

Short Story: **Conversations of Shortie and Smittie**

Topic 070 Article 1

August 14, 2002

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Conversation One

The full moon made walking easy. The flat desert floor was easy walking anyway but the moonlight made it even easier. It would have been easier still to walk on the shoulder of Interstate 10 which was only 400 yards to the north, but the two aging prospectors preferred to walk the desert.

“You ‘member ‘laska Shortie?”, Smittie asked.

“Yeah, I ‘member”, Shortie replied.

“Them was rough days up in ‘laska”, Smittie continued.

“Yeah, rough”, Shortie agreed.

“Snow in winter, sketters in summer, and nothin’ in between”, Smittie said.

“Yeah, snow and sketters”, Shortie agreed.

“You know why we didn’t find any gold in ‘laska Shortie?”, Smittie asked.

“We found some”, Shortie contradicted.

“Not enough to count”, Smittie countered, “We didn’t find any gold cause we as lookin’ in the wrong places”.

“Yeah, the wrong places”, Shortie agreed.

“We was lookin’ in places that was already looked. The only thing you find in places already looked is things people don’t want. And gold ain’t one of those things”, Smittie explained.

“Yeah, places already looked”, Shortie agreed.

“People already looked in all the places they thought would have gold, like ‘laska”, Smittie continued to explain, “If they didn’t find no gold then there still ain’t no gold there. And if they did find gold they picked it all up so there ain’t no gold there now”.

“Yeah, no gold there now”, Shortie agreed.

“So what we gotta do is look in places where nobody thinks there is any gold”, Smittie stated, “That’s the only places where there can be any gold”.

“Yeah, places where there ain’t no gold”, Shortie agreed.

“So I’ll tell you where we’re gonna look Shortie”, Smittie announced, “We’re gonna look in Hawaii.”

“I ain’t never heard of no gold in Hawaii”, Shortie argued.

“And it’s good thing you ain’t. Cause if you had, what you would have heard is that it had all been picked up”, Smittie countered.

“How we gonna git to Hawaii?”, Shortie asked.

“We could work our way out to Frisco and hire onto a ship”, Smittie suggested, “But hell, let’s just go to the Phoenix airport an put a couple of tickets on ‘merican express”.

“Yeah, put ‘em on the gold card”, Shortie chuckled.

Conversation Two

The full moon made the view beautiful. The view from the outside balcony of the 49er Bar at The Gold Rush Hotel was always beautiful but the moonlight made it even more so. It would have been more beautiful still from either of their private suites but the two aging prospectors preferred to sit on the 49er balcony.

“You ‘member ‘laska Shortie?”, Smittie asked.

“Yeah, I ‘member”, Shortie replied.

“This sure beats ‘laska”, Smittie stated.

“Yeah, sure beats ‘laska”, Shortie agreed.

“This sure is nice even if we didn’t find no gold”, Smittie stated.

“We found some”, Shortie contradicted.

“But we didn’t dig it out of the ground or pan it. We dug all those tunnels and didn’t find one speck of gold”, Smittie said.

“Yeah, but we’re sure findin’ it now”, Shortie said, “You know you was right ‘bout places that had gold. People picked it up and carried it off. But how do you explain Hawaii, Smittie? There weren’t no gold here, but people come see our mine, stay in our hotel, and drop off plenty of gold here now”.

“I don’t know, Shortie. I just don’t know”, Smittie admitted, “But I sure like it”.

“Yeah, it’s like they say - gold is where you find it”, Shortie chuckled.

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