

In The Company of Arrogance

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Chapter 1

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Published by R.M. DeSanti

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Sub Rosa (Under the rose)

[Q] How did a rose come to mean confidentiality, as in sub rosa?

[A] The allusion goes back to classical times. The Romans adopted the Egyptian sun god, Ra, who became popular among Romans once the cult had been officially sanctioned during the reign of Augustus. So the rose became the symbol of confidentiality in the classical Roman world. The symbol of the rose was well-known throughout the post-classical period and is

PROLOGUE:

Nestled between a dozen longshoremen working on Dock B, Junior Patrone was during a secret meeting (Sub-Rosa) in Berlin, several irrational plans are being hatched. At the time the United States lacked the electronic technology of modern day. After infiltrating an alpine colony in the Catskills, the Nazi mastermind makes contact with a source. Thirty years before 911, a plan was conceived involving a single WMD. If successful, it would be concealed from the rest of the world for three decades, entrenched within a secure facility. After arresting an organized crime member in the 1970's, an arrogant hard-nosed cop

Part One:

The Forties

DEATH OF A VALIANT LADY

In June of 1945, the newest arrival of a sleepy alpine village, slipped in from the sea. A dozen years at sea left Jack Carbone's face weather beaten and tanned. Shoulder to shoulder. By thirty four, deep furrows etched into his face aged his appearance by ten years. Jack was skipper of the Valiant Lady. One of dozen Liberty ships that delivered munitions to the front. Jack was confident knowing he carried enough clout to guarantee she wouldn't be cut off. Rose never cared for a life at sea, extremely anxious on this trip, she was certain. At five foot four dripping wet, she was still intimidated by Jack's towering presence. Jack insisted that she accompany him on this final voyage. Rose eventually agreed. He joined the Merchant Marines shortly after graduation. He loved the sea. It was an overcast hazy morning when the blast lifted the Valiant Lady's four hundred tons. When the torpedo ended Valiant Ladies life, Rose was on top loving her man. She felt

THE BIG HOUSE

The mansion was built by Joseph Helinski in the early forties while he was in the States. Helinski had purchased twenty three acres of forest, which consisted of an old apple orchard. One afternoon knowing the out of area, new land owner wasn't present, a neighbor said, "This is nuts!" He screamed, crumpling the county invoice to the floor. These figures

"Can we afford to pay such an amount if there's no other choice?" Helena

"I'll find a way honey. By God, I'm a police chief! That should carry

At six four, thirty year old Gerber Lang was a strong looking two hundred

During his scheduled meeting at city hall in Thomasville, Helinski tried t

"Mr. Helinski. May I ask, why are you so bloody concerned about my accent

"Well you sort of sound ... German. I mean, really German! Almost as tho

"Krauts. . ? Ah yes ... American slang! Well to satisfy your curiosity ...

"See there, what 'da ya know. I guessed right. Mission? What sort a mi

"A mission; with your help will succeed !" Lang answered, wrapping his ha

"My help? What makes you think I'm going to help you? For your informati

"My dear Mr. Helinski. Your treats do not intimidated me." Lang smiled,

"I ain't got a choice while you're pointing that fucking gun at me. That

"Specifically, the use of your cabin Mr. Helinski."

"I don't understand. For what purpose?"

"For the purpose of my mission!"

"Ah huh. I see we got a fucking language barrier here. What I don't unde

"Sir! Before you rush off to a faith worse then death, I'll advise you to

"Luck! It certainly was bad luck making your acquaintance. What's your p

"You have been under investigation by my colleagues for some time sir. Fr

"That may be buster. But you ain't me! And neither you, or anyone else i

"I believe that would prove to be a very foolish gesture on your part and

"Fuck you mack! I told you . I ain't buying into your game. Whatever it

"Mr. Helinski, I see you are not a man that is easily intimidated. Then l

The police chief realized that he was in the presence of a man who seemed to have

"What do you need from me?" A subjugated, Helinski asked.

