

The Rule Of Cool: An Intersection of the Raffles and Vega Family Lines

By J. Walker Bryson

Many of my readers may already be familiar with the exploits of Wold-Newton family member A.J. Raffles¹, as recorded in a series of stories by acclaimed author E.W. Hornung. For the uninitiated, let me say that Mr. Raffles was a “cracksman,” or burglar, of no small skill during Victorian times, and additionally wielded a mean cricket bat (Or whatever they call it. As an unwashed American, much of the terminology used in this game is unfamiliar to me). Raffles died in the Boer War in South Africa at the turn of the century, attempting to reclaim his good name after having been uncovered as a thief among the upper classes.

However, recent research indicates that this was not the end of the Raffles story. Sources indicate that Mr. Raffles fell in love with an Italian nurse while at the front, a Sicilian woman attempting to bring honor to her family through service to her church. On the verge of taking her vows as a nun, she changed her plans upon meeting the dashing young adventurer. Carlotta Fonzarelli married A.J. Raffles in a Catholic ceremony shortly before he was sent into action as a spy. He was killed in action after being unmasked. Carlotta returned to her family in Sicily, near the town of Corleone. She was taken in by the Andolinis², distant cousins of hers. Later in the year, she gave birth to Santino. Rather than subject him to an obviously English name among the nationalistic Sicilians, Carlotta made sure that he was referred to as a Fonzarelli.

Despite Carlotta’s attempts to keep her young son out of trouble, he fell in with local toughs (a tendency which was to repeat itself in his various descendants). By the time he was a teenager, Santino had fallen in with a group of bandits dedicated to taking over all criminal activities in the town of Corleone. In the year 1921, he met and became engaged to Englishwoman Stephanie Algar³ (A woman with an illegitimate child) over the violent protests of his mother. Stephanie became pregnant almost immediately, giving birth to a son, Arturo, in 1922. Unfortunately, Santino was assassinated on the steps of the local church by the local crime lord immediately following the christening of his young son. In the ensuing confusion, Carlotta snatched the infant, taking him into hiding.

Stephanie attempted to find Arturo and Carlotta for many months, but was stopped at every turn by her late husband’s family. In disgust, she took back her maiden name of Algar, and set off for America with her firstborn to seek her fortune.

Near the town of Corleone, things were getting uglier. The local Don had made it clear

¹ See the story collections *Raffles*, *The Amateur Cracksman*, *The Black Mask*, and *A Thief In The Night*, as well as the novel *Mr. Justice Raffles*.

² The story of the Andolinis can be found in the novel *The Godfather* by Mario Puzo, and in the subsequent movies of the same name.

³ For Stephanie Algar’s story, I modestly suggest my article “Corrupted Lines: An Investigation Into A Dissipated Branch of the Wold-Newton Family,” located at <http://www.pjfarmer.com/secret/contributors/FinalCorrupted.htm>

that he was not above killing the wives, mothers, and children of his enemies. Carlotta hid for as long as she could before it became obvious that there was no safe refuge for her. Using what funds her late son had managed to squirrel away, she and Arturo sailed for America in 1925, moving in with family members in Boston, MA.

While Boston held little fascination for the young Arturo (almost immediately calling himself “Arthur”) the passage across the Atlantic had seized hold of his imagination. While immigrant passengers were subjected to horrible conditions, Arthur had fallen in love with the ocean itself. This was to prove pivotal in his development.

As soon as he was old enough, Arthur spent every day by the docks, assisting the sailors with loading and unloading their supplies in exchange for a few coins and stories of their travels. At age 16, following an argument with his grandmother, Arthur lied his way aboard ship as a merchant seaman. He set sail for foreign ports. Carlotta stayed behind in Boston, receiving the occasional letter from him.

In 1940, Arthur married one Carmella Tribiani, member of the large Tribiani clan in New York. He settled down for a short while, going so far as to take a job offer as a mechanic with a distant relative of his wife in Milwaukee, WI, and taking his grandmother with them. After a year, though, he shipped out again, the sea calling for him. While he was away, Carmella gave birth to a son, Arthur Fonzarelli, Jr. (referred to hence as “Fonzie” in order to avoid confusion).

Other marriages of note within the family, all from siblings of Carmella: Gina Tribiani married a maintenance man by the name of Dino Spicoli, resulting in the birth of a single son, Martin “Spike” Spicoli. By coincidence, Dino’s brother George married Jennifer Algar (Stephanie Algar’s granddaughter) some years later. Louisa Tribiani married soldier Luciano Arcola, giving birth to one Charles “Chachi” Arcola. Both families eventually moved to Milwaukee, WI to maintain a network of mutual support. Luciano Arcola died in the Korean War, and Louisa married restaurant owner Al Delvecchio many years later. Finally, the grandson of Carmella’s brother Guisepppe became a soap opera actor of some repute in the 1990’s.

