

# Arts & Entertainment

## Who shot Nash Rambler?



### Chapter Two

Living a fast life, Randy Ewing had to be able to bank on snap decisions. He did and was very rich. He prided himself on being a good judge of men, despite the fact that he was almost always mistaken when it came to women.

His shrewd eye spotted Nash Rambler instantly. After night after night of watching Rambler serenely and



**David Wood**

punctually shuffle past the office door, a vacuum sweeper in front of him and a feather duster in his back pocket, Ewing was convinced that the day would come when he would have a use for the boring janitor.

That day came, and when Rambler

took instructions flawlessly, Ewing stole him away from Snidely Bros. Building Services forever.

The word Ewing liked best to describe the kind of man he was looking for was *lymphatic*, meaning "of or resembling lymph." He wanted someone who was efficient at tasks but otherwise forgettable, someone with slightly less personality than a healthy, loyal, well-behaved dog. Being a man of decisions, Ewing couldn't understand lymphatic people, but he could spot them.

"I'm a good judge of men, I'm proud to say," he said to Rambler the night he hired him. "I've a shrewd eye, and I can see right through you, Nash, and see you're a good man."

"That's my invisible ego you're not seeing."

"In this world, Nash, doors only finally open for people who don't ask 'Who's there?' when opportunity knocks."

"A mystic once wondered, 'If a

coin fell from heaven and nobody ever picked it up, would the world be any richer?'"

Ewing was wrong about Rambler in one regard. Listening to the cosmic drivel, he was sure the kid was warped on drugs. Yet Rambler refused even a tickle of the cocaine Ewing ladled out on the top of his desk. Rambler was no occult, utopian, no-nukes vegetable purist either, as he unabashedly volved the jelly beans in the cut-glass bowl on Ewing's desk.

Ewing admired Rambler's ability to sound halfway intelligent while showing no evidence of having anything between the ears, and he was impressed when Rambler never mentioned the zodiac.

He planned to maneuver Rambler into high places and needed to count on Rambler to be oblivious of the rise from rags to riches. He intended to make an idiot prince of this pauper who, he hoped, would never notice the difference. He wouldn't learn until too late that Rambler was a simpleton only by virtue of his trained Zen intellect.

Rambler's job was to deliver messages to people Ewing had cause to avoid. For the service, Rambler was paid well, dressed in fine suits of clothes and given a hydrant-red MG to sport about in. It was an easy job but required a special man. The agent needed to look dapper enough to get past closed doors, yet he also had to look the part of Ewing's faceless puppet. If it was otherwise, the agent would run the risk of being beaten or bribed for his secrets. Rambler looked just empty-headed enough that Ewing's enemies would see it was a waste of time or money to beat or bribe him.

Ewing had many enemies in his business, which he called *operations*, a label as open-ended as the assorted pursuits it encompassed. He had begun his career on the ground floor of several markets that now were glutted with professionals. Never had he lost his enthusiasm for his trade of choice. White-collar electronic crimes, too new to have clear laws written on them, fascinated him, and he showed a flair for video piracy, computer fraud, satellite scrambling and corporate espionage long before such things ever had names.

He conducted his financial empire now from a single computer terminal in his office on the seventh floor of the bank. His seat of operations was in Lincoln for good reason. Deep underground, extensive undisclosed drilling was under way, under his control. Also, awaiting the push of a button, hundreds of millions of dollars were poised and ready to buy up vast

tracts of farmland in western Nebraska.

He had no cause to desire the unimaginable fortune that the enterprise would bring him. His motive was ulterior. It was vendetta.

Randy Ewing was related to the famous owners of Ewing Oil in Dallas, though not by birth. He was Bobby's and J.R.'s cousin. Their father, Jacques, was Randy's father, Toulouse's, brother and murderer. Although the episode had been obscured beneath heaps of cash, Jacques had indeed shot Toulouse in the face for lending emotional support to Emma Yuhrs, a comely lass Jacques had left in suicidal gloom. Randy Ewing would never forgive Jacques and his descendants.

Revenge was now close at hand. Soon the drilling would be complete and the Dallas Ewing would be bankrupted without recourse. The underground tunnels he had dug would tap and drain the rich oil fields to the south. The great Ogallala aquifer beneath Nebraska would fill with Texas and Oklahoma oil. The black gold would rise to the surface of the water and literally come spraying from the rotating sprinklers already in place on the farms he would purchase.

He was aghast when Rambler foiled his plans. He should have guessed it would be his arch-enemy, the evil seductress Mona Lovecraft, that would lure Rambler from the fold. Rambler did have genitals after all.

When Rambler was hours in returning from a simple mission, Ewing went out in search and found the hydrant-red MG parked beside the silver DeLorean in front of Lovecraft's swank bungalow in Southwood. Kicking open the door, he beheld the two of them, naked and entwined on the Islamic prayer rug on the floor.

"Well hello, Randy," Lovecraft said rising, an assured, simpering smirk turning the corners of her mouth. "Your little Buddhist was interested in the teachings of tantric sex."

Ewing sent her sprawling with the back of his hand.

Rambler spoke, reaching for his pants. "A push in one direction necessitates an opposite thrust, boss. Where there is yin, you should expect to find yang."

"Do you know what happens to lymph when it goes cancerous, Nash," Ewing said through his teeth. "It is excised." He drew a pistol, a diminutive piece that he kept in his coat pocket, and put a small bullet in Rambler's chest. Before leaving, he wiped the gun and wrapped it in Lovecraft's hand.

*To be continued*

*Christmas programs ring in holiday season*

UNL will celebrate the holiday season with a program of Christmas carols Sunday night and two performances of "The Messiah" Dec. 12 and 13.

The choral groups to sing will be the Pueri Cantores, the University Chorale, the University Singers and the Varsity Men's Glee Club. The ensemble to play will be the University Brass Players.

In Kimball Recital Hall at 8 p.m. Sunday, four choral groups and an instrumental ensemble will join forces to present a free Christmas Carol Concert.

Along with lesser known Christmas music, arrangements of familiar colars like "What Child Is This" and "Ave Maria" will be performed.

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