

Screwy Days Part 13

by

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Captain Mental sits down at a library table with his closed laptop under his arm. With wide eyes, he places in front of him and opens it. He whispers to himself 'Fancy opening a personal computer. Crazy times...' Further in front of him are a number of empty tables, and in front of them is a young receptionist, sitting at her desk, not making a sound. By his sides are many rows of books on shelves. A couple of elderly people are browsing them. (Not making a sound). Mental pulls a mouse from his pocket (because laptop touchpads suck), puts it on the table and whispers again 'Time to finally research my family tree. I mean I know all about General Mental, but where did he come from? And where did HE come from? Let's check the interweb...'

Mental gets typing. 'Oh wow, I can't believe this is so easy.. . I guess Mental is a rare name, which makes things less complicated...' Mental does more typing 'General Mental came from Fisherman Mental... Hm. A perfectly reasonable profession, I guess. But where did HE come from? Baker Mental? Ok but where did HE come from? Carpenter Mental? Come on... It has to get more interesting than that... Hm, that's strange... Carpenter Mental came from a man originally called 'Frank Mayhan'? And he later had his name changed to 'Frank Mental'? Why could that be? More importantly, why is there so little information about him? What is this site hiding? It just says 'some people are named after their professions or appearances'...'

Mental scratches his head and continues typing. 'Let's close this site down and search for 'Frank Mental' and 'Frank Mayhan' on Booble...' It's not long before Mental goes red and starts to shake 'Oh no.' Losing self-consciousness, he reads aloud in utter disbelief 'Frank 'Mental' Mayhan was a wealthy Baron, famous for firing sheep out of a cannon...' Mental slams his fist on the table 'No!' He continues reading more than audibly, now attracting the attention of the receptionist and OAPs. 'He was ordered to change his name by outraged locals. In doing so, he both avoided a prison sentence and was forced to live with unavoidable shame...' Mental sheds a tear. 'So my real name is 'Steve Mayhan'. That's an Irish name.' Mental tries talking in an Irish accent 'Hoi there, I'm Oirish... That doesn't sound like me. There has to be some kind of mistake.'

Mental leaves his seat in a daze and starts a conversation with the receptionist 'Good day, I'm researching my family history on the internet, and it turns out one of my ancestors is a bit of a fruitcake. There has to be some kind of mistake..' The receptionist replies politely as she scratches her ear 'What website are you using?' Mental replies, now more vibrating than shaking 'FindMyFamilyNowRightNow.com and 'Booble', too...' 'Yes, I know them both well. I'm sorry to say this, but those sites are where professional researchers go to. So you're related to a psychopath or a crazy person?' 'Both...' 'Oh my word. What did he do?' 'He shot sheep out of a cannon'.

The receptionist laughs 'No way!' 'I'm afraid so. Is there a possibility the website was hacked?' 'You never know, I guess...' 'But the thing is, it does explain how I got such a weird name. The site is saying my ancestor was originally called 'Mayhan', but he was made to change his name.' 'I guess it's time for you to face reality...'

Mental is stunned into paralysis. He then runs to his laptop, slams it shut, swipes it away and dashes towards the exit, abandoning the perhaps frightened mouse. No, that's silly. It's just a tool, despite the confusing name. He opens the door, leaves it and slams that too, tears soon streaming down his face. He is now outside (duh), and it is pouring with rain. On the plus side, that does hide his tears a little, so it's not ALL bad. Many shops are by his sides and in front of him on the other side of the road. The traffic is moderate and sadly there are a few rubberneckers gazing at the destroyed policeman. Mental sees them and looks down in shame. He limps to a bus shelter a few meters away from him and sits on its bench. All he can think to do as he waits is stare, blank and cold. Eventually a bus comes by and he walks on it, lifeless and gives the concerned bus driver his change. He sits at the back of the vehicle and goes back to staring. This time out of the window. To shut the world out, he closes his eyes and sighs. It's not long before he's sleeping. He dreams.

Mental is sitting on a beautiful clifftop in the sun, gazing at the sea and kicking his legs (not fists) hard against the rocks. A hyperactive and kind-faced leprechaun dances and skips towards him and asks him a question 'Hey, there! Do you mind if I take a seat?' Mental replies, defeated 'Sure. Go ahead, buddy.' 'What's wrong wit'ya? You look very down...' 'It's nothing...' 'Come on. You can tell me...' 'It's just...' Mental hears the sound of baaaing above him. He looks up in horror. Yes, as suspected, he see a flying sheep, heading towards the water. The leprechaun is outraged 'That scoundrel Frank Mental's bin firing sheep out of a cannon, again!' Mental screams 'Nooooo!! I have to get out of here!' Mental springs up and runs like he's never run before. The mythical creature is concerned 'Where are you going? You've missed your stop haven't you?'

Back on the bus, a sweet old lady with green hair is shaking Mental by the shoulders. His eyes slowly open. The woman talks to him, softly 'You've missed your stop haven't you?' The cop looks out the window to see a now sunny peaceful village going by slowly, then going nowhere. He mutters 'Thank you. I'll just get off, here.' He picks a pound coin from his pocket and hands it to the do-gooder 'Please take this.' The lady laughs 'Why?' 'This is how I want you to remember me...' 'What are talking about?' 'You know I'd never fire a sheep out a cannon, right?' 'Mental! Why would you say something like that?' 'I have to go. Thanks for waking me.' Mental leaves the transport with his computer and waves goodbye to the driver.

