

# Tom Richards Jr.'s Column--

## *Amazing Tablecloth Manipulation by Etook*

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THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.

OLONGAPO CITY - I can't hold back any longer, Etook. I have refrained from telling the story for over a year now. It is about time that I let loose with it. Someone has to immortalize the tale, so it might as well be me.

Etook, Charlie, I'll bet you thought that I would be satisfied only with a quote which I ficticiously attributed to Wayne Aspinall to explain the origin of your name. You remember, I am sure, that I had the Chairman give you your Eskimo name when I quoted the former

Congressman as stating, "He's the guy who is always following me around, and saying, 'E-took my land. E-took my life.'"

Sorry Charlie, but I feel obligated to relate the story of the Incident at the Monocle Restaurant. You must recall that evening when you joined Laura Bergt, and Don Wright, and John Rainer (Chief Indian Member of the National Council on Indian Opportunity), several other nationally recognized Indian leaders and myself at that outstanding French restaurant near the New Senate Office Building.

The Monocle certainly lived

up to its reputation that evening, Etook. We had appetizers of superbly prepared escargot, that snail with a sauce which is ideally suited to wet one's bread with. And, Charlie, you must remember those generous portions of roast beef and lobster tail. And, those perfectly mixed drinks we ordered, and fabulous wines. Even the salad was delightfully crisp. There was so much offered us that the table was cluttered with candleholders, many plates, and many more glasses, and a lot of silverware.

It was a very good meal, and we had excellent company, and it was one of those pleasant summer evenings in Washington.

Maybe you shouldn't have responded the way you did, Etook, but we shouldn't have angered you so much. Don wasn't very complimentary toward you that evening, and Laura was enthusiastic about the way she was criticizing your rural housing program, and I wasn't doing anything to improve your morale.

Up until the time you reacted that way, Charlie, I think those Indian leaders were just passively taking it all in and attributing our argument to Native politics. Afterwards, I believe, they began to think that you had great powers as a shaman.

It all happened so fast, Charlie, that I nearly missed it. We were giving you such a terrible time that you stood up, and you paused for a brief instant to figure out how you were going to demonstrate your displeasure with our uncomplimentary treatment of your ideas. You really decided upon an excellent gesture.

You know, Etook, I was concentrating on the texture of the red tablecloth, and it changed color before my very eyes. It lifted my head to analyze this feat of magic, you were rapidly exiting the Monocle and the tablecloth was resting across the room. For some time later, we were all completely astonished. Everybody in the restaurant marveled at what you had done. All was quiet until laughter broke the silence.

You gripped that tablecloth and jerked it off the table so skillfully, that of all the wine glasses and drinks, candleholders, all the plates and water glasses, and of all the silverware at our big table, only your own dinner plate fell. And Charlie, your dinner plate glided to the carpet so smoothly that it didn't even break.

We offered apologies when the waiter came over, but they weren't necessary. No need to apologize, he said, I have heard about people being able to do this thing. But this is the first time that I have seen anybody do it, he added.

Etook, I was under the impression that you had accomplished that feat just to give us a sample of your magic. You know, Charlie, that you shattered this illusion when you went to the restaurant the next day to see about paying the breakage fee, and were surprised to discover that there was none.

The next time you have to travel to Washington, why don't you alert the Monocle so that they can advertise your special talent. And, some of us who witnessed your magic, have lately been tempted to ask you, Etook, "Have you learned any new tricks lately?"