

March 2025



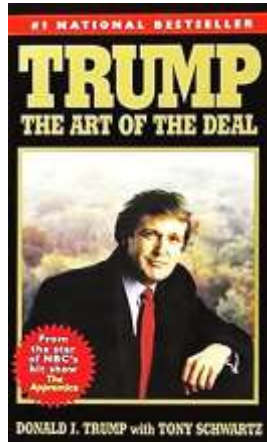
"It's your New York!"

The Rondout Reader



The KING and I

by Kevin Ahearn



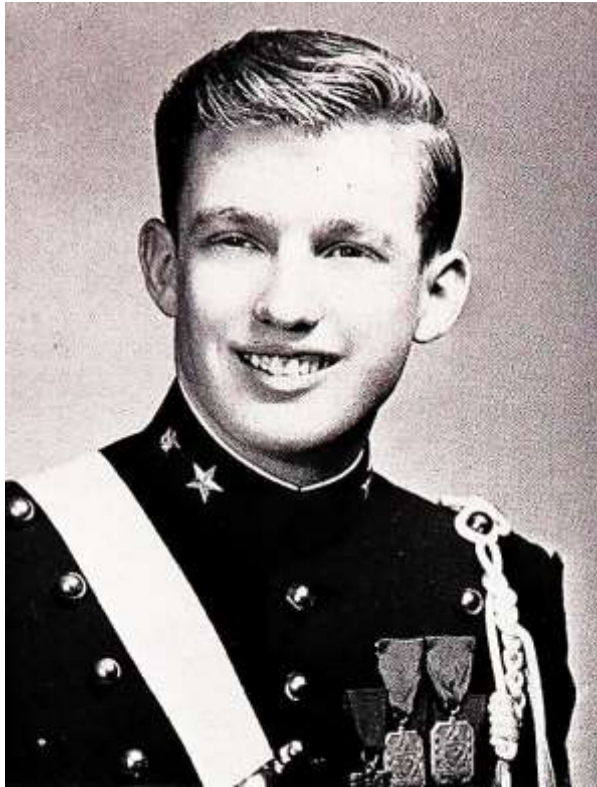
“People love me. And you know what, I have been very successful. Everybody loves me.”



“I've always won, and I'm going to continue to win. And that's the way it is.”



“I'll be there...around every corner... in every empty room...as inevitable as your guilty conscience.”



REALITY?



BELIEVE IN MAGIC!



2016



From Eddyville, once the local hub of the D&H Canal till the waterway closed down and progress quickly chopped up the tiny town a la 'fillet of Rondout Trout'."



I drifted aboard a train heading south!



I've finally begun to appreciate rail travel!

My 'Target for Tonight'!



*Security never spots,
never stops **The SHADOW!***



*Closing in...
Is the boss at home?
The Oval Office!*



Bull's Eye!



**“OMG! It’s The SHADOW or what’s left of him!
What do you want here?”**



**“To talk with the new Leader of the Free World!
To warn him and our country!”**



"No calls, no visitors, no nothing until I say so!"



"Good, Mr. President. What I have to say must be heard by you alone!"



*"Yes, **SHADOW**, the country is divided, and I'm the only one who can fix it!"*



"You can? That's the spirit! What do you propose to do?"



*“Well, **SHADOW**, your world was dark, dingy and dangerous. Mine will be very different!”*

*“That’s why I’m here! **America is my country, too!**”*



“Government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

“With great power comes great responsibility!”

“We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now!”



NOT VERY FAR AWAY...



"The SHADOW! WTF is going on in this town that this used-to-be vigilante is getting so much ink?"

“Who is ‘the man behind the Master of Darkness?’”



“The SHADOW is notoriously independent!”



“There has to be a woman involved!”



“But what’s his mission? Bigger than crime-fighting?”



“We Avengers have incredible powers! The SHADOW is but ‘A voice in the dark’! What can he hope fo accomplish?”