Joe was introduced to several German-American town officials during the next few w

"He is an important fixture within the State Police." Lang clarified. "

"Us? There is no us for what it's worth Herr Lang. I may be a Benedict A

Realizing the task ahead was to big to handle on his own, Joe would have to recrui

Charles Palermo was only twelve when he burgled a local record shop by cli

Uncle Vito also owned a local body shop/gas station on the corner of Tremont and S

While playing chicken with an on coming vehicle on the night of his seventeenth bi

Upon his release on his eighteenth birthday, Charles was picked up outside the ga

A year later, with Rabbi Vito's blessing, Charley became a member of the Lancheste

Without disclosing much information, Joseph Helinski employed his best fri

The mission, dependent partly on astrology, started as the first foreign freighter

Wooden crates reeking of oil from the old freighters cargo hold would then be load

THE MISSION

During the 1940's, Hunter Mountain was a secluded mountainous area in Sull

Lieutenant Hans Hymnal had trained the men involved in Operation Reservoir

Born in New York City in 1918, Hans was raised by a devote German mother. Capable

When time drew near, Gerber Lang would contact Hymnal who was responsible

The High Point Power Plant at Stoney Point, New York was the main power source tha

The mission would begin by knocking the plant off line. In turn, power to the rad

SECOND THOUGHTS

No matter the amount of money promised, or whatever threats loomed over hi

Before passing out one night, Helina tried to coerce her husband into telling her

Joe surmised Father Reardon recognized his silhouette as soon as the priest asked

"You have been away from the confessional much too long my son!"

"Yes father. And I need to get something off my chest. Something... somet

"Have you broken any of Gods laws my son or perhaps hurt someone?"

"Gods laws huh? I... I... Don't know about that. Hurt ... Yes! Well, no

Believing his authority came from a higher power to forgive all sinners, no matter

There was also the possibility that if Lang, or any of his nutty cronies eluded ca

The headline went on to report that "The Valiant Lady" was one of several Liberty

HELINA AND THE BABY

It had been five years since the baby came into her life and four since Joe. Soon after the infant came into their lives Joe stopped drinking but continued having. One morning Helina dropped into HQ with the baby hoping the chief was available to

"A few days?" She questioned surprisingly nonchalantly flipping another

"I need to take care of important business that can't wait any longer. I'

G. Lang: Thomasville Tax Collector—#1- M525-1937-0000

H. Hymnal: Lieutenant, N.Y. State Police— #2- M526-1938-0000

G. Muller: Fire Chief: Sullivan County Fire District #3- M527-1939-0000

G. Schussboomer: Assistant Mayor of Thomasville #4- M528-1936-0000

N. Gustafson: Senior Medical Examiner, Sullivan County # 5- M529-1939-0000

C. Paladino: Received \$25,000.

J. Paladino; Received \$15,000.

The list continued for another three pages. The Paladino's, which had to be Charles. Helina was surprised that the film was ready by late afternoon the following day.

ANACONDA WIRE MILL, NEW YORK DIVISION

NOT EXACTLY AS PLANNED

Charles snarled, shoving Joe hard against a tree outside the cabin. You m

"Anything for a buck, huh. You prick! I love this country. My country!

"What the hell are you talking about Charley?"

"I'm talking about your, our new found friends. You can't believe that th

"Listen to me for a minute will ya. I can't reverse what's done. I wish

"Pull the plug? The three of us? I think not; 'cause I'm leaving John ou

A sudden deviate thought flooded Charles' mind. What if me and Johnny could stop

HELINA AND THE GERMAN BOYS

Although Helina had discovered what appeared to be the the truth about her

The next morning she notified the State Police at Thomasville concerned over of he

"No Lieutenant!" Helina scoffed. "I don't have a clue as to my husbands

"It was not my intention to upset you Mrs. Helinski. Please accept my apo

"Of course I will Lieutenant. By the way; I never actually gave you or an

"His wife claims she does not know his whereabouts sir." Hymnal affirmed,

"And do we believe her Lieutenant?"

