

Miscellania

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p. 83 [Charlie Mould's] son Jack grew up to be an equally heavy dude, who, according to his authorized biography *Curse of Gold* spent his life alternatively prospecting for gold in Bute or unjustly incarcerated.... Jack attributed his minimal gold return and a series of accidents to the curse, "Nika memloose, mine memloose" that Slumach set on the mine as he was hanged for murder in 1890. Eventually Jack discovered a letter written by one John Jackson dated May, 28, 1924, which gave the location of the mine. The indicators were a cairn surmounted by an engraved tent-shaped rock that faced a creek that bubbled in places over bedrock bright-yellow with gold, and the disappeared. These indicators could be found by lining up three mountain peaks.

After a helicopter search, Jack found the indicators but was unable to find the mine. How could he quit? Finally he hired a combination dowser/blasting expert to dowse for and crack open potential gold-bearing quartz veins using the dynamite which is as essential to mining as Noble had hoped.... His crew hauled vast amounts of blasting powder up Southgate Peak [Bute Inlet] to their camp. It's Jack's claim that as soon as his back was turned lightning struck his arsenal and blew the camp apart. Jack was thrilled.

"Gold is the perfect conductor," he exclaimed, "I'm closing in on the mine."

p. 85 How stories like this grow, how nuggets of fact are found, rearranged, transposed and beaten into, well I could go on, but the story is pure gold. Combine a Native curse, Volcanic Brown and his buried jars of nuggets and his missing body ... and what we have ... is an archetype.... [A] boy's adventure and the missing girls' tragedy. Remember the teen-age girls? They never returned from their journeys with Slumach.

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The constant is the tall tale, containing just enough verifiable elements to undermine disbelief, and how it moves through groups, is transformed and persists.