As the vehicle disappears from Mental's sight, the lawman starts to sob like a conscientious fountain. (Again). He staggers towards home, head to the pavement and neighbouring grass, kicking a rock over and over, like a dastardly man's face. A minute or so of the same stress-fighting exercise goes by before out of the corner of his eye, he sees a statue leprechaun in someone's front garden. In a fury, he swings his leg at it at a tremendous speed and power, shattering it. Victorious, head to the sky and beating his chest, he shouts 'I'm Mental! I'm Mental Steve Mental!' He then has a laughing fit as he pulls on his hair with both hands. He then screams, scaring away some pigeons flying above. After frowning at himself, head back down, he slaps his face and continues in a more rational tone 'This isn't me. And that statue was old. I'm sure it won't be missed. Maybe I could give the owner my laptop to make up for things. I'm not even sure I can face the cruel internet again...'

Mental hears an outraged creaking sound. He looks to the opening front door of the property he vandalised and sees an outraged home owner, who's jaw drops open. I'm sure he's never seen anything like this in his life 'What's going on, here?' Mental is polite 'I just killed your leprechaun, sir. Please take my laptop. It's my way of saying 'sorry'.' 'What?? Didn't you once help save my cat?' 'Just take it...' Mental hands over the hardware to the now speechless owner. His eyes never leave Mental as the cop casually walks away, this time facing the world and the other scenic residences. He speaks to himself 'Good deed of the day, done. It's time to be proud, again.' Mental wipes a tear and sighs. His stagger turns into a dignified stroll.

After passing more totally innocent abodes, Mental reaches then sits on a small stone bridge over a stream. Very nice. So nice, he looks down on the water for a good ten seconds. Here it is peaceful and most importantly, all alone. Mental has an embarrassing call to make. As he waits to be answered, he bites his nails. 'Hello, Mrs. Jenkins, I mean JENKINS. Oh, you like Jenikins? Cool. Anyway, sorry for storming out of the library, like that. I was very upset. So... do you know if there's a way to destroy family records on FindMyFamilyRightNow.com and Booble? Maybe through some kind of... white virus?... Y'know, white virus... Like a white lie. A virus for the greater good, maybe?... No?... Ok, how about destroying the headquarters through some kind of... No?... Is there ANYTHING I can do?... Ok, bye. Mental hangs up 'Dammit!'

Mental clenches his fists and makes another call 'Morgan, I have some terrible news; I'm related to a real lunatic... What did he do?? Very unspeakable things! Serious acts of animal cruelty!... I know!... You have to help me, you have to destroy all records of my family. Is there a way to destroy internet pages?... Dammit!... Morgan, if the truth came out, I'd be a social leper!... You think I should give a speech tomorrow, letting the public down, gently? What if it goes wrong?... You really think people will be understanding?...

I hate to say this, Morgan, but I've just vandalised someone's leprechaun, things are NOT looking good for me, now... You're right, I was under stress. Thanks, man. And how will we get so many people to attend the meeting?... With the promise of Evil Hawaiians? Of course! Bye!

For the first time in perhaps decades, Mental is dressed all in black. He is standing behind a microphone on a stand and a wooden podium. His stage is 4 feet high. That's taller than many children. :O Wait, that's not impressive. Ah, who cares? Above him is an ornate, wooden roof. Facing him are a hundred seated people of all shapes and sizes, all scoffing their faces with pizza. They have a roof above them, too. What kind of building were you expecting? A half-roof building? Get outta here. Constable Morgan is in the front row, and he smiles warmly at the soon to be disgraced officer. After looking down in shame, Mental clears his throat and talks 'I'm sure all of you have a deep respect and adoration for me and my team who stopped the Sausage Roll Killer. But there is something dark about my family history that can't be ignored. I can only pray that you forgive me.'

The Chief of Police kicks the door open at the back of the room and power poses with his hands on his hips. Everyone turns to him. The Chief shouts 'Mental, you don't have to do this! I know what's going on here! Morgan explained everything!' Mental sheds another tear. He is at serious risk of dehydration 'The public need to know!' 'No they don't! The Chief stomps across the far side of the building towards the Captain. Mental ignores him 'I don't have much time, so let's cut to the chase; one of my ancestors shot sheep out of a cannon. There. I've said it.' The COP stops dead and screams 'NO!!' There are a few giggles. A quiet 'are you serious' is heard amongst the masses. Mental continues 'So... What do you think? Has that fact changed your perception towards me?'

The COP looks down 'Mental, why don't you keep talking? It can't get any worse.' Mental nods 'I also brutalised a kind of gnome.' There are more scattered laughs 'I kicked him right in the face, but don't worry, I apologised to the owner immediately. I gave him my laptop as a gesture of goodwill. Having said that, I kind of need it back as I have lots of classified files on it, some concerning the allusive granny. So if the guy I met yesterday is here, please give it to me, and I can give you cash instead.' The COP continues 'Is that all?' 'No. To distance myself from Frank Mental's unforgivable actions, I would like to change my name to Steve Goodman. Because I'm a good man.' Morgan shakes his head 'We all know you as 'Mental'. It's the kooky name we've all grown to love. You have nothing to be embarrassed about.' Morgan turns around to the rest of the crowd 'Right guys?' The whole room bursts into a supportive applause. Even the Chief joins in. Mental wipes his forehead and mutters to himself 'Hm. No sweat. How odd.' He then speaks into the mic 'Thanks you all, so much! Back to fighting crime I guess, huh?' Mental jumps in the air and punches it.