"I believe she knows more then she confesses. But I don't believe she kno

A KILLING AMONG FRIENDS

For an excessive boozier in his early sixties, Constable Chad Rapp was in e

"He from these parts?" The proprietor of the Inn queried.

"Yes and no. I believe he bought that old Hoffman place down on Hammond V

"Never laid eyes on him Chad. Ya think'n maybe some-thin' happened to tha

"Dexter, I wouldn't have a clue what that boy's up to. And don't go get'n

"Uh huh, 'cept'n the time Miss Gracie's hogs blocked traffic on Main Stree

"Sure do!" Rapp chuckled. "And if I remember rightly, that event kept yo

"Yep, reckon it did. Shame 'bout that ol truck though."

And how's 'bout the time Bernie Louis got liquored up and held up the Farmers Bank

"Hey! Go screw yourself Dexter. I was cleared of any wrong doings! Besi

"And how's 'bout the time 'ol Dwight Rollins put a bullet in the back of h

"Yep! I remember them all Dexter. And Dwight did the right thing by blow

The men had just completed storing and listing the last of the munitions i

"Two million bucks can ease a lot of guilt Joey!" Charles shout. "Two mi

"You mean a million each! Don't you Charles? Look ... just forget everyth

"Really?" Charles grinned. "Screw the rest of the money huh? Don't want

" I say we hold the weapons for ransom and threaten to destroy the lot."

" Charles, If we destroy them now we'll never see a penny."

"These fuckers mission is irrelevant to me! We're dead men Joey boy! Dea

"And you've figured all this out on your own, right Charles? So then ... W
Constable Rapp had heard two men arguing from the cellar when he quietly entered t
"Well... Sorry buddy but my plan doesn't include you." Charles said, pull
He bolted through the thick fores ignoring thin branches that whipped across his f
Some twenty minutes later while rolling the heavy stranger over onto his back, try
Later that afternoon after meeting with the young Paladino, Joe had convinced the
"No to both questions chief. Chief, is my dad alright? Maybe there's som
"John! Go about your normal business until he returns. There's noting to
The young officer listened to orders going about his daily duties as though noting

A CHANGED WOMEN

Although Helina was relieved to have her husband finally home safe and sou
"You've snooped into my private affairs and you want me to explain? How d
"Joe, don't stand there staring into space looking like your insulted. I
"Oh? So you were comfortable when I was just a rum runner then. Is that
"Please believe me Helina. Ever since the baby came along I've laid off t
"What's to become of Charles then?"
"Well ... To tell you the truth—"
"Where's Charley, Joseph. What's going on?" Helina suddenly said sensing
"Helina ... Honey ... Baby... Charlies gone."
"Gone to where?"
"Shit I don't know. Could be heaven. More likely hell."
Feeling a tightness in her stomach, she whispered as the room started to swim arou
"Oh, he's dead alright! I buried him shortly after he threatened to shot
"Oh my God, Joe. This is terrible! How is John handling it?"
" Uh, I ... I haven't told him yet!"
"Why not, may I ask."
"C'mon, don't look at me that way! Since we never told John where the cab
"Why am I getting the feeling that you're not telling me the truth? What
"Helina! For Gosh sake!"
"Tell me then, which excuse should I use when the baby asks why his dad's
"Nobody's going anywhere Helina! Christ Almighty! Your starting to sound
"Please Joe, please... no more bullshit! Whatever your involved in, you
"Uh... I think it's best if I get outta your site for awhile Helina. You
"The truth, damn you! I want the truth! I want to hear it from your own
"What the hell are you rambling on about women?"
"I'm not a stupid women Joe! It took me awhile to figure it out, but I'm
"Journal! What journal - - -"
"You sold out your country! That's what I'm talking about! For a few buc
"A few bucks . . ? Confiscated . . ?" Cursing himself for forgetting to l
"Is that what you think this is all about? A few measly guns? I thought
"I have. All except a few pages written in gibberish. Which I don't unde
"Ooh! Do I detect a sudden change of attitude? And I thought I knew you
So ... Okay it's more then guns is it? Then how many people do you have
"Two or three million. Maybe more. That enough for you?"
"C'mon Joe Goddamn it. That's not funny. Stop exaggerating!"
"Exaggerating? I'm not trying to be funny my dear! You're were right whe
"Joseph ... Sweetie, you'll do no such thing! No such thing at all. We're
"Haven't you heard a word I just said! I'm telling you I'm not going thro
"You poor baby. Grow up!" Helina Jekyll jeered. You've gotten yourself

