

CHESTER HERALD

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MISSING CARNIVAL

By JENILEE HARMS

“Raymond Wit, known as Ray Wit, of Chester, Nebraska, disappeared last Friday, October 19th, after being called to the Chester Auditorium to handle some peace disturbances that were reported to the village, with witnesses saying the source of the disturbance was coming from the basement of the auditorium located on the corner of Thayer and Howard St.”, said Joe Carbonneau, Mayor of Chester.

Ray Wit, the village manager, responded to the reported disturbance and decided to unlock the gates to the basement of the building, which have remained chained since long before he started working for the village in 1983. It is believed that no one has gone beyond the gates for the past 100 years. His wife, Dawn Wit, noticed that he did not return home on time and was very concerned. After investigation, authorities ruled it a voluntary disappearance.

After digging through some old files in the desk office that belonged to Ray, his wife found an old, dusty journal of the former village manager that dated back to the early 1900s. Folded up in the back of the book was a newspaper clipping published in the Chester Herald in October of 1918. The article stated:

“The disappearing of pets and people have assuredly been solved. The suspects of the thefts have left the town, and the Chester villagers have never been happier.”

After reading on, she discovered that a group of circus people moved to town earlier that year and their odd behavior sparked numerous rumors. Mrs. Smith, their neighbor, reported that her cats kept disappearing, and she wasn't sure why. The

men of the village met up at the town cafe to discuss what they should do about the new, unwanted residents after a couple more citizens and pets went missing. It was decided that they would allow them to use the auditorium for a one-night show, but they had to leave as soon as they were done. After the show, the odd balls disappeared, and that was the end of the newspaper story. However, the village manager's journal said differently.

October 19th, 1918

I didn't mean to lock them down there for as long as I did. I just wanted them gone and I knew that they wouldn't leave town like they were asked to. All along I knew they were the ones behind the disappearing of people and their pets. As soon as they showed up, Chester suffered from power grid failures. After their show, while they were undressing in the basement, I did what had to be done and locked the security gates to keep them down there. Around a dozen people were left in the basement including several clowns. As village manager, I think I did the right thing to protect the innocent citizens and pets of Chester until I could decide what to do to them. For the first few nights, I listened to the blood-curdling screams and cries of the people as they tugged at the gate, trying to escape. I kept planning to let them out, but I was afraid of their anger and what they might do to me. Then a week passed, and then two, and the noises were almost gone. May God help my poor soul, I still did nothing. Finally, after countless sleepless nights, the noises stopped and I knew it was finally over. But I can't bring myself to unlock the doors to see what horror surely remains behind. I think it's for the best if they are chained shut from this time on. And strangely, I still can't sleep at night.

After this discovery, law enforcement believes Ray Wit is in grave danger. The village is asking for

the public's help in the investigation. This Friday and Saturday, October 26th and 27th, the building will open up to the public so that they can explore the basement of the auditorium and can help locate Ray. The Village of Chester is not responsible for any strange occurrences while the investigation is in session.

