



| THE ENDER |

STATUE OF LIMITATIONS

BY TIM ROGERS

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, A STORY IN THE PAPER CAUGHT my eye. A fellow by the name of Gary Islett, a landscaper by trade, had planted a 7-foot-tall Kip's Big Boy statue in his front yard. (If you're too young to know what a Kip's Big Boy statue is, then talk to the internet.) The way Islett told it, he'd seen the Big Boy while working a job in North Dallas. He'd bought it and moved it to his East Dallas house, where it became a nuisance by slowing traffic on Abrams Road, until code enforcement showed up and made Islett relocate the Big Boy to his backyard. When I read the story, I figured Islett and I ought to have a chat. I suspected that the Big Boy belonged to me—or, rather, to me and a handful of miscreants that I ran with in high school.

So as not to cast an unfavorable light on my alma mater, I shouldn't tell you where I went to high school, but it was Cistercian Prep, in Irving. Several of us together made a to-do list of feats to be accomplished before our graduation, in 1988. One entry: steal a Kip's Big Boy.

Our first attempt did not go well. Having determined that the Big Boy at the Hillcrest and Northwest Highway restaurant was not bolted down, we had our wheelman park around the corner in his International Harvester. My associate J. and I hoisted the Big Boy from its base and made for the waiting car. The hollow fiberglass statue wasn't heavy, but it was unwieldy and made running difficult. The Kip's employees who gave chase, though they'd allowed us a head start, had a clear advantage.

"It's not going to fit!" J. said as we approached the car.

"It will fit!" I said, huffing, hoping.

"It's not going to fit!" he said.

I scored a 1350 on my SAT, putting me in the middle of our class of 29 boys. I had a facility for spatial relations. J., as I recall, scored lower than I. But they don't make you take the SAT while running with a statue of an overweight kid holding aloft a hamburger on a plate. There's the test, and then there's real life. J. was right about the problem of the International Harvester and the Big Boy.

"It's not going to fit!" I informed him.

We ditched the Big Boy and dove into the back of the International Harvester, yelling at our wheelman, "Go, go, go, go!"

Our second effort went like a scene from an alternate version of

Ocean's Eleven. We hit the Kip's Big Boy on Forest and Marsh with a well-considered plan and overwhelming force, seven guys in a '70s yellow Ford pickup driven by a kid we'd nicknamed Moondog. This was back when high-schoolers used to cruise Forest. So the Kip's parking lot was packed with cars the night Moondog backed up his truck to within a few feet of the Big Boy stationed at the restaurant's front door. Four or five of us leaped out and loaded the bastard into the truck in a matter of seconds. We covered the Big Boy with a tarp, and I can remember speeding down 635, laughing to the point of tears because, no matter how we jiggered it, the tarp couldn't conceal the hamburger, which drew bemused looks from other motorists.

We stashed the Big Boy in a wooded area near Moondog's house, with several potential plans for its future use. One scenario had us cutting the statue in half at its shoulders, then placing the top part on the 50-yard line of Cistercian's football field, making it appear as if we'd buried the entire Big Boy, hopefully forcing the (unnecessary) deployment of heavy earth-moving equipment to remedy the problem.

But here's the thing: the next day, when Moondog went to check on our Big Boy, he found that it had vanished. Someone had apparently restolen our stolen trophy. We prep-school thieves were crestfallen.

Fast-forward 25 years to Gary Islett's yard art installation. You know what? The guy lives just a few blocks from that wooded area where we'd long ago hidden our Big Boy. Now, I'm not suggesting that Islett followed us that night, swiped our booty, hid it someplace for many years, then recently "discovered it" while "working a job in North Dallas." Not at all.

I called Islett and had a conversation with him so pleasant that I feel comfortable recommending to you his White Rock Landscaping. He sounds like a good guy. But, after I regaled him with my high school exploits, he did make a point of telling me about the security measures he has taken to protect his Big Boy. It is bolted down in his backyard. There are motion detectors in the trees. Inside the Big Boy itself, Islett has installed a baby monitor.

Precautions taken by a prudent man or a guilty one? I can't say. But I do know this: after *Ocean's Eleven* came *Ocean's Twelve*. **D**



WRITE TO TIMR@DMAGAZINE.COM.

Postmaster Send address changes to D Dallas/Fort Worth, 750 North St. Paul Street, Suite 2100, Dallas, TX 75201. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, TX, and additional mailing offices. D Dallas/Fort Worth (ISSN 0164-8292) is published monthly by D Magazine Partners, 750 North St. Paul Street, Suite 2100.