IT DIDN'T HAPPEN

An unexpected weather formation stalled over New York's Metropolitan area
The higher-than-normal seas across the mid-Atlantic had slowed the ship down bring
Joe's orders were to locate a covered truck within two days prior to the c
On the night of the mission just after two in the morning, Joe was expected to dro
"Where is your partner Mr. Helinski? Lang asked suspiciously.

"He's resting at the cabin before all the excitement starts. Guarding our
"In case of. . ? Do you think me a fool?" Lang scowled with killer eyes,
"Well then Herr Gerber. Let me explain my thoughts about what should happ
"You threaten me? You fool! You had better consider your intentions stec
"Herr Lang... One million in cash by tomorrow. No more threats. Just brin
Gerber Lang was a professional soldier devoted to his country. But he realized th
Later that evening Gerber contacted Joe advising him where they would meet
"Listen up Herr general, no tricks! Even if I can't get away in time, I'
"Until tonight." Gerber replied.
"Right. Until tonight."

Later that afternoon, tucked away in a quite corner in the back of the Dew Drop In
"New 'round these parts, are ya fella?"
"Not at all. Names Helinski. Joe Helinski. Bought the place out on Hamm
"Aha! Y'all that missin' person that bought the Hoffman place then."
"Missing? Sorry but you lost me. Who says I'm missing?"
"Constable Rapp that's who. Butcha don't look like y'all are missin' to m
More than an hour ticked by while both men lied to each other telling 'war stories
It was also time for Joe to set the explosive charges at the cabin. He wasn't bl
As he rounded the side of the Inn, a black Mercedes limo suddenly pulled up and sl
"Hey Joe! That you boy? Y'all okay out here?" Dexter shout, surprisingl
"Do you not remember me?"
"Can't say that I do mister. Who might y'all be?"
"Why I am the tax collector for Thomasville, my dear sir." Gerber smiled
"Well... uh, sure... sure do now that mention it. The tax collector. Right!
"You and your friend are very rich. For the moment." Gerber whispered.
"We'll be there on time general, don't you worry. Just tell me one thing.

THE THING ABOUT MONEY

While the money exchange between Joe and Gerbel was taking place at The De
It was nearly one in the morning, hours behind schedule, when Helina arrived at th
Collapsing to the floor almost two hours later Helina asked. "How long do
"I'm sure we'll have plenty of time to do that later doll-face." Joe ans
"Gosh Joe! I didn't think there was this much money in the world." Helin
"Take a good look at it doll. A long look. It's getting stashed until I
"Keep this in a safe place doll-face, it's a little nest egg for you and t

DAVID LANG ROTHSCHILD

Excluding Sunday's, every day on New York City's waterfront is a massive w
Gerber Lang AKA David Lang Rothschild: Former member of the Nazi Patriot
Listening, watching, and ingesting the aroma that wafted up from the harbor below;
He had been ordered home to face the humiliation of a secret trial to be followed
A few years after the conspiracy was foiled and his enemy Joe Helinski dead, Gerbi
A few days later Gerber nonchalantly approached Paladino during his street beat cl
After a quick bomb making course given by the aging Lang, several weeks later Pala
Lang knew Paladino was a sheep obeying orders without question. On the other hand

