fine interactive, intergenerational, reading experience together!)

Arrival in Memphis

“What I love about the game, Judy, is the logic of it, the puzzle of it all,” Charles Earl explained to his wife. Charles, a distinguished professor of pure mathematics specializing in algebraic graph theory, had another life in the world of tournament duplicate bridge. It was, of course, the card game of bridge to which he referred.

“It’s great to be here in Memphis; the home-area of the American Bridge Congress (ABC), and even better to be here for an American Bridge Tournament (ABT),” Charles continued. “Sure,” commented Judy, “I will see if the *The Emporium* has a branch here where I can go play trivia and

enjoy some local bar food.” Judy and Charles shared many interests; but, they had divergent ones, as well. “I also want to do something in association with the Mississippi River—that’s what I think of when I think of Memphis,” she said. Six weeks a year, at three ABTs, they pursued separate interests, but did so “together.” The rest of the year they did almost everything else as a unit.

“Even though a few Foundations and such have already been meeting (and no doubt been playing some rounds of bridge), I can hardly wait for the regular full-Board meetings to begin,” Charles said anxiously. His passion for the game extended well beyond the play of the cards, although he was outstanding at that, ranking in the top 500 in the US on a regular basis. What he enjoyed even more was bridge administration; at that, too, he had risen to the top, as he sat on the Board of Directors of the national organization (the ABC). Charles’s expertise in logic led him in many different directions that involved clear, orderly thinking.

“Ten days of bridge plus four days of meetings—how lucky can a guy get,” Charles said. The usually mild-mannered, brilliant mathematician became lively and talkative, even effusive, at the thought of yet another trip to a national bridge tournament and Board of Directors meetings.

“Here we are, Judy...I think this is our hotel. I’ll turn the car over to the valet; you go and start checking in and I’ll meet you at the front desk.” The couple checked in and went to their room on the 22nd floor with a view of the river. “I’m going up to “The Suite,” Charles said. He meant the hotel’s “Presidential Suite,” occupied by the current President of the ABC, Ryan, and his wife, Jacquie. They were a delightful couple. Spouses of the Board often hung out together, and because Judy’s interests in life centered more on things that typically, at least in this part of the world, were regarded as “male” rather than “female,” she often went to places with male spouses of Board members. She enjoyed museums, field trips, sports, discovering how things work, and environmental puzzles. Her interests were wide-ranging whereas Charles’s tended to be more focused.

Life in The Presidential Suite

As Charles began to head up to The Suite on the 30th floor, he met colleagues, Kent and Joe, heading toward the elevator from their meeting room on 22. “Are you guys going to be ready to go walking tomorrow morning?” asked Charles. “Sure,” Kent said, “four miles as usual—meet at 7:30 tomorrow morning in the lobby—I have a route planned and I have my pedometer—we’ll walk from our hotel here to the hotel with the ducks in the lobby, and then across Beale Street to the Mississippi, and then back to our hotel.” “Is Sarah here?” Charles asked Kent, “Judy will be coming up to the Suite soon.” “Yes, Charles, she is; but right now I am more than a bit distracted—that guy Herb was acting up in the Human Rights Foundation meeting that Joe and I just came from—his behavior is incredible!” The elevator doors opened and the group headed off to The Suite—a remarkable social network with a life all its own.

Each year the ABC funds the Presidential Suite as a place where its Board of Directors can talk, socialize, see entertainers, and work in unofficial ways outside the formal meeting rooms. Some might even think that more business gets conducted in The Suite than in the formal meetings. At the very least, it is a firm outlet for advocating for one’s own agenda prior to decision-making meetings. During the meetings, only Board members and their spouses may use The Suite (in addition, of course, to ABC staff).

“Welcome, Charles...Kent...Joe,” said Ryan, “let me get you a drink and then come on over and look at this spectacular view!” “I’ll just have soda pop,” said Charles and Kent in unison. “I’ll just have scotch and water...you got bottled water? I don’t drink local, anywhere,” said Joe. With that, Joe went to talk to Ellen and Sarah, the wonderful women who helped the ABC President for the year run The Suite. “Well, Joe, you got lucky...here’s our last bottle of water...I’ll go get some more, but Sarah if anyone else wants water in a drink they will have to have tap water or wait until I get back,” noted Ellen. “Thanks,” said Joe, “it’s a fine drink—and after that ridiculous meeting it tastes much better than usual.”

“So, Kent, what happened at the meeting of that Foundation?” asked Charles. “WELL,” said Kent, “we had elections to determine officers of the Foundation. Of course, you know that I am one and have been one for many years, including as an ex officio one when I was ABC President. So, naturally, I was in charge of handling the vote count. I think you also know that Herb doesn’t seem to have very many friends. So, when he declared himself as a candidate for the presidency of the Foundation, another member immediately threw his hat in the ring. Herb had of course been going to each of the members to twist their arms to vote for him. You know he’s such a pest...hard to get rid of...so, even though I don’t like to think that the others would say they would vote for him and then not do so, I would certainly understand why otherwise honorable people might engage in such tactics. Anyway, there are 11 Board members (two of us, only, are ABC Board members), so 6 votes are needed to win. Herb only got three votes. When I announced the count, he hopped up and down, shaking his fists; he demanded to know who had failed to vote for him. At that point, I got Joe to verify the vote; we reported it to ABC Staff, left the meeting and came up here with the ballots. The others are still down there. One of them texted me a few minutes ago and said that Herb is running around the room berating the people who said they would vote for him--calling them liars, threatening to sue them for some sort of slander that he imagines, and making threatening physical gestures in addition to the verbal assault. I have the ballots with me and right now I am going to explain all this to Ryan and he and Joe and I will take the ballots and lock them up in Ryan’s safe in the private study attached to the public area of The Suite.” “Wow! That’s quite extreme, even for Herb,” Charles noted in an even tone.

