

# A Small World Story



Large Mouth Bass From The Everglades

While stationed at Homestead Air Force Base in 1968, Shelia and I lived in the "Helman Courts" apartment complex on Biscayne Dr., just off U.S. Route 1. While there, we became friends with John M. and his family. John and I were both avid fishermen and we fished a lot together, sometimes down in the keys. Neither of us ever discussed our jobs and neither of us had a clue as to the other's professions.

More than seven years later, I was at the end of my night shift at the National Security Agency, sitting in front of a tall rack of electronic equipment wearing a pair of headphones when I became aware that someone was standing behind me. I turned around and saw John M. but drew a complete blank on his name. It had been a long night and I was tired. With his name not coming immediately to mind, my eyes shifted to the badge he was wearing and I saw a name there, but not a name that I

recognized. I took the headphones off and pointed at his badge, saying, "You're not...", when he interrupted me with, "Jon, let's go get a cup of coffee."

He was under cover, preparing for an overseas assignment. As we shared coffee in the cafeteria, I told him that I was retiring from the Air Force and moving to northern Virginia where I had just landed a job. I was in the process of trying to find a place to live. Miraculously, John was renting a house near my new workplace and getting ready to move out. He told me that his landlord, who rented to John at a price well below the going rate, would rent to a new tenant at the same rate with a recommendation from John.

It worked out perfectly. Our families reunited. They moved out and we moved in.

Some months later, I traveled to Tel Aviv as part of a team working on a proposal for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Who do I run into in Tel Aviv? John M! He turned out to be a great tour guide, taking several members of our team on a road trip to Jerusalem, the Galilee, Golan Heights, Metulla, Haifa, Megiddo and a number of other sites.

A few years later, I was reading the Washington Post at the breakfast table one morning and stumbled across a short article about John M. being declared persona-non-grata by the government of Spain. If I recall correctly, it was something about him taking photographs in a location not authorized for such.

He returned to Maryland and our families reunited once again.

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