PART TWO

The 70's

A MOTLEY CREW

I had worked out vigorously at a local gym for several weeks anticipating
The heat of the morning, too damn hot for a spring day in this part of the country
After taking the oath to uphold the law in 1970, even though I was ready, willing
VILLAGE OF LANCHESTER COMMONS POLICE RULES AND REGULATIONS HANDBOOK
I received a copy from Sergeant Phil Zallinger. A bug eyed, red faced obesity of
One thing that ate at me the most after passing the written exam; I was expected t
I thought it was me at first; long curly black hair and all. Maybe it was the way
Two months after the tragedy, shortly after receiving notification that the state

During a week of traffic control training in the middle of a busy intersection, I Officer Kellogg never removed his police hat. At five foot nine, the hat gave Kellogg Bound to become a professional home maker from birth, Andy's wife Angel of five years. At seven thirty that night we were dispatched to investigate a possible break in a window.

"What's that?" I asked, checking the weapon in my shiny new holster.

"I said; I hate going on these fucking basement calls! Great way to end up in jail."

Several minutes that felt like an hour ticked by since Andy had been swallowed into the darkness.

"Andy?"

"Get your ass down here rookie!" Andy snapped. And whatever you do ... don't mess up.

Creeping through the darkness minutes later I peered over my shoulder and caught a glimpse of the hammer.

"I gotta tell 'ya bud. I never saw anyone move so fuck'n fast!"

"What the... Was this a joke? A set up?" Now, I know I have a good sense of humor.

"Easy bud, easy! This place was hit all right. I was surprised for a second that it was a real deal."

"Ah huh... Well, go ahead and have your laugh." I uttered, rubbing my chin.

Like I said; I've got a good sense of humor. But my chin was killing me and besides that, I found out that I passed my first test by not letting the hammer fall under pressure.

AN EYE FOR AN EYE

Some shifts were crammed with excitement that exploded into overtime running. A nor'easter was threatening to roll in one night. Kellogg had taken that evening off. Kellogg was careless this night giving permission to his small head to do the thing it wanted. On patrol earlier that evening, Sergeant Frank Carbone spotted the young groupie making out with the approaching storm less than an hour away Andy had positioned the cruiser in front of the Weiss's.

"Would you mind running that by me one more time, Mr. Weiss." Frank said.

Ten minutes after the Weiss's stormed out of headquarters unhinged by the lack of a hammer.

"Morning Sergeant. We stumbled upon your frequency on our scanner this morning."

"Huh? Nice of you guys to lend a hand." Carbone growled shoving his tremor into the Weiss's.

"Girl? What girl?" Skinny number two suddenly asked scratching a persistent itch.

Andy's sizzling lust hour in the apple orchid sizzled out immediately after discovering the Weiss's.

Mary Williams Beth's lanky legs were pulled up to her breasts in the fetal position.

Andy figured, although they were two consenting adults getting it on, he'd only be a minor.

After Andy was nabbed with the minor, besides losing his family and job, he faced a long prison sentence.

THE CABIN

A two story A&P supermarket was positioned in a shallow gorge near the west side of the town. The first time I succumbed to this directive I swore I'd never degrade myself with a woman. On Friday nights during the midnight to eight shift, the patrol would forage for trouble.

Frank Carbone enjoyed the handle Big! The moniker stuck with him well past his prime.

The metallic clattering of repetitious gunfire had stopped by the time I slid down the hill.

"Stop bust'n my fuck'n balls Tommy O'! You got to shoot that fuck'n rocket launcher." Schwartz growled.

"Rocket launcher. I asked, as I came around the side of the range brushing my shoulder against the hillside."

"What the fuck you doing back there Mike? Schwartz clamored.

"Had to take a wizz. Now... What's this about a rocket launcher?"

"Big mouth Schwartz!" O'Connor growled. You got a big fuck'n mouth boy."

I chuckled, enjoying the comedy act of O'Connor and Schwartz. What's the secret g...?

"That right!" Bob said. Mikes right 'ya know. And uh ... What the difference is between a rocket launcher and a bazooka?"