With that, Ryan, Joe, and Kent headed off into the private part of The Suite. “But Charles, come on over here...see that island out in the Mississippi, that’s called ‘Mud’ Island...look at the beautiful condos...quite the place to live, I understand,” announced Jacquie, Ryan’s wife. She continued, “I hear that the condo owners don’t even need flood insurance, can you imagine that...the base level of the condos is apparently higher than the western banks of the river in Arkansas so when the Mississippi floods, the runoff will go to the west.” Charles wondered where Judy was...this was

the sort of thing she would love to hear about. “Judy, where are you...come on up to The Suite...Jacquie is telling us about all sorts of fascinating things” Charles quipped into his clamshell phone. “I’ll be up there once I finish setting up my laptop so I can get at files in my computing cloud. I already set up your laptop,” Judy noted while talking to Charles on her smartphone—“Gotta get the networks all set...you’re a graph theorist—you should appreciate network analysis!” Charles did, of course, appreciate it-- but only abstractly—he was not one to tinker with machinery.

Shortly, Judy started getting ready to head up to The Suite. “Who cares about unpacking the clothes,” she thought, “just take care of the important stuff like the computers.” But first, she went into the hallway to find which door hid the bank of freight elevators. She did not like to take glass elevators: the vertical motion combined with the lateral view that moved was at best disconcerting and at worst had been known to make her sick. Thus, in a new site, she acclimated gradually to the glass elevators, taking an opaque freight elevator in the early part of their stay. “Aha,” she said with the ring of experience in her voice, “that looks like it.” Then she took one piece of duct tape that she had taped to her forearm (another remained on her other forearm) and wrapped it around the closure lock on the door that had been left ajar. A pre-cut notch in either end of the tape fit snugly around the handle. Now she should have easy access without bothering hotel staff and, hopefully, they would assume that one of them had put the tape there and not remove it for several days.

When Judy arrived in The Suite, Ryan and Charles were talking at the door. “Charles, I want you to stand in the hallway here...you cut a dignified and imposing figure. I do not want Herb in here,” said Ryan. He pointed to the posted sign on the door which announced to the world that The Suite was private and available only to ABC Directors (and spouses or partners) and ABC Staff. “If Herb makes a move to come in, at least point out that sign to him—that’ll give me grounds to throw him out,” stated Ryan. “I can do that much,” said Charles, “but you do know that while I am firm and have strong opinions, I do try to remain civil and pleasant in any event.” “That’s fine,” said Ryan...”you do that part, I’ll take it from there...don’t worry about that!”

The hotel hallway began to crowd up with animated Board Members, delighted to see each other in sincere gestures of friendship, on the one hand, and equally delighted to have a chance to press the flesh and share their own viewpoints about bridge administration. As a group of fairly tall Directors approached The Suite, Charles noticed a small, slender man nestled among them. Charles took advantage of the presence of the group... "please note the sign on the door... I see that all but one of you are permitted to enter tonight—welcome, and I hope you enjoy yourselves.



Herb, please step aside... I want to make certain that you have read and understood the sign on the door." "OK, Charlie-boy... of course I can read" yelled Herb "but I'm surprised you can... I see you are really packing it on (as he punched Charles in the stomach)... better not go swimming in Lake Erie... otherwise downtown Cleveland might flood—ha, ha!" "Eureka," noted

Charles sardonically (as he thought that a mere extra 10 pounds should really not have elicited this response)... "Archimedes' bathtub was smaller than Lake Erie. Please note, my name is 'Charles'." "What's that have to do with anything, Charlie; you are an idiot, as well—get out of my way—I am going in to get what is rightfully mine!" asserted Herb. As Herb shoved on past him, Charles thought that he did (but perhaps shouldn't) hope that Herb would indeed get what was coming to him.

"Where's your jerky President, Sarah, and while you're at it get me a scotch and water, woman..." commanded Herb. Sarah handed him a drink and went to get Ryan—she felt like throwing the drink at Herb but restrained herself. Herb took a few swallows of his drink and headed on over to the food, sneered at it, and walked over to an area filled with people. Ryan, in the meantime, had gone out the private entry from the study to the hallway and was engaged in conversation with Charles at the entrance to The Suite.



Another group of Directors came along, and with them came an Elvis Impersonator. “Who are you?” Ryan asked the Impersonator. “Your wife ordered me as a surprise for the group...nice, huh?” said the man in the garish bejeweled white satin suit. “Oh, yeah, sure,” said Ryan, “that is the sort of thing she would do...she knows there are a bunch here who loved his music—hope you will sing ‘Hound Dog’.

“What’s all the noise?” Ryan said, as he ran in to The Suite from the hallway. Herb had slammed down his half-finished drink and had then hopped up on the marble table in the center of The Suite. “Listen up, you fools,” screamed Herb, “your great President allows this to go on...vote fraud...who’s behind it?...I had nine votes yet the counters said I had only three. I KNOW that can’t be true, I was promised votes by nine members...give me the ballots! I demand them! They are mine ... mine ... mine! I am the rightful President of the ABC Human Rights Foundation ... with nine votes.” Ryan motioned to the Impersonator to begin singing “Hound Dog” and followed through on that arm motion by swooping Herb off his self-fashioned podium and shoving Herb out of The Suite door into the carpeted hallway, while singing in unison with the Impersonator “you ain’t no friend of mine!” “Pretty cute, huh, Charles,” said Ryan....”good timing...maybe I should go into show business, too!”

“Ryan, might I get you a beer?” queried the ever-hospitable hostess, Ellen. “How about a scotch and water, instead,” said Ryan. “Well, I have to wait for the bottled water to come up from downstairs,” noted Ellen. Just then the others from the Foundation meeting came upstairs...there were 11 members: 2 from the ABC Board of Directors (currently Kent and Joe) and the remainder, like Herb, were bridge players from around the world who had volunteered to serve after presenting credentials to the entire Board of Directors of the ABC. While that group of folks was not part of the group eligible to enter The Suite, after the altercation involving Herb, Ryan thought it made good sense to invite them in and talk to them. “You are lucky...you missed seeing me throw Herb (literally throw him) out of The

Suite a short time ago...I'll have that beer, never mind the scotch and water," said Ryan. "Don't worry about anything; we have the ballots secured and he is not elected. The count that was announced was correct. Don't let him intimidate you. Now, you are in charge! I may be able to invoke Executive Privilege and have him removed from your Board and any other ABC boards on which he currently serves. Congratulations on standing your ground," stated Ryan to these Human Rights Foundation Board members. Following his somewhat formal congratulatory message, Ryan took the group over to the bar, encouraged them to have whatever they wished, showed them to the food tables, and just generally served as their genial host.



