A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 17 Apr 2013 00:28

It wasn't much, but it was home. At least for now

It really was just a refrierator box that Jerry Longer had managed to find while he was scavenging through the garbage day spoils.

But it kept him dry, which was a good thing becaudse he had enough on his plate without worrying about catching a cold. or pnuemonia.

The Rush of cars, and the roar of trucks blocked out most noise, but Jerry was able to make out the high pitched screech of a Bird of prey as it swooped in on a helpless rodent.

Just like they had swooped down on him.

His whole picturesque existance had been shattered.

and it all began with that Shady man he had met at the Dry cleaners.

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 30 Apr 2013 01:02

"Like his erstwhile namesake, Shimon - my poppa - proved to be a brilliant light. His mind was quick and his heart humble and he was cut from a different cloth. Poppa dazzled his teachers and they all foretold great things for him. Instead of cops and robbers, Monopoly and after-school baseball games, Poppa was rising to transcendent meditations and the deepest mysteries of Torah."

"When I was born, Poppa was overjoyed. He felt he had a son, a student and a successor, someone whom he would mold and shape to perfection."

"I was raised in the shadow of my father's achievements and was constantly being measured up as his son. Did I live up to his unusually high standards? Was I worthy of his name?"

"I don't know if my lack of interest in learning was caused by the refusal to accept me for what I was or vice versa. The fact of the matter was that I would've been a great plumber, engineer or construction worker but not a bookish guy in a monastery. I loved building the sikkeh, cleaning for Pesach, bonfires on Lag Boimer - anything that engaged my hands and mind in a good positive way."

"If only my parents, teachers and friends would've seen me as an individual, not as a project to be molded to their desire. If they would accept that I am not going to be the next Hitteroigen Ruv, and I am not going to be the greatest scholar who ever walked down 16th Avenue..."

Jerry listened sadly, knowing well how false conformity can be confining, confounding and unsustainable. Jerry wondered if he could convey to Manny the idea that blaming and assigning guilt contribute to the problem without opening a door of hopeful action.

"I rebelled, Manny continued, "and got into more and more trouble. I remember the first time I missed davening. I felt devastated, but only for a short while. I numbed myself to the things I would do. For better or for worse, I found and befriended guys who were in similar situations to mine. The feeling that they understood me and did not look down at me was intoxicating. Life became a game of holding my breath until I could chill with my buddies."

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 02 May 2013 01:33

I was in this yeshiva that was out of the city and I slept here in the dormitory

most of the boys there where very serious and just sat and learned day and night.

I felt like I was totaly wasting my time and I would hang out with the bums outside of the Study hall during classes. we would just pass the time talking about all sorts of things, they talked quite a bit about music, names that I never heard before, Eminem, Brtiney Spears, Shaggy, they used to sing there songs, and I, trying to fit in learned them pretty quickly.

I must have been quite a walking hypocrite, I dressed like one of the most Chasidic boys in the yeshiva, I had long peyes, and on Shabbes, I wore short pants with long black socks. But with the crew, I could sing all the cool songs, sometimes on friday nights we would have our own oneg shabos, some guys would bring booze, and corn chips and we would sing all night long, sometimes the goyish stuff, and sometimes some Lipa songs, or maybe some Matisyahu, and a little bit of Carlebach.

I waited all week for these parties, I was the star, I had a good voice, and I was able to remeber long songs with complicated lyrics, my yddish accent making it all the more entertaining.

My rebbes used to come to me, "Mendel, those boys are not fo you, stay away from them, they are having a bad influence on you, see Yoily? he comes from a divorced household, see Avrumi? His mother is a baal teshive, they aren't for you,

You're better than that, you're the sone of Reb Shimon fin Hitteroigen!"

Their requests fell on deaf ears.

I wasn't interested.

My friends where a lot of fun and i loved being around them, not a lot was expected from me and I felt good.

One day Yoily Greenfeld, one of the biggest machers in my group pulled me aside,

"You know, Mendy, I think that we have a lot of musical talent in our group, I play keyboard, if we could get a drummer and a guitar and maybe a sax, we could have a band and play at simches!"

