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SKY WORLD	
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"Beautiful autumn morning up here today, eh Mukki?" shouted Kenny Chabriole in his native Iroquois over winds gusting around the painted steel catwalk, 1600 feet above big city streets. Reclipping his fall harness carabiners while adjusting a coal-black braid under his yellow hard hat, Kenny's body took another glancing blow from Father Sky's powerful breath.

Broadcast tower warning light maintenance was Kenny's work. It took him away from the rez for weeks and months at a time. The pay was great but the dangers and loneliness of the road took its toll on six generations of his ancestors, all of them having walked the high iron of America's skyscrapers. Not all of them had lived to tell about it.

"Arff! Arff!" was the reply from a shaggy muzzle attached to an equally shaggy Cairn Terrier nestled under the fringed flap of a hand-sewn deerskin bag sporting a neck strap adorned with quahog wampum beads in the traditional Mohawk way, a gift from Grandmother Irene.

"We gotta get these red beacon bulbs switched out before some plane decides to plow into this antenna mast in the middle of the night! And these white daylight strobes need attention too, Mukki!"

Mukki was their only child, their baby, a surrogate son for Kenny and Ana Chabriole. A tough little guy, independent, smart, sporting a weatherproof coat, ideally suiting him to be apprentice bulb-changer atop skyscrapers around the globe. A *Wizard of Oz dog*.

And personality? Mukki had it in spades, wowing airline ticket agents with his toothy grin and friendly, yet protective nature for his working partner. The two of them always flew coach. Kenny, in the right wing window seat while the Mukkster snored comfortably on the floor in front of Kenny's seat in a Sherpa pet carrier, thanks to a few pills in his chow before takeoff.

"What a great dog!" folks would say. "What breed is he?" That question always raised the hackles of his master's sensibilities for some reason. He never overtly acted on it, but maybe it was that inner safety mechanism Indians had developed from generations of discrimination infecting mainstream America. At least Kenny and his Mohawk brothers had literally and figuratively risen above it as they walked the high iron and sent those big checks back to their women and children safely ensconced in the societal bubble that is reservation life

Down at the Operations Center checkpoint, dog-loving security personnel always got a kick out of seeing Mukki show up, his shaggy little head poking out of the fringed work bag as Kenny beamed with fatherly pride.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Annual mast light changeout, is it Kenny?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Yup, gotta keep the FAA happy, you know."

And off they went for the express elevator to 110, Kenny and Mukki swallowing hard as their ears popped along the way to the top.

Opening doors of the sleek elevator box welcomed them to the banks of transmitter rooms of major TV and radio broadcasting tenants of the building. Familiar waves were exchanged through glass walls between the Mohawk and station engineers as Kenny made his way to the roof service hatch. From there it was a 360-foot hike to the top of the massive antenna mast, festooned with transmission antennas and clusters of warning lights from which one could see for 45 miles in any direction on a clear day like this.

A creature of habit and a son of warriors since time began, Kenny clipped on to the manway guardrail, and then rotated his torso in prayer to each of the four sacred directions. Between blasts from constant vortical wind around the mast top, one could almost hear Mukki echo a brave "ayaee" to Father Sky.

And for his Ana, the usual cell phone exchange from atop every job:

"This is Major Tom to Ground Control" he shouted into the headset. Today, she was not at the house to receive his best David Bowie.

Must be substitute teaching today! Oh well.

Laughing onto their answering machine, Kenny left her with the same Bowie lyric he always did:

"Tell my wife I love her very much ..."

And then he sheathed his phone into the pocket of his Carhartt work jacket.

"Time to hit it, Mukki!"

Busy at the steel safety-caged red beacon sockets, Kenny was oblivious to his hazardous surroundings. A helicopter whomp-whomped past his perch. A few sea birds, just in from the coast, floated by. He could smell the salt air. He could see New Jersey.

Mukki's ears pricked up at their earliest detection of a high frequency whine somewhere afar off.

"Arff!"

Again he barked that alert to Kenny, not knowing what it was or where it came from as the two of them hung out over the urban landscape, hardly a cloud in the pristine morning sky.

"Arff! Arff!"

Kenny caught a glint of light flash out over the water.

Then they both heard the increasingly deafening whine of violently racing turbine blades.

By the time Kenny looked up, and Mukki had again poked his shaggy nose out from under the protection of fringed deerskin, the building shook horrendously like a gigantic steel-clad metronome. Transmitted whiplash at the antenna's tip top was enough to send Kenny into temporary unconsciousness as his yellow safety helmet bashed violently into the metallic skin of the broadcast tower atop World Trade Center One.

Mukki had nearly been dashed to the street 1600 feet below. Except that the always safety-conscious Kenny had snapped the Mukkster's hand-tooled crimson leather collar ring to a carabiner wisely sewn in before Grandma Irene presented the bag as a gift to her grandson.

"Arff! Arff! Arff!" raged Mukki, trying in vain to awaken his master. Blood trickled from Kenny's ears. His eyes--rolled back. His body--motionless but mercifully still safety-harnessed to the catwalk railing as the tower's shocking ten-foot sway drained off into the building's central core.

Flames shot into the Sky World as WTC One became an inferno. That passenger airliner, its aviation fuel tanks nearly full, incinerated individual persons, places and things of world trade in its path. Tower One burned for nearly an hour as the Mohawk and his shaggy partner dangled perilously from their lifelines.

Just then, a second ghost flight roared in, well under detection levels of FAA radars across the Northeastern seaboard, to take out Tower Two with a madness not witnessed by America since Pearl Harbor. *Airliners as Weapons of Mass Destruction?* shocked TV and radio news commentators asked into their microphones as we all watched in horror.

Even though WTC One, on which Kenny and Mukki were working, was the first impacted by the insanity of the day, South Tower imploded first, raining down like toxic powdered Lego's, sucking oxygen out of the street-level environment.

Eagle-eyed freelance and news photographers trained their massive telephoto lenses on a yellow dot at the tip top of Tower One's antenna mast, as police, fire and news choppers hovered helplessly in the September 11<sup>th</sup> skies over Manhattan.

Kenny Chabriole was spotted coming to as he hung from the catwalk by titanium carabiners jammed shut by the impact.

Defiantly lifting aloft his beloved Mukki to Father Sky, Kenny screamed out an ancient war cry.

They were ready for immortality!

With that, the 360-foot steel broadcast tower atop WTC One, shining in the beauty of a perfect New York morning, made a tilting, parting gesture to its many admirers glued to their TV's, then took Kenny, Mukki and itself into the Sky World.

That place where generations of Mohawk high iron dancers waited to greet them with shouts of joy.

10:28:22 a.m.

Our time.