Things began to settle down and there was even laughter as the Impersonator, who had just returned from a 'musician's break', began singing "All Shook Up." It was not hard to imagine, Judy thought, that Herb might be a bit shook up—his existing knee problems were about all that slowed him down in terms of standing on "his own two feet"!

Judy also recalled that Ryan could not get the drink he really wanted because there was a temporary shortage of bottled water at the bar. She tried to work her way past the beautiful fruit salad and elaborately laid out table of grazing snacks that Ellen and Sarah had worked hard on all day. There were hot meatballs (both beef and turkey), prosciutto, roast beef, ham, cheddar, Brie, Camembert, pickles of all kinds, freshly baked breads and spreads, cream cheese loaves draped with pepper jelly and other exotic spreads, and carved fruit and vegetable platters. There was an array of tempting desserts from homemade pies to petit fours to seven layer cakes. Mousses of different kinds served as a fitting finale. Naturally, when one was near either the food area or the open bar, it was difficult to navigate around the milling crowd. Judy did manage to make it to the bar where she told Sarah that she would go down to the room and get some extra bottled water (Charles and Judy always brought their own when they travelled). Eventually, Judy made it to the door to the hallway, where she

was intercepted by last year's President and her husband, one of Judy's spouse pals on the tours. They chatted pleasantly about recent travels, tours, and various other topics of mutual interest.

Finally, Judy broke loose and headed to the elevator. On her way, she remembered that she was not yet acclimated to the glass elevator. She headed over to the door for the freight elevators. It was locked. She had taped the one on 22 but had she forgotten to tape the one on 30? She pulled up the sleeves on her long-sleeved shirt...no tape on either forearm. "Well, I must have forgotten to tape it (easy to do when exiting the freight area) and knocked the tape off my arm in The Suite," she said to herself. So, she went back to The Suite to see if someone would go down to 22 and bring the freight elevator up to 30 and let her in...she did not wish to make a mess in the glass elevator. Ryan offered, as he had so many times in the past (in addition of course to Charles), to assist with elevator arrangements. He went down to 22 in the glass elevator and was able to enter the area with the freight elevators because Judy had taped the access door (and the tape had not been removed). Both freight elevators appeared to be in use, but eventually one of them came and he took it to 30. He jumped out of the elevator, pushed buttons to call them both, and ceremoniously opened the hallway door for Judy. Now, the other elevator was coming. When the door opened, Judy looked in and gasped, vomited all over the place, and fainted on the floor. Herb was dangling in a noose from the elevator ceiling, clearly dead.



Helping Judy Recover...





"Come on, Judy, lie down on the bed," Charles said when they arrived back in their room. "Ryan has called the police and he will let us know when they want to talk to us about these shocking events. In the meantime, we need to get into shape to do so. Let me help you—you have experienced a horrible ordeal. Here, eat this high-fiber, high-protein cereal bar and drink this bottle of water. Eat it up and drink the whole bottle of water." Judy nodded agreement. After she was done, Charles cleaned her up and generally took charge--"Now, let's take a nap for a while—here, let me hold you." Judy rolled over into Charles's loving arms—she was so lucky to

have such a wonderful husband she thought as she drifted off into a sleep made more comfortable by being held firmly and reassuringly by the man she had loved all of her adult life.


“What time is it?” asked Judy, rousing from an alternately fitful and comfortable nap. “It’s time to get up and discuss strategy—as a ‘power of two’,” Charles stated firmly. “You know,” he continued, “that when we work as a team the combined effect is far greater than a simple additive one of each of our efforts...that’s because we think alike in many, but not all, ways; and, where we do not think alike, we fill gaps in the equation so that everything fits, as it should—that is the ‘power of two’ that we joke (half seriously) about.”

“Yes,” Judy noted, “effective communication is central—shall we invoke our ‘Brain Trust’ of thoughtful communicators?” Charles and Judy both enjoyed collecting Teddy Bears...they were “pets” that required no care, gave hugs freely, didn’t eat, and didn’t need to be walked, groomed, or cleaned up after. Furthermore, the couple often used them as ways to communicate thoughts in a playful, but sometimes meaningful, manner. “Sure,” giggled Charles, “of course we didn’t bring them with us (in their physical forms) but they are really part of our worlds of abstraction and virtual reality so they are always with us in spirit.” “Introducing,” he continued with a grand gesture, “the Earl Family Brain Trust and Team of Special Agents Assigned to Memphis!”

<i>Earl Family Brain Trust</i>		
		<p>Theodore E. Bear: A sedentary philosophically-inclined bear. Kind and thoughtful. A clear-thinker interested in the balance between pragmatics and abstraction. He worries about personal issues, such as being made into the bed, as well as broad-ranging issues involving world peace and global politics among all creatures, real and imaginary. He views himself as a dignified and proper teddy bear wearing a tuxedo—NOT as a panda. He is a native of Detroit, MI.</p>

		<p>Binker Bear: Named after Christopher Robin's [A. A. Milne, <i>When We Were Very Young</i>] "imaginary" friend Binker, as in "you can't see Binker." He lives largely in the realm of the imaginary, in the world of abstraction. In his "bear" persona he is physically quite large; he has a number of other personae he has been known to adopt. He is known to keep his cards close to his chest. Binker is originally from Paris, France, and was born at Galeries Lafayette.</p>
		<p>Tine E. Bear: Named for his diminutive stature. Tine focuses on the pragmatics of life. He feels he has to do so...as a small creature in the world of giants. He enjoys playing duplicate bridge, as an equalizer, and has a fine partnership with Binker who is large enough to use a bidding box. Tine emigrated from Paris with Binker, but is originally from a US Zone in Germany (as his tag says). His genealogy is rooted in the Vintage (mohair) Branch of the prestigious Steiff Family.</p>