"well yoily, I don't mind learning guitar, but where would I get one?"

Yoily smiled broadly.

"Don't worry, I'll get it for you"

True to his word, after the next off shabbos, Yoily brought a package into our dorm room.

"This is for you Mendy, now lets get playing!"

It was a used Fender Strat with a small amp, it was a bit beat up, but it had great sound.

I had no clue how to play it.

Youiy explained to me about lead and chords, he got his hands on a book with basic fingerings and I was off.

I took to guitar like a fish to water, many nights I would stay up till 3 am practising my rythym and chord progressions.

Yoily also got a Digital drum set for Avrumy Friedman, he had always been drumming everything anyways.

We started practising together when the yeshiva slept, and soon we had a pretty good sound.

Yoily was happy with our progress.

We worked on fast songs, slow songs, hora and eveything.

"You know, our band needs a name" Avrumy mentioned at one practice.

"well, I think I got one, how does Ghoul Aish sound?" responded Yoily.

"Awesome", I said, "it sounds really fest"

Ghoul Aish started to get better and better.

One night Yoily met with me and Avrumy

"Guys, I got us a job at a wedding, I posted a clip of us playing Gelt on Youtube, and I left my contact information there.

some modern guy from Great neck contacted me that he wants us to play at his wedding"

"Emsdik?" I shouted amazed?

"Emesdik" confirmed Yoily.

"I said we will charge him \$1000 for the chassine, plus he needs to pick us up, or arrange a ride from here, and bring us back after it's over."

we practised very hard over the next few weeks.

You know guys, I think we need a more heimishe name" mentioned Yoily,

I came up with thwe Idea this time,

"I think we should call ourselves the Heimishe Leibidik band"

"Corny!" shouted Avrumy, but Yoily looked thoughtful, "you know, if we play really wild, it'll actually be sort of ironic, I say we call us that".

We got picked up by the choson's brother i na nice Mercedes SUV, he met us down the road from the yeshiva so nobody would see us leaving wth him.

We got to the hall early, and Yoily instructed us to get dressed.

We knew that our families were not allowed to know about this, it could be fatal for shiduchim, so we decided to wear sunglasses, we also wore our white shirts untucked with the woolen tzitzis inside, and Yoily rolled up his beard, and we all gelled our peyes behind our ears.

The wedding was great,

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I played like never befoe, we even mixed in a bit of our "contemporary repetoire" much to the delight of the guests.

It was quite a wild affair, with a lot of booze, and I was scandalized when parts of the mechitza started disapearring, but il just focused on playing and we were back in the dorm by 3 am.

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 02 May 2013 22:12

"Months passed and we perfected the art of living compartmentalized lives. We were chasidisha bochurim in yeshiva to all the world - so we thought - and budding rock stars in our own minds."

"Poppa was anxious to see me married, building a family and carrying on the legacy. He listened to any and all prospective shidduchim that were suggested. If not for my mother's intervention I would have met many a girl who was not suited at all to me. Poppa was hopelessly clueless and his only criteria was that the girl be frum, traditional - meaning an accomplished chef of kokosh, borsht and knaidlich - and that her family be chasidish. Personality, appearance and interests were not on the radar. My mother was more aware of the realities with me and firmly vetoed any pie-in-the-sky schemes."

"The time came and I finally met a girl. A good family with suitable pedigree to satisfy my father and a daughter who was at once realistic and kind and smart and the embodiment of perfection in my eyes. We met and spoke and things seemed to click into place. Needless to say, I was on my best behavior and must have made a favorable impression because a few weeks later the shidduch was announced and I was engaged!" Manny said with some traces of triumph. He is clearly proud of passing muster, Jerry thought.

A shadow crossed over Manny's face as he continued. "Two weeks after my engagement I went to a wedding with my friends. An acquaintance of ours was getting married and we decided to have a good time. We drank a bit too much. While drunk one of my buddies gave me some pills and promised that if I took them I would feel like I was on top of the world. Well, I woke up in the hospital the next day. I don't remember what happened but my friends told me that Hatzolah was called when I collapsed. My stomach was pumped and I was out of sorts for a few days but a week later I was home."