"Then you tell him !" Schwartz smirked, convinced he won the argument.

"Okay, Okay." Tom whimpered, still blowing on his blistered fingers. The difference is that a bazooka is a bazooka.

Everything was cool, and we were having a blast shooting the shit out of the target.

"A Bazooka." I questioned, wide eyed.

"Right! A Bazooka!" Well sort of. It was different then the one's you see on TV."

"It goes off? It was actually armed?"

"I mean to tell ya Mikey! Just like that! Va-fuck'n-room! Out flies this thing."

Trying to flick a snot-ball off the tip of his right finger, Schwartz chimes in.

"Ten!" O'Connor injects.

"Well it looked like more! Anyways... Frank tossed the thing into some lake."

O'Connor looked at Schwartz, then lowered his head wondering what he had done wrong.
"Alright big mouth, enough already!" O'Connor growled. You said more the
"Starting too." I answered, leaving my two drunken buddies to finish their
Some months later I discovered that the arsenal in Franks underground vault had a
I had become transfixed with the security camera partially hidden on the roof of the
A sudden weighty slap on my back startled me back into the here and now.
"Very much! Thanks for asking us up to your, uh ... bungalow."
"Bungalow! Very funny ... Ha ha. And if there's something you desire and desire
"Thanks, but I'm fine. Although I'll admit you've got one hell of a pond
"Secure? I call it comfortable. Ah. I see you're referring to the security
"Don't tell me you got security issues out here in stick-ville?"
Frank emptied the last ounce of Scotch from his cut crystal glass. Chuckling he a
"Right. Lost in the forest... It wouldn't have anything to do with some Baz
"Those rat bastards!" Frank snapped, smashing the expensive Irish glass a
"Like the time with the Bazooka?"
"You know my friend; if I didn't care for you I'd be showing you to your
"Like you did to those town officials?"
"Hey! Enough already! You were fed a line of shit by a couple of drunken
"So how much of it is bullshit Frank?"
"It's a small town rumor some local ass-wipe jet-nigger started in town.
"Truth would be good." I answered.
"Did you happen to see the antique machine gun those dick-wads were playin
"Discussion my ass! More likely they were fighting over the fuck'n thing
I chuckled, finding the whole state of affairs stupidly amusing. "Then I guess to
"Ain't the first; won't be the last!" Frank grinned. "Let me explain; O'
"So you're saying that this pilot just happened to single this place out?"
"Ya gonna let me finish the story! You know where the road is Bubba, if y
"Take it easy Sarge. You have my full attention."
"Anyway... " Frank huffed. "An hour after the fly over, half the town show
"Did they ever come back with the warrant?"
"Nope! Like I said. It was all bullshit!"
"Were charges ever brought against O'Connor?"
"Charges? Nope! None of them ass holes knew who did what. And since then

THE SHOOTER BLOOMBERG

At fifty-five, the chief's junior by ten years, Henry Bloomberg was the se
Several years later, Henry shot and maimed twenty-two year old Robert Barker. The
Several months after the incident, the Barker family left town after their civil s
C15/H15/N2/CON/(C2/H5/) 2. Lysergic Acid Diethylamide. Known on the street
In July of 1976 I met Freddie Barker. He was Robert Barker's sixteen year old whi
There was a one man taxi service in town owned and operated by Vincent Mad
On the way to pick up an early fair one morning, Vince was startled by a strange g
Although Freddy was abnormally large for his age, he was incapable of defe
Nearing two in the morning a week later on a Saturday night while off-duty I watch
"What . . . ? Who . . . ? What the fuck are you doing? Man, are you nuts!"
"C'mon man ... ya gotta be kidding! Don't ya know who you're fuck'n with?"
"Hey ... Goddamn it! Take it easy, will ya!" Don yelled as the hard metal
"You son of a bitch! You're dead meat motherfucker!" He gasped grabbing
The fat guy was really sweating now! "I want you to move your ass outside! And t
"You're insane man! Take it easy already! I'm going, I'm going!" Vendit
"Oh my God!" Don screamed. His ass cushioning his fall this time. He gr
A minute before the police dispatcher sent out a call to investigate a report of s
"No way." I replied.
"What the fuck's going on? Settle this shit after I drop him off. He ain
"Yeah. I know all right. He's my fucking prisoner!" I replied, shoving V
"Goddamn you Michael! If you've fucked things up ... " Henry snapped, plac
"Hey! Just a fuck'n minute ass hole!" I barked. It's a good bust! What