Earl Family: Special Agents Assigned to Memphis

	<p>A. C. Beale Bear: A native of Memphis—still a teenager in a leather, zippered jacket, but a thoughtful sort that blends in easily with a crowd his age. A.C. Beale has been playing tournament level duplicate bridge for his entire life...he says he was born into it, and perhaps he was. He is the youngest Grand Master in that world.</p>
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	<p>Shade E. Bear: Also a native of Memphis. Shade E. is very proud of his beautiful hair and feels it sets him apart from the other bears, whom he views to be bald. His preoccupation with his hair leads him not to be taken seriously by many...a useful attribute for an otherwise altruistic spirit functioning in an undercover function (a natural function for a teddy bear). He is quite comfortable in his “blue suede skin.”</p>
	<p>Guillaume R. Squirrel: A linguist who is the Master Teacher of all languages to all teddy-type creatures in the Earl world. Guillaume is highly articulate and will chatter endlessly on a vast array of topics—some of greater interest than others. He claims to possess a copyright and trademark on his unique pronunciation of the word “hmmmmph!!” which he uses to express a variety of feelings. Guillaume’s gray coloration, along with his natural athletic talent and structural engineering background, make him an ideal undercover agent in otherwise drab, large area/height, surroundings in which swiftness of movement is helpful. Guillaume, a world traveler like some of the others, emigrated from Toronto, Ontario, but was born in North Korea.</p>
	<p>Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou: Like Binker, Eeyore is also named after a character from A. A. Milne’s classic children’s work and like Binker is originally from Paris’ Galeries Lafayette. Eeyore worries about his tail, of course, but in recent years has learned to enjoy greatly the fact that real-world versions of himself, an endangered species, are once again rising in number. He is a kind and thoughtful, though stubborn, creature. His plodding ways and stubborn persistence, along with his gray coat, make him an ideal undercover agent in complex, but physically bounded, situations that appear drab in color. He persists until he gets to the bottom of things.</p>

Charles knew that casting the situation in the abstract “teddy” world would help Judy, who is hyper-sensitive, to cope with the nasty events that had begun to unfold around her. He needed to get her to channel her large imagination in constructive ways.

The Investigation of Possible Solution Paths

“Now, let’s get to work,” said Judy. “How about,” she continued, “if we go down to the local branch of ‘The Emporium’ and play a little trivia...it’s only 10:00p.m. here so that should work...it’s near Beale Street...we can walk it. Furthermore, we can take the Brain Trust and A. C. Beale with us” (she winked at Charles).

“I’ll just have a soda pop,” Charles told the waitress at The Emporium, “and maybe some chicken wings, plain, with ranch on the side.” “I will have a draught light beer” said Judy “and an order of nachos with chili, guacamole, ground beef, and extra cheese. Also, please bring us each a gameboard box so we can play trivia.” The barroom trivia that the couple liked to play was in some ways similar to duplicate bridge. In bars throughout the United States, everyone was playing the same game at the same time. It was all computerized; first, you competed against other patrons in the bar playing the game, and then the scores from one bar were pitted against scores from other bars across the country, all in real time. Your enemies became your allies—an exercise in world peace that Theodore E. Bear greatly appreciated. The game involved an elegantly-conceived use of computer technology that both Charles and Judy appreciated; they hoped that someday tournament duplicate bridge might follow a similar path...they noted that it’s on the way now, but not there yet. Then, they signed on using their registered player handles, Judy as “Binker” (another persona) and Charles as “CWE” (his initials).

They played two games and ate their food...not much conversation, just an unwinding time...Judy won the first game, Charles won the second. That put both of them on the Big Board of monthly results for that bar but they failed to scratch in the top 20 nationwide. Charles was creative in his logical approach to the game, making him the superior guesser of the two. Judy’s “out of the box” imagination occasionally yielded correct answers out of the blue (when she had had no clue as to the correct answer). Their respective abilities at this simple five-part multiple choice game also reflected components of their mental abilities in other arenas, as well.

“Now,” Charles said to Judy, “instead of thinking about parallel paths between duplicate bridge and duplicate trivia, let’s think about possible paths that might lead to a solution to this murder...OK?” “Yes, Charles,” Judy replied.



“Let’s start,” Charles began, “by thinking about anything that was out of the ordinary, or unexpected—could be something small or large—an out of place detail or whatever.” “That’s a good idea,” countered Judy, “I noticed that the bar was out of bottled water; that doesn’t happen—Ellen and Sarah are so well-organized. I also noticed that there was no duct tape on the door on the 30th floor and none on my second arm—that doesn’t often happen—sometimes I forget, but I really didn’t think I had this time.” “In addition,” continued Judy, “I noted that the Impersonator was clothed in a white silk jumpsuit with some black, a black shirt, and white gloves (he had an Elvis look to his head) but...he was wearing brown penny loafers....he should not have been wearing brown shoes with a black and white outfit.”

“It’s interesting,” Charles noted, “that you mention the Impersonator, Judy. I was in the hallway when he came to The Suite along with a crowd of others. He told Ryan that Jacquie (although he referred to her as simply ‘your wife’) had hired him. Ryan took it at face value, as I suppose one naturally would, and welcomed him to The Suite. I might have been a bit more suspicious...it’s hard to say...but, it was an unexpected event.”