"The word got out and my kallah and her family heard about my adventure. They were decidedly unimpressed with my antics and they summarily informed me that my engagement was a thing of the past. I couldn't even talk to my kallah. It was over. Period."

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 02 May 2013 23:29

"I felt like for once in my life things were going well, I really connected with Breindy, even though she was a bit pudgy, and I was really planning on turning a new leaf after my wedding and then BAM all up in smoke.

My father was inconsolable, he just looked at me and groaned, I could hear him crying at night from behind the closed door of his study.

My mother was heartbroken.

She looked at me with such sad eyes, I couldn't bear it.

Even in the streets I knew everybody was talking about me, In shul, and in the grocery store.

I felt I had to get out

I hooked up with Avrumy who had since moved out of his parent's home and was renting this rundown apartment in downtown Brooklyn, Avrumi was a bad case, he was totally hooked on drugs, soft and otherwise, his eyes were always bloodshot, and he would black out sometimes.

We would play music together, but he was in no shape perform.

We started totally dropping our yidishkeit, I still remember the first time I had a joint on Shabbos.

I never davened, I was sure that Hashem must hate me totally.

I stopped wearing a kipa, and shaved my beard down to this goatee you see now.

We started hanging out with other street kids and we went to wild parties, got stoned and pretty messed up.

I felt like such a sinner

I was sure that a lightning bolt was going to strike me down.

we met up with some girls who dropped out fro chasidishe families, and we started a little group, we would go out together and chill.

Avrumy was especially friendly with a girl named Devoiri who had been orphaned at a young age, he really looked out for her and tried to see that she was okay.

One night last summer we headed down to Coney Island to restock our stash.

It was after eleven in the night and we headed along the darkened beach.

We spotted our dealer standing near the water, he was a Mexican dude called Miguel, tonight there was this whole Mexican gang that worked with him over there.

We started placing our orders with Miguel, suddenly we heard Avrumy raising his voice to Juan, one of the gang.

"LEAVE HER ALONE, Y'HEAR !?" he was shouting

if you go one step closer to Devoiry I swear I'll bust your chops!"

It appeared that Juan had laid eyes on Devoiry, and Avrumy would have none of it.

"I'm GONNA WHIP YO ****!" shouted Juan

"OH YEAH? TAKE THIS!" Avrumy kneed Juan hard in the stomach and at the same time sent a hard punch to his jaw, Juan crumpled to the floor in pain.

"Alright guys, this is the last time we deal with these jerks, LETS MAKE TRACKS CHEVRA!"

we headed back towards the boardwalk when Devoiry called out "LOOK OUT!"

but it was to late.

Juan had jumped Avrumy from behind and had sent a knife deep into his torso.

Avrumy crumpled to the floor in a pool of blood.

Mayhem erupted.

Kick and punches, knifes and bats flew through the air, I think I busted up a few of those guys pretty good, I remember stomping on Juan's forehead, but I think he made it because of the soft sand.

For a while it looked like nobody would leave alive, but none to soon we saw flashing red lights and heard the high pitched wail of the sirens.

"NYPD, SHOW YOURSELVES IMMEDIATELY WITH YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR" boomed the speaker on the police car, more officers pulled up and the Mexicans fled.

We went back over to where Avrumy lay unconscious in a pool of his own blood.

I called out to the cops "OVER HERE! THIS GUY NEEDS HELP!" in the meantime i tried talking to Avrumy, "Wake up, it's gonna be alright"

Avrumy struggled to open his eyes, "Mendy ... I don't think I'm going to make it. I just want to thank you for being my friend.... PI please... If I don't make it, try to help our group get back to our families, we went way off....

way off... I know this is from Hashem.....

If you ever get married, please name a child after me, Avrum Duvid Chaim...

Shema Yisrul hashem eloikaini hashem echod!"

I held his hand as his eyes closed

He was gone.

The paramedics tried bringing him back, but it was too late.

we all went with to the hospital, and we were interviewed by the police.