In 1943, Arthur bigamously married Ruth Greenbaum of Massachusetts. Ruth also gave birth to a son, also named Arthur, Jr. This would normally be a footnote, as this second son only met his half-brother once during Fonzie’s life. However, the Greenbaum family was the only Jewish family living in Innsmouth, MA, and considering that the second Arthur felt the call of the sea more strongly than his father, further investigation seems warranted for a possible future article.

Fonzie grew up in Milwaukee, his fondest childhood memories being of his father’s few visits home. During leave, Arthur, Sr. would take the entire family on road trips on a WWII surplus Indian motorcycle. Carmella would hold tight to Arthur as the young Fonzie rode in a makeshift carrier in the sidecar.

In 1950, Arthur finally deserted both families for good. Fonzie immediately rebelled,

acting up at school and hanging out with a bad crowd. Carmella did what she could for him, but the young man proved impossible to control. He barely managed to make it into high school. Eventually, his mother's sanity slipped, resulting in her committal to a mental institution in 1955. This resulted in further issues for Arthur, and he began to attempt to find comfort in the arms of numerous women. However, in 1957, Arthur encountered the one woman who would change his life forever:

Juanita "Pinky" Vega transferred to his high school (Though she was nicknamed "Frenchy" at the time).

In order to explore the twisted branches of this family tree, it is necessary to explore the ancestry of Juanita Vega. In "The Legacy of the Fox: A Chronology of Zorro,"⁴ by Matthew Baugh (with additions by Win Eckert), the authors state that James Vega (b. 1910) was the last living descendant of Zorro at the time of James's adventures. However, further research does indicate a brief and unhappy marriage of James in 1938, to one Maria Lopez. The marriage was annulled in 1944 for reasons that remain a mystery, and resulted in the birth of two children: Juanita (b. 1941), and Marcos (b. 1943)⁵.

Juanita was a kind and gentle child, more concerned with fashion and cosmetics than action and adventure. However, she had little patience with high school. By the time of her transfer, Juanita had all but decided to drop out in favor of beauty school. She became friends with a group known as "The Pink Ladies," a women's auxiliary of the local gang "The Falcons". The Falcons had as their leader the most prominent hood in the area: Arthur "Fonzie" Fonzarelli, Jr.

Juanita and Fonzie immediately fell for each other, but obstacles were in their way. Despite being a member of the girl gang, Juanita was considered a "good girl," pure and innocent. Additionally, she was considered eccentric at best due to a styling accident: An mishap with hydrogen peroxide had caused her hair to turn a bright shade of pink⁶. However, after much high school melodrama, Juanita and Fonzie finally managed to overcome all obstacles and begin a relationship. This resulted in the almost immediate pregnancy of Juanita (now known as "Pinky" due to her hair color).

Unfortunately, Fonzie was still unable to control his wandering eye. While Pinky understood the psychological reasons behind his promiscuity, this was not the life she had planned for her child. Despite his dropping out of high school, getting a mechanic's job to support his child, and promising to control himself the best he could, Pinky realized that he was not sufficiently mature for marriage and fatherhood. She instead pursued other options: The mechanical know-how Fonzie had taught her led to a job on the up-and-coming demolition derby circuit. To give her child a father, she managed a quickie marriage to Tony Tuscadero, brother and manager of up-and-coming singer Lola

⁴ Found at <http://www.pjfarmer.com/woldnewton/Zorro.htm>

⁵ Marcos had numerous children, including a single daughter, Suzanne. It is unknown whether or not this is the same person as the folksinger Suzanne Vega.

⁶ See the Broadway musical and movie *Grease*

“Leather” Tuscadero.

Fonzie moved in with the Cunningham family of Milwaukee, still working at the mechanic’s shop, and taking night classes to complete his high school diploma. It was his hope that by dropping out of the gang and building a stable life, he would eventually prove his worth to Pinky⁷.

Tony Tuscadero died in a demolition derby accident in 1961. To preserve his memory and legacy, Pinky moved from the mechanic’s pit to the derby floor. She became a crack driver and feared contestant.

In March of 1963, Pinky and Fonzie encountered each other again⁸ when she needed assistance in defeating a pair of ruthless demolition drivers. They again consummated their on-again, off-again romance, again resulting in Pinky’s pregnancy. This time she did not inform Fonzie of the pregnancy, instead moving out to California to have the child. She moved in with Otto and Cynthia Maddox⁹, a young couple who took in the troubled young mother out of a sense of Christian charity.

On November 22nd, 1963, as shots rang out in Dealy Plaza in Dallas, Texas, a scream pierced the air in a delivery room in Encino, CA. Victor Otto Vega (Juanita had gone back to her maiden name) took his first breath as his mother died in childbirth. Vincent, who had been left with his grandmother, lived in Brooklyn, New York. Victor was adopted by the Maddoxes and raised as their own.

In 1967, Vincent’s grandmother died. Fonzie discovered this, and (after some blood tests required by the state to prove parentage) gained custody of Vincent¹⁰. In order to disrupt the young man’s life as little as possible, Fonzie moved to Brooklyn, opening a series of mechanic’s shops.