“I think,” continued Charles, “that we will need to keep our eyes wide open in the quest for more items of this sort that will no doubt come up as the investigation proceeds...someone may trip himself up that way. Tine E. Bear is a great advocate of this sort of approach—of noticing the ‘small’. I’m sure the local police department will do outstanding work in resolving this case, but it never hurts for them to have extra input from observant folks. I know that to be true based on your volunteer work, Judy, with our police department at home.” “Yes, Charles, that’s all true,” said Judy, “now let’s organize what we do have and think about possible paths to send our ‘agents’ out on. Once we have their reports back, you can take the reports and proceed as the evidence, or lack thereof, suggests. So, let’s lay out direction—I will help them with computer and Internet research for their

reports.” “It seems to me that what we need to know about,” said Charles, “are matters associated with the Impersonator and matters associated with tap water for drinking...at least those should be facts we can get at the outset and then logically piece together directions for further research. Judy, you and ‘the boys’ pursue those angles; I will continue talking to folks around the hotel to see what I can learn. ”

Initial Possible Solution Paths		
	<p>Beale Street: Undercover Agent, A. C. Beale Bear.</p> <p>Mission: Find out if there are any Elvis Impersonators who perform there who wear brown penny loafers with their black and white satin, or other, costumes.</p>	 <p>Follow along with A.C. Beale on your smartphone.</p>
	<p>Graceland: Undercover Agent, Shade E. Bear.</p> <p>Mission: Study Elvis’s actual clothing to see if there are any occurrences of brown penny loafers. Look at general style of Elvis garb.</p>	 <p>Follow along with Shade E. on your smartphone.</p>
	<p>Mud Island, Mississippi River Display, Mud Island Park Riverwalk: Undercover Agent, Guillaume R. Squirrel.</p> <p>Mission: Study the engineering of fluid dynamics along the river course as it might affect the drinking water distribution network for the city.</p>	 <p>Follow along with Guillaume on your smartphone.</p>

	<p>Wastewater Treatment Plant just beyond the north end of Mud Island: Undercover Agent, Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou.</p> <p>Mission: Determine if cross-contamination between water and sewer networks might be possible.</p>	 <p>Follow along with Eeyore on your smartphone.</p>
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Investigative Report of A.C. Beale

Last night I spent from 10:00 p.m., when we all arrived at The Emporium, until 6:00 a.m. going into establishments up and down Beale Street. A number of them have Elvis Impersonators and a number of them were able to give me information about how to hire one of them. I had them check their records and not one of them went to our hotel on the night in question. So, the Impersonator in The Suite appears not to be one that works on Beale Street.

While on Beale Street, I used my per diem from you to enjoy some outstanding Barbecue...ribs and pulled pork are my favorites. While eating in various establishments, I also looked around to see what the well-dressed Elvis Impersonator might wear (I'm sure that Shade E will soon have historical information for you, from primary sources at Graceland, as well). I saw no brown penny loafers—pointed toe boots (white) with a stacked heel were the most common.

- Most common: white suit with gold beaded trim and gold belt with large gold buckle, flared pant legs, a stand-up collar, jacket open at the top revealing either a red or black shirt with white, red, or black boots with a pointed toe and stacked heel.
- Black suit, embroidered with gold beads/jewels and black shoes
- Purple suit with gold beads and belt similar to that of Shade E. with tan boots with a two-inch stacked heel.
- Brown suit with gold trim, red panels in lower sleeves and below the knee with red boots, pointed toe, and stacked heel.
- Blue suit with red and silver beads, red, silver, or blue boots.

- Red suit with standup collar, gold beaded trim, white shirt and white boots with pointed toe and stacked heel.
- Black suit with gold and silver beaded trim, red shirt, and red boots or black slip-ons.
- Ivory suit with gold trim, red shirt, and ivory or gold boots with pointed toe and stacked heel.

Investigative Report of Shade E. Bear

I've been through the whole place at Graceland. I see a white silken, almost light yellow, jumpsuit on display there with associated ivory/light yellow shoes. There are a number of suits displayed in glass cases. Also, I see white and light blue jumpsuits—there are even some for sale here. Most slip on shoes appear to be black or blue (of course) and are not made the same way that penny loafers are—rather, there is, for example, a strap of gold, perhaps saying “Elvis,” across the instep. One pair of slip-ons is made of two-toned leather, tan around the outside and dark brown over the toe with some sort of ornamental strap across the instep—not a penny



loafer. Other blue slip-ons look more like slippers and appear to be made of suede. There are also tie, oxford style, shoes--some blue; others look more like saddle oxfords; yet others look more like sneakers. Also, there are black and white wingtips. Finally, there are boots of many colors and styles. I see one pair of what might be called “penny loafers” in a very chunky style and of bluish cast in color, perhaps made of worn suede. There are also incredibly garish looking slip-ons with gold and light blue patterns all over them. I would say that generally a great deal of thought went into the entire package—that a conscious effort was made to have the shoes an integral part of the entire outfit, although certainly one might see an all black outfit with black slip-ons and white socks.

Investigative Report of Guillaume R. Squirrel

I have run through the full length of the River Walk that represents the 1000 mile journey of the Mississippi, with 30 inches representing 1 mile so that the entire length of my run was about 2,000 feet. My stride is about 6 inches, so that's 4,000 of my strides. Of course, I did need to do a bit of

additional lateral scampering to stay out from under foot of the many tourists. No one suspected my reconnaissance work. During the course of my travels, I saw nothing particularly unusual about the described course of the river. In fact, the engineering management plan in place rivals that of even the most carefully engineered squirrel's nest. Rivers and trees have a lot in common—they have hierarchical feed into them from the tiny branches, to longer branches, to the largest branches, and thence to the trunk and finally to the outlet where an inverted branching pattern tends to develop, either in a body of water (such as the Gulf of Mexico) or in the underground root system of a tree. While studying and associated map, I noted one place to the north of Mud Island where there appears to be some sort of outflow from a pipe into the river, as revealed by the characteristic inverted pattern, but I assume that Eeyore will find out more about that when he visits the wastewater treatment facility there.

Investigative Report of Eeyore, Baudet de Poitou

Well, I decided to do a bit of research of my own, prior to going over to the actual site of the wastewater treatment plant just to the north of Mud Island.



It seems that the Environmental Protection Agency has been working with them to eliminate unauthorized overflows of untreated raw sewage. Now, this project, as part of a comprehensive Clean Water Act, has been going on for a while (for perhaps more than one year). So, one would think that cross-contamination would not be likely. But, I supposed I needed to trudge on over there and look around a bit. So I did. Here's an account of what I did.