Two days later we found out that the funeral was going to be at the big KilleBAD WORD REMOVEDzer beish medrash where his family davened, we tried to stay hidden at the back and we couldn't stop crying, I could tell everybody was looking at us and whispering but I didn't care anymore.

I overheard voices saying it was a car accident, somebody else said it was a suicide, I just kept quiet.

After the funeral I went back to our place, but the pain was too great, everything reminded me of Avrumy, so I moved out and found another place.

I sunk deeper into depression, and stated doing more hardcore stuff.

I eventually got this AD"CH tattoo it was the initials of Avrum Duvid Chaim, I knew it was against the torah, but I didn't care anymore.

Life passed in a blur and I lived in a haze of drugs and pain and regret.

From time to time I would wake up from my stupor and remeber Avrumy's last request to return to our families, and I promised myself that I would do it tomorrow.

Life moved on and I started to hate myself more and more.

Sometimes when I was walking on a bridge I would think of jumping and ending it all, but I would look at my tattoo, and remember I had a duty to name a child after Avrumy.

I got into all sorts of trouble, I was arested twice for possession, but they just gave me a warning.

I got into fights whenever I could, and I usually surprised bigger guys with my ferocity.

Things finally came to a head when I saw that Bentley drop you off near my place late at night and you set up shop in that box, so I decided to follow you to see what was going on.

Thats, how I ended up here.

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Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 03 May 2013 01:46

"Whew," exhaled Jerry, "you're pretty young to have so much 'stuff'."

"Tell me about it..." Manny looked dejected.

"Sometimes I wish I was just stupid and didn't have to quiet my mind and constantly feel a need to do or be something. Just getting up and eating a bowl of corn flakes would provide a sense of accomplishment... I thought of writing a song like that. Why Can't I just Be Stupid?"

"Come on Manny, we're moving", Jerry shouldered his pack and took off down the block.

"Wait up!" called Manny.

"Let's find an entrance ramp to the Interstate and get to points west". Jerry thought the story with AD"CH and the stabbing combined with sleeping in the cemetery was pretty morbid and wanted to move onto something better.

After walking for half an hour they found an entrance ramp to the highway. They stood on the side with their thumbs up. Most cars and trucks ignored them. Manny was getting frustrated, "Hey, why would anyone pick us up? Why don't we figure out some other way to get places?"

"You have all the time you want to figure something out. In the interim I am gonna hitch," responded Jerry.

And with those words barely spoken an 18-wheeler with the words Woolly Mammoth Trucking hove into sight and with a long air brake exhalation and a shudder it came to a stop a bit ahead of them.

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 07 May 2013 00:55

Manny and Jerry jogged over to the side of the truck..

they looked up at the driver and saw a old wizened man with an impossibly long walrus style mustache.

He had great big Aviator sunglasses with greasy pink lenses, his denim jacket had many patches, and he had watches on both wrists, he was smoking two pipes at once, his head was as bald as a bowling ball.

"hey watch guy lookin at? step up and get on board Noa's Ark" he called down to them.

The pair quickly scrambled up the side of the truck and into the cab where they joined the driver, a bunch of fast food containers, and a small bulldog.

"Pleased to have you boys aboard the ark!, my names Noah Mammoth, and this here rig is the ark, which happens to be en route to Lousville with a container of fresh pig snouts

Who are you guys?" he finished as though an afterthought...

"well, I'm Joe, and my friend hre is Moe, and we're heading to Portland for the international Guitar string makers convention" Jerry improvised.

"Oh" said Noah uncomittedly "a lot of Fellers, make things up when they come to the ark, but Noah has a big heart even for sinners and liars"

Jerry felt his cheeks redden.

"any way young laddies, theres no reason to sit quiet, wev'e got a ways to go, so were gonna start with 1000 bottles of beer on the wall, anyone found to be a nonparticipant will join the pig snouts in the back."

"all together now!

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One thousand bottles of beer on the wall one thousand bottles of beer,

take one down dont make a frown, nine ninty nine bottles of beer on the wall!"

thus passes the next 95 minutes...

