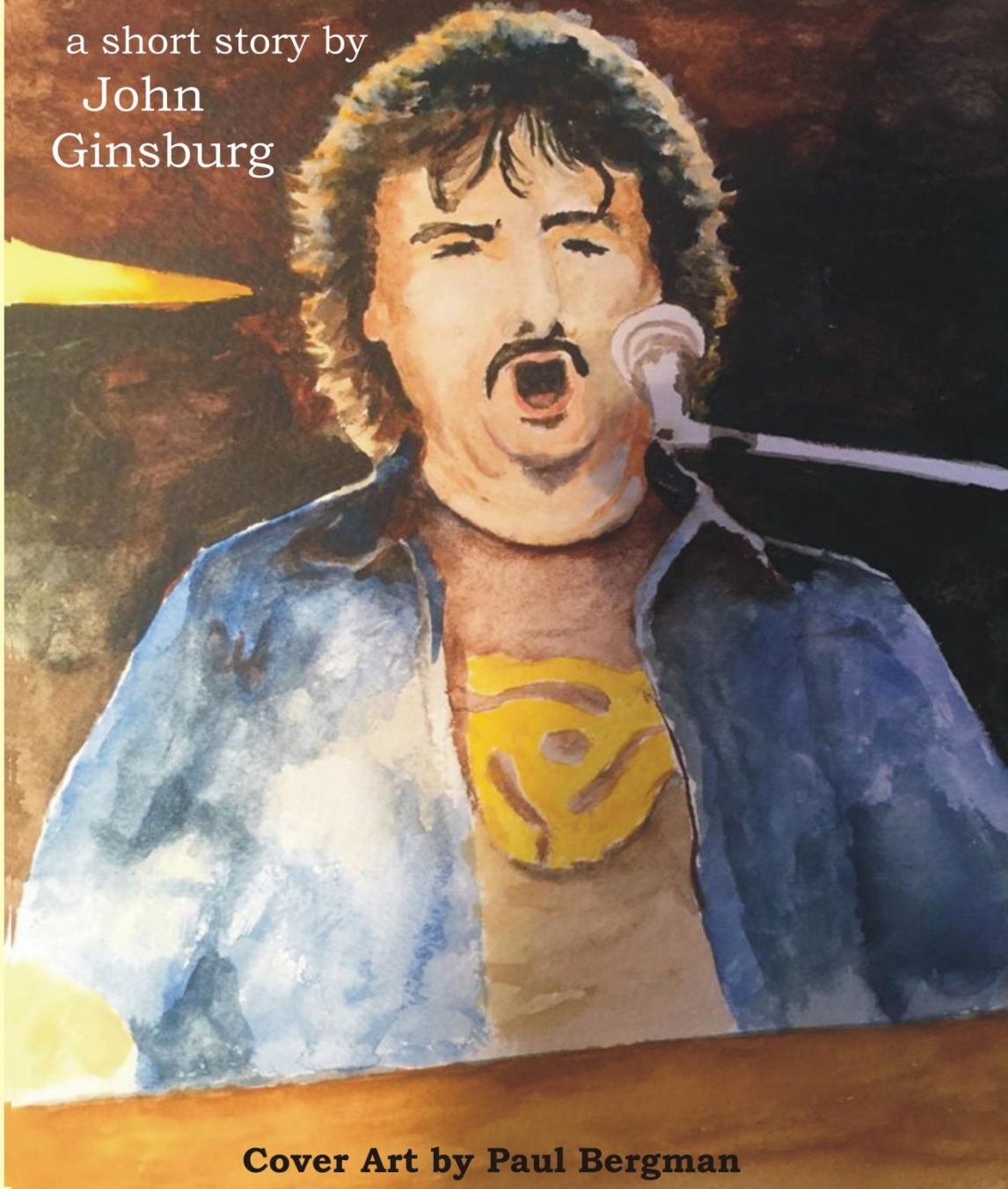


One Egg, One Sandwich

a short story by
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The Castle is a popular restaurant and club located on Academy Road, in Winnipeg's River Heights area. Named after its co-owners, the Castellanos brothers, the establishment began as a small gyros and souvlaki joint in 1983. Good food, low prices and late hours made the place an instant success, and it quickly became the place to go for young people from all over the city. Within three years of their first opening, the ambitious brothers - Nick and John - expanded, buying the adjacent properties on either side, including an old bowling alley. From its humble beginning, The Castle was entirely transformed. It became an upscale club, featuring live music, musical theatre and comedy acts. It was a magical touch at the right time. Within months of its second opening, lineups in front of The Castle were a common sight. Many favoured the impressive continental menu and the stylish bar, but the real draw was the entertainment. A neon marquee on Academy Road announced the bill; mostly cutting-edge Winnipeg bands, independent local theatre and a dizzying array of comedy acts. On weekends, the place was packed. Tables had to be reserved well in advance.