I walked along the road that appears to enter the place. Here's a mapped view, from overhead (below). Now, as I was walking along the road, there were numerous giant trucks, saying 'yeast' on them. Perhaps they use the yeast as some sort of biological agent in wastewater treatment—seems to me I might have heard of such a thing. I don't really know...but we, from Poitou, need to speculate (about all sorts of things) lest we become extinct as a breed.



So, being a friendly sort, I followed where the trucks were coming from and went on into the structure associated with the trucks. A nice gentleman, named Ed, asked me how he might be helpful. I explained to him that the Baudet from Poitou is a tried and true means of hauling heavy objects; that we are quite reliable and do not require the sort of expensive fuel oil his trucks might require.

Additionally, I explained that we were an endangered species and that I knew he and others were working with the EPA so thought he might be receptive to other forms of environmental protection. After all, once a species is gone altogether you don't know what unintended consequences in the balance of nature might arise. In 1977 there were only 44 of us left on the entire planet. There are more now and our numbers are slowly increasing. But, we need all the help we can get...a happy Baudet de Poitou is a good thing...and to be happy we need food and shelter for our families....hence, jobs. So, I told Ed that I wondered if he might have any jobs for us, perhaps in hauling, but whatever he might need.



Ed said he was touched by this story but really just wasn't sure where we might fit in, especially as the city modernizes its infrastructure. He offered to show me around and of course I was pleased to be offered such a tour. I am not a sanitation engineer, so I'm not sure that my understanding is that clear, but at least I can share some and offer, for your consideration, references that are more authoritative.

I gather that the sewage comes through pipes, by gravitational force, to vented fields, or covered lagoons, where it is stored and subjected to biological treatment. From there, it is sent to extract water from it (hence, "dewatered"). Then, the remaining dried cakes of material are stored in a surface disposal facility. The biogas generated by the covered lagoon system is sold to a nearby industry for electricity generation.



I didn't think to ask him what they did with the water that was removed, but I'm confident from reading these references that they handle that situation, too. Guillaume noticed, from looking at the map above, some white foam in the river. Ed gave me a reference to that issue, linked to this QR code.

Although I had no scientific references to offer Ed in return, I thought he might enjoy this story about alleged yeast use on the farms of Poitou in France. You see, so the tale goes (not the donkey's tail), there is a species of bird that likes to build its nest in the thick manes of the Poitou donkeys. This practice is more than a bit disgusting and has a number of health concerns associated with it. But, if the farmer sprinkles some yeast in the mane of the donkey, any birds already there pick up and leave

immediately, never to return; no new nests ever result. Why? (I can't help but chortle when I haul on these lines),

*Yeast is Yeast,
And Nest is Nest,
And Never the Mane Shall Tweet!*

Ed laughed, "a little Kipling goes a long way!" Sharing tall tales with friends is nice. I wanted Ed to know how much I appreciated his caring, scientific approach and I feel convinced that it is not possible that there is cross-contamination of the drinking water from the wastewater. I have no proof, of course, just the satisfaction of knowing a fine public official, eager to share solid information, whom I found trustworthy.

Charles's Report

While Judy and "the boys" were busy following one strategy outside the hotel on field reconnaissance, I spent time within the hotel talking to various folks about the recent tragedy. I began by trying to piece together detail I saw with detail others saw. This process involved a great deal of conversation and I spare you all of the commentary but do think the highlights are worth including in this report.

1. First of all, I wanted to find out if the Impersonator who came to The Suite had actually been contacted by Jacquie, as the man had said earlier to me and to Ryan. When I spoke to Jacquie she said she had, in fact, not contracted with him and had had no knowledge that he would show up. She was as surprised as we were, but she apparently assumed this was something someone else had arranged. As did her husband, Ryan, Jacquie took it at face value as a nice form of entertainment for the evening. Subsequent to my conversation with Jacquie, I talked to Ellen, to Sarah, and ABC Staff associated with running The Suite. It was the same story all around: no one knew anything about him and all assumed someone else had arranged for him.
2. Second, I wanted to learn more about Herb. Why had he died? Was it from being hanged or was there some other cause. Sarah told me

that she had served him city tap water with his scotch. Judy said he drank only half his drink prior to jumping up on the coffee table from which Ryan eventually ejected him. Sarah also said that she had served tap water to no one else that evening.

3. Third, I needed to learn more about the Human Rights Foundation's Board. Given Herb's behavior, it surprised me that he had received as many as three votes; I should have thought that he might get only his vote. So, I set out to interview each member of that Foundation separately.
 - a. Six of them that had apparently told Herb they were going to vote for him did not do so. Each of them told me they had deliberately lied to Herb to get him off their backs and that of course they would never have voted for him for any office. They said they voted, as a block, for one of them for President.
 - b. Sam told me that he told Herb he would vote for him and did vote for him. Sam was a new member of the Foundation and new to service to the ABC. He said that Herb had taken him out to dinner a few times to sort of show him the ropes. He thought that Herb was just being a nice guy as a mentor to a new participant and so Sam said, of course he honored his commitment to vote for Herb. Sam told me that he and the other members, except Herb and Peter, had gone up to The Suite together on the night in question. He also said that Kent and Joe (the ABC Board representation on the Foundation) had left almost immediately after the voting and that they took the ballots with them for safe-keeping. He said that Peter had left to go back to his room and change prior to going up to The Suite. He told me that they were all staying on the 22nd floor so that going back to the room from the meeting was a simple thing to do. He also said that he had found Herb's berating of their colleagues to be outrageous and that he used his cell phone to text Kent and tell him about it. Shortly after the vote, Sam said he felt foolish and never should have voted for Herb.
 - c. Peter told me that he voted for Herb only grudgingly. Peter said that he, as a bridge pro on the international scene, valued

Herb's long-time experience on Foundations and with international bridge. He said he did not see a better candidate available in terms of those criteria.