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 07 May 2013 19:57 Somewhere in the Alleghenies the beer bottle hymn proved itself too taxing on Manny's mind.

"Hey Beelzebub, can we take a break?" Manny called out.

Noah, none too thrilled at this new-found nomenclature, rejoined "Avast, young one, don't you go callin' yo' elders names like that!"

"What's the big deal?" asked Manny, with obvious sincerity.

"Do you know who Beelzebub was?" asked Noah.

"I thought it's just a stand-in name, like bubba, amigo or mister-blister" answered Manny.

"Are you Jewish?" asked Noah.

"Yes!" answered Manny and Jerry in unison, surprising themselves with their own ardor.

"How on earth did you know?" inquired Jerry.

"Think I didn't see you wince when I mentioned them pig snouts? Unless you're of Mohammedan persuasion, ain't no reason to wince at them swine proboscis. Something told me you aren't praying towards Mecca so you must be the chosen 'uns. That being so, how is it that you don't know your Bible? Did you hear of the Philistines? Do you know who they worshiped?"

"Justin Bieber?" asked Manny, grinning.

"Not quite. Ba'al Zebub, the lord of the flies, sounds queer to a man today but the ancients operated on a different stage and Justin Bieber would sounds like Beelzebub to them... And you can call me Noah for all practical purposes."

"Noah, thanks for the lesson. It sure beats the beer bottle hymn. What else can you tell us? Just keep it in the Old Testament please." Jerry thought about how lessons are so much more readily appreciated when unfettered by conventional trappings of formal education.

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Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 07 May 2013 23:59

"Well, I'll tell ya some more bible, ya see I used to be an elder in my church back home in Port Jervis, Saint Harry's it was called, it was a grand old place, but it was torched by some wild Irish kids as part of a Halloween prank,

no insurance, the place never stood aggin..." Noah was quiet for a moment as he gazed of into the horizon.

"Ya guys ever heard of Elisha? well I'll tell ya all ya need ta know.

See here there was this General Naaman eh? an he was stricken with the wost case of leprosy youlla ever seen, he was in constant agony, so this Jewish slave girl, she tells him thet he ought to see the Jewish holy man, he could cure him, right?

So naaman goes down to Elisha with all his horses and paraphanelia, and he comes to Elisha Eh?

and Elisha , well he told him to jump in the lake... HA HA ho ho.. oh he did, didn't he, well not the lake but the Jordan, and not Michael Jordan, Eh?

so This Naaman fellow, he goes to the river, and it's dirty as innything... but he goes in and lo and behold, he's healed, like Hey Presto, y'know?

and Naaman he wants ta give all this gold and goodies to Elisha, eh?

but Elisha, he sauys No, ii got what I need, thankya very much.

So Naaman returns to his land eh? and Elisha, he had this servant, I think his name was Gaykhazzy, and well he want all those gifts... so he goes after Naaman and his entourage, an' he catches up an' tells 'em that the Holy man, he change his mind... so they gives him some gifts, andThis Hazzy fellow, he's as happy as a lark, and he heads back to Elisha, and Elisha asks him where he got the goodies from, and he realizes that Mr. Hazzy double crossed him, and went against his will, so he cursed the old Hazzy, and Hazzy became white as snow...

He'd gotten that Naaman's leperrosity.

True story!

an' I'd tell all the good folks at St. Harry's that what we need to ake from this is never cross the Man of God.

Hear me you dirty Jewboys!? NIVVER MESS WITH THE MAN OF GOD! when a holy man tells ya sompin' ya do it."

Manny and Jerry where a bit blown away with the theatrical revival speach and just sat there letting it all sink in.

After a few minutes flashing blue and red lights appeared in the rearview mirrors.

"Dangit. the cops are onta me..." Noah muttered, and with that he gund the engine and watched as the spedometer slowly crept up to 80 then to 85...

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Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 10 May 2013 21:04

"Noah, do you really think you can outrun the trooper?" Jerry was not keen on high-speed chases involving 18-wheeled behemoths.