“Speak for yourself, Vision! The Master of Darkness took on fierce foes and triumphed before any of us were born!”



“What if he’s after even bigger game?”



“Ah, but we are going to find out just what this magician’s creation has up his sleeve!”



“Aren’t we, Doctor?”



*“That we are, Director Fury!
But the fate of the SHADOW lies well beyond our earthly powers!”*



“SHADOW, you’ve got a lot to learn about America!”

“Mr. President, who said you and I had nothing in common?”



“My country is the world’s only superpower and it’s about time got the respect America has earned!”

*“America as The World Leader, with you as the permanent CEO!
USA! USA! USA!”*



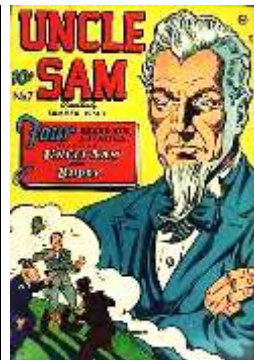
“SHADOW, you have an under-appreciated imagination!”



“Master of Darkness, let the President of the United States of America shed some light!

“Our History, Trump 101...

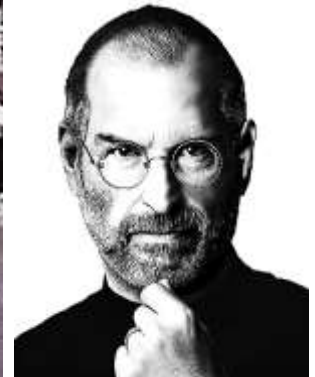
America is a nation created by white, Christian men! From the very beginning to right now, we discovered the land, explored and conquered it! Beat the Indians, then the British, the Japs, the Germans, the Koreans. We lost in Vietnam after killing two million of them. Go figure.”



“Might makes right! US uber alles! MAGA’S vision of America?”



*“Because we deserve to dominate!
White Christian men inspired an America
in their own image!”*



*“Yes. people of different colors and religions
have made national contributions, but nowhere near
the influence and impact of white, Christian males.*

“We are the new America!”





*'And in **MAGA** America, superiority equals privilege!'*



"Because it has to! These pitiful illegals -uneducated, unskilled, some are rapists and cartel killers! Millions of them storming the border! My wall will fix that!"



"No! The Chinese and the Russians built walls! One to keep the enemy out, the other to keep the people in. Both failed. So will yours!"



“Not with back-up! The best people plus the top technology! The invasion stops now!”



“Degenerates, criminals, and racially inferior corrupters of society!”

“Only I can save America!”

“The international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids!”



‘Nearer my God to Thee!’



The New York Times



*“The SHADOW? Never heard of him!
And why should any of us care about
a long-dead serial killer?”*

*“Exactly! ‘The Master of Darkness’ has
to be made to see the light, but how can
we do that?”*



"My power ring will instantly engulf this 'dark spirit'!"



"I'll speed 'round, create a vortex, blow him into nothingness!"



"But first let us see if this 'untouchable whatever' can survive my heat vision!"



*"No, no, **NO!** None of you understand! The **SHADOW** was no fly-by-night costumed clown, but far beyond Robin Hood and the Cowboys, the **Master of Darkness** became 'America's first superhero!'"*

"The SHADOW's DNA is in every one of us!"



*“So glad you came, **SHADOW!** I am the Man of the People!
You are a ghost from the past! Are you here to learn or were
you sent by the Liberal losers to haunt me?”*



*“Let the overrated opposition rant and rave!
The Commies tried to rig the election and failed!
Oh, the irony, **SHADOW!** You’ve been called
‘The First Superhero’! I shall be the last!”*



*“Believe me! America will be great again!
MAGA forever!”*



*“Yes, Mr. President, YES!
The 21st Century is yours for the taking!
Not to be remembered as a good, or
even great President, but the Founding
Father of the New America!*

“You just have to make one vital change!”