- d. So, the vote tally in Herb's mind is: six votes plus Sam plus Peter plus Herb, himself—for a total of nine votes. Subsequent follow up shows only Sam, Peter, and Herb voted for Herb.
4. Fourth, I decided to get to know both Sam and Peter better to see if I believed their reasons for voting for Herb.
- a. Since Sam seemed responsive to being taken to dinner, I offered to bring him up to The Suite and join us as a special guest. I wanted Ryan to see him, as well. Ryan recognized Sam immediately and said he was happy that all the remaining members of the Human Rights Foundation had come to visit. Sam contradicted Ryan...all but one came, he said. Sam came up with the block of six who not voted for Herb. Herb came up ahead of them. Peter had not yet come up by the time Sam left. Ryan nodded that certainly that was possible; he had simply assumed that they all came together—he didn't know any of them very well and by the time they got there the place was more than a bit of a madhouse anyway.
 - b. Peter, on the other hand, as an experienced player, would probably not be as responsive as Sam had been to an invitation to The Suite. Instead, I offered to play in an open pair event with him. He hesitantly agreed, informing me that he does not usually play with folks of my lowly caliber, except for money (at the rate of about \$1,000 per day). He was relatively pleasant, in a business-like manner, although clearly impressed with himself. He was apparently one of the top players in Kyrgystan, a republic with emerging interest in tournament bridge as it reflected positively on their new-found freedom to move around. The game seemed to be going along moderately well; I estimated, going into the last round that we were having about a 56% game. On the penultimate hand of the session, we had the following bidding sequence...

	♠ 5		
	♥ A K Q 8 3		
	♦ A 9 5 4 2		
	♣ 6 5		
♠ T 9 8 7 6		♠ A K Q J 3 2	
♥ 9		♥ T 6 5 4	
♦ J		♦ -----	
♣ K Q J T 3 2		♣ 9 8 7	
	♠ 4		
	♥ J 7 2		
	♦ K Q T 8 7 6 3		
	♣ A 4		

North	East	South	West
1H	1S	2D	3D
4S	5S	6D	6S
P	P	7D	P
P	P		

West led the club K, glared at dummy, and I quickly took all 13 tricks (7 diamonds, 5 hearts, and a club). I decided to learn more about Peter. Rather than ask about his bidding, I thought it would be easier to ask Peter about Kyrgystan. So I said, "What do you think of Issyk Kul?" Peter replied that Issyk was a fine player, one of Kyrgystan's best, but that he was now too frail to travel. By now, the session was over (our score rose to 59%), and I thought it best to go share my findings with the others.

Putting It All Together


“All right,” said Charles, “let’s see where we stand now! Are you and ‘the team’ ready, Judy?” She nodded assent. Charles took charge of the commentary as all the reports had been turned over to him.

- We learned from the effort of A.C. Beale and Shade E. that a good Elvis Impersonator would be unlikely to wear New England style penny loafers and that a good Impersonator would also be likely to coordinate shoes with the rest of the outfit. Our Impersonator wore brown penny loafers with a black and white satin outfit—failure on both fronts. Judy mentioned once again that the Impersonator in The Suite had worn gloves—our undercover agents did not see gloves as a general part of an Elvis outfit. Beyond the clothing style issues, it appears from my own questioning of folks in The Suite and of ABC Staff that not one of them knew a thing, in advance, about hiring an Impersonator. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that the Impersonator who came to The Suite was an Impersonator of an Elvis Impersonator...sort of a “meta” Impersonator.
- We learned from the efforts of Guillaume and Eeyore that it is unlikely that the tap water had become contaminated by wastewater. It might have seemed a bit far-fetched, as a possibility anyway—surely if the tap water were bad enough to kill someone (who drank only half a scotch and water, as Judy noted), others would have been ill from it too, and that did not appear to happen. However, when I was out walking with Kent and Joe early this morning, I noticed pump-like fixtures on the main street in town with signs on them that said “non-potable water, do not drink.” Perhaps that water came from the dewatering station? Perhaps it is water used to wash the streetcars that run on that street? We don’t know. But, it leaves room to speculate that a killer might obtain non-potable water on a selective basis.

- A logical issue is to then consider whether the set of all nodes and pipes, viewed abstractly as a graph (vertices and edges) is planar or not. A planar graph is one in which the edges do not cross each other...a desired situation here so that wastewater pipes do not run on top of drinking water pipes (lest a leak in the top one filter down into the lower one causing contamination). Here, Eeyore and I are in the same boat...not enough information. I presume that the pipes run under the streets for ease in maintenance. I checked that idea out with one of my colleagues on the Board whose day job is in the wastewater division of a large municipal government of a city that is a model for environmental protection of various sorts. He confirmed that certainly I did not have enough information and he also told me that I would not be able to get the sort of information I sought. So, I contented myself with imagining a network with zones and that within each zone the graph was planar because there were no forbidden subgraphs forcing the network to be nonplanar. Thus, there would be no undesired crossings of pipes within service zones that I might suggest from a street map. Kuratowski's Theorem came to life for me in downtown Memphis!



- I think, based on all of this—the efforts of Guillaume, of Eeyore, and of myself, that it was reasonable to consider whether contaminated drinking water might have been an agent used in the killing but I am satisfied that such was not the case. The drinking water system is fine and I doubt that there is any cross-connection with the wastewater treatment system.
- The case of my adventure with Peter.
 - When I played bridge with Peter, he made an error no professional would make. His pass of 6S showed no immediate loser in spades, which is why I bid 7D and why the opening leader glared when dummy had a spade.