However, things were not calm at the Fonzarelli household. Fonzie married Mona Barbarino, a widower with several children (Including one priest). Vincent rebelled against his father and (especially) his new family, though he did get along rather well with his stepsiblings. The issue was this: Vincent had been brought up on stories of his wild, adventurous father. The man who had adopted him bore little resemblance to the one who his late mother had told him about. That Fonzie was a motorcycle-riding

⁷ See the television show *Happy Days*. While Pinky’s pregnancy is not mentioned in the show, it does provide motivation for the “greaser” Fonzie to suddenly get his act together, as shown in the second season of the series and onwards.

⁸ Ibid

⁹ It should be noted that while he was little more than a mild businessman, Otto Maddox was part of the Maddox family tree that had produced “Mad Dog” Branzillo, and was therefore distantly related to scientist Calvin O’Keefe. See the books *A Wrinkle In Time*, *A Wind In The Door*, and *A Swiftly Tilting Planet* by Madeline L’Engle for further information regarding this family.

¹⁰ See the series *Happy Days* again, though David Vincent was not revealed to be Fonzie’s son in the show. Instead, he was adopted. However, at the time, adoption by single parents was almost unheard of. The final few episodes of the series make much more sense if it’s understood that Vincent was Fonzie’s biological son.

daredevil who had countless women hanging off his arms. This one had become a schoolteacher, then the Dean of Industrial Arts at a local community college, then a middle-class businessman. Vincent soon fell in with a gang called “The Sweathogs”¹¹. While Fonzie was initially concerned over his son’s companions, the arrival of a highly influential teacher at the high school gave him hope that not all was lost.

In 1973, Vincent managed to procure a fake ID in the name of “Tony Manero”. He began to frequent the local nightclubs and discos, eventually winning a number of contests. In 1974, he and a partner won the major dance contest in Brooklyn, though Tony was unhappy with the circumstances involved (He felt that a Puerto Rican couple had proven their superiority, and that he had only won due to racial bias on the part of the judges).

Vincent continued to pursue his dreams of becoming a professional dancer, eventually managing to win a part as a backup dancer in a Broadway musical in 1980. A series of events led to him taking the lead role¹², Under the name “Tony Manero” (The name on his fake ID, now his stage name), he received some minor fame. Unfortunately, he soon became involved with the drug use prevalent in show business at the time, and it affected his performance abilities. Vincent became less reliable, eventually finding himself blackballed from the stage.

On the other coast, his brother was faring little better. The sweetly religious Maddox family had become obsessed with a televangelist, and were sending him nearly all of their money. Victor Otto, like many disaffected youth of his generation, became involved in the local punk scene. He spent his days in a series of dead-end jobs, barely managing to attend high school, and eventually dropping out to spend more time with his friends. In 1982, he stumbled into a job as a repo man, unwittingly becoming drawn in to a governmental conspiracy involving alien corpses¹³. It was during this time that he also met Marcellus Michael Wallace (Going by the name “Mike” at the time), a co-worker. Following the events involving the aliens, Marcellus took over the repossession business, using it as a front for a variety of criminal activities (Under the advice of veteran repossession agent “Bud“, Marcellus required that all people working for him wear suits. This served to give his business a veneer of respectability, and additionally caused possible targets to let their guard down). It should also be stated that following the events of the alien incident, Victor became more ruthless and vicious than ever.

In desperation, Vincent called his brother, asking for any job leads. Victor talked Marcellus into hiring Vincent, teaching him the ropes of the local criminal underworld. Despite Vincent’s penchant for drug use, he proved to be a remarkable operative, graduating from simple burglaries and con jobs to enforcement at a remarkable speed. The two Vega brothers were soon at the top of the criminal underworld.

In 1990, Victor Otto Vega was killed in a series of unfortunate incidents immediately

¹¹ See the television series *Welcome Back, Kotter*.

¹² See the movie *Staying Alive*.

¹³ See the movie *Repo Man*

following a bungled diamond robbery, as shown in the movie *Reservoir Dogs*.

In 1992, David Vincent Vega was killed by a man who he had been assigned to assassinate. His story was told in the movie *Pulp Fiction*. In order to address obvious speculation regarding the briefcase shown in the movie, and what the contents are, I should state that I do not believe the contents of the case to be related in any way to the alien corpses of *Repo Man*. While the glow that emitted from the trunk of the car in *Repo Men* and the glow from the briefcase in *Pulp Fiction* do share a certain similarity, it should be noted that the light from the briefcase (unlike the light from the car trunk) did not result in the immediate death of those viewing it, and the source of said light must therefore remain a mystery.

The final fate of Arthur “The Fonz” Fonzarelli remains unknown. However, considering his presumed age, his tendency to take good care of himself (Fonzie was never known to drink or smoke), and his Wold-Newton genetics, it can be safely assumed that he is alive at the time of this writing. I am currently researching his activities subsequent to the 1970’s, and hope to publish further information as it becomes available to me.

Acknowledgements: To Win Eckert for wondering how Otto Maddox might fit into the Wold-Newton Universe, to the WNU Yahoo! Group for insight, and to my friend Daniel Palacio for making my theories seem sane in comparison.