"Bud, it's the principle of the matter, ain't nobody catch me without me puttin' up a fight", answered Noah.

Shortly the cop was gaining on them as the needle hovered over 90.

"C'mon Noah, this is futile, why not pull over, and face the music? Didn't Jonah try to run away from his calling? What happened to him?..." Jerry tried a Biblical angle.

Noah turned and grinned. "You hit the nail on the head brother! I don't exactly want to end up in Leviathan's belly." Noah decelerated and pulled over onto the shoulder. By now the cop had called for backup and 3 cruisers pulled up behind the rig.

"COME OUT WITH YOUR HAND UP!"

Noah climbed down and was promptly surrounded by some of Pennsylvania's Highway Patrol.

Jerry turned to Manny "I think we should jump ship. Octogenarian Bible-spouting speedsters are not my idea of the best way to get from point A to point B."

They carefully peered out the window and waited for when the cops were not looking their way and they jumped down and over the guardrail and into the trees near the road.

"Whew, it is nice to be on terra firma again", Jerry said as they caught their breath. They broke out a bag of chips and ate a bit.

After waiting for the cops to leave they walked further down the road to an entrance ramp and began looking for a ride to points west.

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Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 10 May 2013 23:14

"Wow, excitement really follows us, doesn't it"? pondered Jerry, "for a little peace... but I wonder if that message about a man of God, I wonder if that wasn't some type of divine message to us..."

"whatever, ichvaisnisht ichhonishtkainkoiach" Manny muttered, he was clearly in a bit of a black mood, perhaps do to a lack of chemical stimulants weighing down on him, Jerry watched as Manny absentmindedly scratched the AD"CH tattoo...

Oh well, the kids been through a lot, the main thing is to get back on the road again, Jerry thought to himself..

His mind took him back to when he was a similar age, in his senior year at UCONN,

he cringed as he his mind took him back to that year of dismal falure...

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by tehillimzugger - 04 Jun 2013 21:58

"HEH HEH! BALLZINYOUR COURT"

The muscular african american had taunted him as he pushed him against the hard whitewashed wall in the deserted Wolff-Zackin Natatorium [right off the Gampel Pavillion]-

"ONE MOH TZIME YOUZ'E BE MESSIN WIFF KHALLEED'S CHANSISS IN THEM BIG LEAGUES AND JIM CALHOUN KNOWS ALL ABOUT YOUR FAKIN' THE BUSINESS DEGREE AND EVERYTHING"

"THAT SHOULD PUT YOU INNA SLAMMER FOH A WHILE HEH HEH"

"A GOOD KICK WOULDA STRAIGHTENED YOU OUT A WHILE AGO, JEWBOY"

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by ZemirosShabbos - 05 Jun 2013 01:14

Jerry shuddered thinking about that day.

In the preceding months things were good, as good as Cookie Monster would feel in Oreos HQ. Jerry was finishing a degree in financial management and was playing top of the line basketball. Landing a job even before graduating was icing on the cake. Working, studying and playing ball left little time for leisure pursuits but it was very fulfilling. Jerry thought himself to be a guy who could honestly look upon his record and clearly attribute it to his dogged perseverance, tenacity and plain old fashioned hard work.

As the saying goes, the most neatly laid plans tend to ferment into something bizarre at times. If Jerry's life was a recipe for fine scotch, the resulting ferment would be Czaszar Korte.

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by mr. emunah - 05 Jun 2013 23:12

Khaleed didn't like Jerry that was clear, he blamed him for every lost game and every missed pass.

Khaleed was a Freshman who towered over the others at 7 foot 4, and he played center for the huskies.

"LISSEN J-BOY, YUZE A STINKIN' WHITEY JEWBUG, AND YOUZE DA REEZUN WE LOOZZA DA GAME, I WANTS YOU TO GET ME SOME MAGIG CANDIES thus begun Jerry's journey into the shady world of narcos.

Re: A tale of a Giraffe and an Emu ~ by Lefty MacPhee Posted by tehillimzugger - 05 Jun 2013 23:44

And it began in the Dry Cleaners...

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