Fabulous food and fabulous entertainment are one thing. But there was something else that made The Castle the overwhelming, enduring success it came to be. It was a simple, single principle: celebrity clientele. While hardly a new idea, it worked like a charm. Famous people, from all walks of life, were purposefully courted. Not just big-shot movie stars who happened to be passing through the city. Not just the A-list political figures on the lecture circuit. Of course the Richard Geres, the Bonos, the Hillary Clintons, the Jane Goodalls, all were more than welcome. They were an important part of the plan. But even more important were *local* celebrities. Winnipeg people. Nick and John's parents had been Greek immigrants to the city; dedicated, hard-working shop-owners. Living among the wheelers and dealers on Selkirk Avenue, the boys had learned a thing or two. As businessmen, they understood the typical Winnipegger, someone looking for a fun night out and willing to part with some cash.

From the mid-eighties onward, the brothers diligently and relentlessly promoted their club. Complimentary front-row tables at The Castle were bestowed on an impressive list of prominent Winnipeg people. Sports heroes like Dale Hawerchuk and Teemu Selanne. Famous TV personalities like David Steinberg, Ken Finkleman and Doug Henning. Local legends in the arts, like Evelyn Hart, Len Cariou and Randy Bachman. From major political figures to the top dogs in the business community, they all came to The Castle: Gary Doer, Phil Fontaine, Izzy Asper, Peter Nygard... A night out at The Castle meant rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous.

Many local celebrities developed personal relationships with the extravagant and intense brothers. For a handful of these, the chosen few, there was a standing policy at The Castle. Even when the place was packed to the rafters, completely sold out, a good table would be produced on the spot.

In the summer of 2016, Martin Schiff was in the bloom of youth. Marty, as he was called, was an easy-going, bright and attractive young man. He was 23 years old and had just completed his B.A. at the University of Manitoba, majoring in Political Science. As the youngest child of two

established lawyers in the city, most people assumed he'd had a pampered childhood, that he idled his way through life, that everything was handed to him on a platter. In fact, he was a hard-working and thoughtful young man, and had always rebelled against the conservative, upper middle-class world of his parents. Unlike his two older siblings, who had wasted no time in following their parents into the legal profession, he was in no hurry to figure out how he wanted to make his way. Maybe he'd pursue graduate studies in journalism. Maybe he'd do some volunteer work with CUSO. Or maybe he'd spend a year on a kibbutz in Israel. In the meantime, he had a great job for the summer, as an assistant manager at The Castle.

It was commonly believed that young Schiff had gotten the job because of his parents somehow. Had his mom or dad done legal work for the Castellanos family? But it was a job he'd won fair and square, by virtue of his own abilities and his impressive interview with Nick Castellanos at the beginning of April. On top of being bright and self-confident, his curly hair, bright blue eyes and friendly disposition were exactly what Nick wanted. He was hired on the spot. While he'd had no experience in the entertainment world - nor any aspirations in that direction - Marty was keen on the job. It paid well and the late night hours suited him perfectly. He had the mornings and afternoons all to himself.

Like most people who'd spent any time around the brothers, it didn't take long for Marty Schiff's impression of them to take a cold and dark turn. At first they seemed okay. Sure, they were a bit loud and vulgar and a bit disgusting-looking with their gold chains, tight shirts and fat guts. But otherwise, they were tolerable. Marty had certainly heard the stories about the brothers, about their foul tempers and the demeaning way they treated the staff. But in his first weeks at The Castle, he simply shrugged the stories off and did his job. And then, toward the end of June, he witnessed firsthand what everyone had been talking about. In a span of two weeks, no fewer than three incidents erupted on his shifts.