- Even more peculiar, Peter claimed that Issyk Kul was a bridge expert. In fact, Issyk Kul is a lake in Kyrgystan and one of the larger lakes in the world. It has a number of interesting characteristics. I'm sure Judy will back me up on that...I remember when she mapped it and the surrounding terrain along with the numerous streams that flow into the lake (with no apparent outflow).
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- So, what is the matter with Peter? It is true that he speaks English quite well. I didn't ask, but I assumed that probably he was educated in the United States. In any event, though, I think I need to know a bit more about Peter. So, I placed a call to my friend who is high up in the international bridge federation and has been so for many years. I asked him if he had a photo of a great Kyrgystani bridge player named Peter—a top player. He said he did. I asked him to email it to Judy so that she could get it on her smartphone. Judy, please check your email. Let me see...hmmm, just as I expected....this man is not the man I just played bridge with! It appears the "Peter" here is an imposter...he is not the Kyrgystani expert he claims to be—he is a pseudo-expert. Do we have yet another imposter?
 - A lot of the pieces came together for me when my partner, Peter, got up to get a cup of coffee in the last round. As he walked past me, I noticed his nice new penny loafers (of course lots of men here wear them). I did not think too much about them until I saw on the bottom of one of them a piece of duct tape...surely a nice new shoe would not yet have developed a hole in the sole.

Now, I think I have enough information to weave the facts into a plausible theory. Let me try it out on the group here and then see what they suggest I do with it.

Charles's Theory

I am convinced that Peter murdered Herb in a deliberate, premeditated manner. Peter is a master of impersonation, first impersonating an Elvis impersonator and second impersonating a Kyrgystani bridge expert. Here is plausible support.

- Peter has been selling himself to unsuspecting bridge players as a fine Kyrgystani pro, using the name of an actual pro. He is an imposter and not a very good bridge player, himself. He bilked innocent duplicate players, wanting a playing lesson with an expert as one way to improve their game, of hundreds of thousands of dollars. He made a small fortune from this deception.
- Herb caught on to what Peter was doing and he was blackmailing Peter for a percentage of the take. In a similar manner, Herb demanded that Peter vote for him (and Peter did so).
- At that point, Peter could see no end in sight to Herb's demands and consequent destruction of his professional and personal life. Therefore, he decided to get rid of Herb lest Herb bleed him dry. In Peter's twisted mind, the benefits of murder outweighed its risks.
- Peter left the room after the vote, leaving Herb to make a fool of himself and set the stage for others to have motive to kill Herb.
- Back in his room, Peter put on an Elvis Impersonator suit he had earlier purchased on a visit to Graceland (as Shade E noted, they are for sale).
- Peter had checked out the freight elevator situation earlier in the day. That is why Judy found the door ajar when she went to tape it open. Peter had rigged a noose to the ceiling of the elevator and stored most of the visible part on the top of the elevator. He had conceived the rigging of the noose so that when the elevator went up, the noose was pulled up with it.
- After a bit of time, Peter left his room, dressed as Elvis, and went up in the freight elevator; Judy's taping of the door was a fortunate turn of events for him.
- He exited through the door from the freight elevator into the hallway of the 30th floor when he heard a crowd in the hallway. That way it

appeared as if he had come up in the regular elevator with the group in the hallway. He noted on his way through the door to the hallway that once again someone else had already taped it open.

- From there, you know how things went for a while. You can imagine his glee, under his makeup, watching Herb act like a fool and Herb's eventual ejection from The Suite. Peter did not find singing like Elvis to be much of a problem. He knew the songs and the acoustics and noise level in The Suite were so bad that few, if any, would notice the quality of his voice. And, even if they did so, they would be likely to attribute it to the fact that he was not the real Elvis...little did they know, nor would they be likely to suspect, that he was not even a real Elvis Impersonator!
- Once Ryan threw Herb out of The Suite onto the hallway floor, Peter seized the opportunity...he had not been sure when opportunity would arise but Ryan's action brought it to the fore. Peter immediately went on a musician's break and ran out into the hallway, ostensibly to help the ailing Herb. Herb did not recognize Peter because of the Elvis disguise. Peter told Herb that he could help him and in real life was the hotel doctor and a chiropractor—that his role as an Elvis Impersonator was a gift from the hotel to the ABC. He offered to take Herb to a hotel room and take care of his knees. The unsuspecting Herb was agreeable and Peter took him to the "private" service elevator where he convinced him that the noose-like structure was analogous to a neck brace and a way to avoid any consequent spinal column injury from jarring of his knees in the elevator—that the hotel had approved its being there as part of service to the hotel doctor. Herb was in pain and said he would try anything. He did as Peter asked. Then Peter got into the elevator car, pressed the button to go to the 33rd floor (the highest in the building), jumped out of the slow-reacting freight elevator, and as the elevator rose in its shaft, its machinery pulled on the noose, lifting Herb off the floor. Herb died quickly. If he made any noise no one could have heard it as the floors above 30 are for hotel use only, for the most part during the business day.
- Peter made a big mistake with the duct tape that Judy had placed on the hallway door on the 30th floor. He removed it to keep people out of the

area, understandable from his vantage point perhaps, but he should have left it there so that whoever put it there would not become suspicious. So, when Peter was struggling to get Herb into the elevator, he dropped the tape he had carefully removed from the door jamb and it stuck tightly to the sole of his nice new Maine penny loafers. When I saw it during the last round of the bridge game, I also saw the notches in either end of the strip that Judy customarily cuts so the tape fits snugly around the door fixtures, such as knobs or handles. I did not attempt to get the tape nor did I mention its presence.

Then, I knew....for sure in my own mind...what had happened, how it had happened, and why it had happened.

Well, what do you think? Theodore? Judy? Anyone?

“I think it’s an amazing theory,” said Judy, “it makes good sense to me and I think it’s probably correct.” “You had better take it to the police, right now,” echoed Theodore; “you know that Ryan is now their number one suspect because he was in the freight elevator area, alone, shortly before Judy and Ryan found the body.” “Yes,” Charles said, “I can see why they might come to that sort of conclusion. The problem there is that they are not duplicate bridge players and don’t understand the workings of that world so they could never find Peter. Yes, Theodore, you are correct—I need to get to the police right away and explain all this—to protect Ryan and other potential suspects, to protect us, and also to see that justice is served!—thanks so much to all of you—your efforts were critical in coming to this conclusion !”

Several hours later the police arrived and unceremoniously arrested the unsuspecting Peter. The duct tape was still on the sole of his shoe. Justice had been served and the bridge tournament continued, minus two players who had come to play but never did play much and, clearly, never would play, anywhere, again.

* All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.