*“To rank with the greatest Americans,
what ‘vital change’ will I have to make?”*

*“And don’t tell me it’ll cost billions
or upset the stock market!”*



“Absolutely free and all America will love and respect you for what made Lincoln and Washington immortal legends...”

‘Honesty, Mr. President! Lies can get you far, but in the end, they will catch up to you and you will be disgraced and discarded into the ‘dustbin of history!’”



“What, me worry?”



“The quarterback must go down. And he must go down hard!”



““Lord help me, I’m just not that bright.””



“Out, 20th Century has-been! Out of my house now! Better hurry, security’s on its way!”





"I hopped on two 'dogs' to get back to Eddyville. You know, on the Rondout!"



"Magician, have you captured the power that will make me whole?"

"Patience. still searching. for the strongest of magic!"



"By the Bolts of Balthakk, the SHADOW will be reborn, but not anew!"

THE VERY NEXT DAY...



"Does the President believe in ghosts?"



"EXCLUSIVE – According to three unnamed sources, the President had a unique Oval office visitor – the **SHADOW!** They talked for 'at least an hour' until the President hit the Security Button. Immediately, the Secret Service rushed in to find the President alone!"



“FOX’s medical reporters...”



“Time out! Let’s not call for the ‘men in th white coats’ just yet. After his incredible victory, the President has been under severe pressure and...”

“White House ghosts, especially Lincoln’s are old news! The spirit of ‘Honest Abe’ has been seen or heard by First Ladies, a Queen, even a Prime Minister!”



*“Does the **SHADOW** still exist or not”*



“A CGI hoax perpetrated by by the usual Liberal suspects!”



*“Not a chance! Put the **‘Master of Darness’** on the same shelf as Bigfoot and Space Aliens!”*



*“Impeach, **IMPEACH’** I can hear the Liberals screaming. ‘The President has lost his mind!’*

*“No so fast. Not so fast!
To every American who believes in Law & Order, the **SHADOW** does exist!
The **‘Master of Darkness’** lives on the fear felt by murderers and terrorists around the world!*

*“Go get'em **SHADOW!**”*

AT DINNER THAT EVENING...



"Ghost'?"

"The SHADOW'?"



"Sad. If it weren't so funny!"



"I believe. I believe. It's silly, but I believe!"



*“Deny a fighter ace and a treasure hunter?
An administration with no imagination!”*



*“The **SHADOW** went right to the top! My
kind of guy!”*



*“What’s next? Or has the **SHADOW**
blown his wad?”*



*“Oh, no! After more than ninety years,
he’s got more collars than Joe Bolton!”*

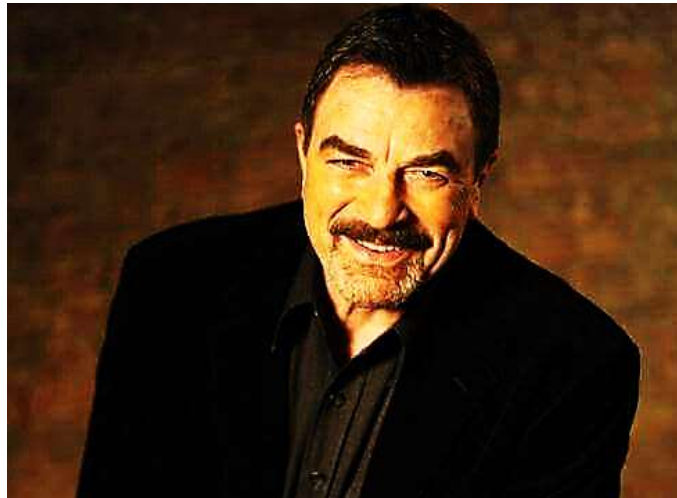




"Please don't ask me if this 'ghost' confirms the afterlife!"



"Who us?"



*"This isn't over. Not by a longshot!
But I hope to be here when it is!"*

NEXT: MARGO, MARGO, MARGO!

