

AREA 52 – Whores of Emerald City

The place is Iraq, between 2003 and today. It centers on the City of Baghdad, but like the war itself, it covers the whole country, America at home, and the world as it goes from what it was, to what it is today. The check is in the mail.

For over 7 years, a vision of greatness rose from the ground as a statement, not of wonder, but one of greed, stupidity, love, hate, sadness, death, and humor. It was America's OZ, America's Emerald City, but you couldn't look behind the curtain. Within the 2003 grand adventure through today, a structure rose from the sand, a Palace called the US Embassy, or NEC. It is a 163 acre complex, larger than Vatican City, and situated in the middle of hostile desert and country, a holy city in an unholy place. It and the people who built it and live there are symbols of a different way of life and existence, truly strangers in a strange land.

Within Iraq, inside Baghdad, there is the Green Zone, also called the Emerald City, a new OZ proclaimed and ordered built by the all powerful American President from a far away land nick named the Wizard. This OZ and its Emerald City was also green, but colored by the greed of money, almost unlimited resources, and waving victory proclamations signifying nothing.

But its message became smoke and mirrors hiding not behind a curtain of cloth, but one of tanks and troops. As Baghdad grew increasingly dark, their power grids disappearing, the New Embassy Complex, the NEC, grew and became like the city at the end of the Yellow Brick Road, a full beacon in the night sky in a opaque country. Soon it only produced unrealistic hope, delivering false messiahs. They spread the policies of competing Lords trying to please a Wizard who controlled the daily lives of entire country, conquered, cleaned, and now awaiting the pleasure of their will. And while projects of supposed hope began across the country, mostly failing and leaving a bitter residue, the Emerald City thrived; lights, parties, bazaars, music, food, fuel, water, anything available for a price, depending on what you wanted to pay, your ethics, your morals, your life. And three main characters stepped onto the Yellow Brick Road.

THE SAGE – CIARAN EDWARD DEVINE - a failed professional or a professional failure – he is still working on that. Born in Clonikilty, Ireland, a child of the 60's, he got his citizenship the hard way, he earned it with servitude in another dark place, a jungle far, far away where the greatest part of his life, his soul and self respect will always remain. He had a career in the aviation industry, but when that went south, he went north, first to Europe and then to the Far East working in contract aviation jobs and later a manager of airport facilities in the Middle East. Moving into Afghanistan, he followed the path of war and profit until the late night call for a job in Iraq. He is in his late 50's, been there and done that and life was golden for a long time, then it took a fall and his world with it, family, friends, and sadly, his sense of his own purpose. This is now the last hurrah; his sands of time are running, extremely cynical, but still savage in certain beliefs. Never really speaks of the past, but acts it. A source of humor, warmth, and refuge, but realizing that reality will not last for him, an astute observer of human character learned through personal betrayal and rolling of the dice that his sanity will last longer than his liquor and cigar supply, but is not sure who is winning. His favorite movie is "Team America" and his personal quote is "This moves Vietnam to the win win column!" Treats everybody as a respected enemy until they are a proven friend, but never ever takes prisoners. His true friends are Ian, Kat, and A'mal. Fluent/native speaker in several languages, but keeps it a secret because as he says, "Eavesdropping is the will and pleasure of the gods." Does not believe in any tribal religions, especially the major ones, but still holding hope for an Alien visit, quickly!