"Step back from the car! I'm taking Mr. Venditto to the ER. We'll talk a
As the unmarked car sped off with its red light reflecting off the surrounding bui
It was a few minutes past four in the morning when Henry stormed into HQ.
Thirty days after the arrest, the New York State Liquor Authority revoked Don Vend

HELENA AND THE COMMUTE

The sun was up almost an hour by the time morning relief drifted into head
I took a detour on the way into work the next night. I figured I'd better get an
As usual his majesty was late arriving to work. By mid-morning I wandered
After several years, the commute had become a burden. Particularly during the win
"For crying out loud yourself! Relax will 'ya babe! When has the weather
At first the ride down county was invigorating. It was the first ride of the seas
After breaking a few speed laws, I arrived at HQ twenty seven minutes later. By t
Twenty-five minutes later, the beginning of what felt like hypothermia hit me. It
Lesley had felt uneasy over my choice of careers. To be honest; I wasn't
John Paladino, the current police chief of Lanchester Commons, was a loud
While a rookie in the early forties, he was assigned to the motorcycle traffic div
Lanchester Commons, or for those in the know, 'The Commons', was incorpora
With its natural harbor on the Hudson River, by the turn of the century the town d
Charles Paladino, one of the original descendent's had been a police officer in th
Like a set of bad luggage I had grown accustomed to The Job as it became the only
Each ring became intensely irritating as the sound jolted me into consciou
"Why didn't you hang around this morning?" An irritated voice on the oppo
"Loud and clear! John. Uh... Chief." I replied as the words deep shit man
If I were going to get through this interrogation without jeopardizing my future,
As I entered the underground garage at HQ, I noticed Jay Pearlmans iridescent pear
As the elevator door opened onto the main floor I was greeted by the comedy act of
"Yeah right!" Schwartz intervened, scraping up two or three pennies off th
"Trouble? Tell me girls... who's here to protect me?"
As usual, shorty was hiding behind his massive desk when I entered the office. I
"Have a seat officer." Paladino gestured, pointing toward a straight back
"Before you say anything Mike." Paladino continued. "What's said in this
"I think it means to keep a secret, if I remember my history lessons. In
"You got it right wise ass! Now ... we need to go over a few details. We'
Good! Then I'll proceed. If you had any expectations about getting an attaboy, o
"Shut up!" The chief shrieked. Don't talk! Not one word Mike! In a few
What a flock of crap! Is what I immediately thought. Which unintentional
"Son? Ah, now I get it!" I said turning to the old man. Pearlman conti
"Office Diamondo. Let me first say some a-ting. If 'n you behave this wa
"No!" The old man shout grabbing hold of the henchman's' arm. Paladino s
"Goddamn you Diamond!" Paladino screamed mounting his enormous desk. "K
"In chains?" I smirked. Hysterical, waving his arms Paladino screamed at
Pearlman wasn't a coward. Nor was he stupid. As soon as the old man's bodyguard
"Listen Mike. Mr. Venditto will drop the charges as long as you agree to s
Realizing this 'witch-hunt' had been put together to blackmail me into dropping th
Bowling my head in defeat, I knelt in front of the old wise guy to apologize. "Don
On my way to the parking garage I wondered why the chief had referred to the old m
I met Katherine O' Riley during my first week at the Police Academy. Seve
"Hold up a minute will ya buddy!" I said, slightly out of breath as I app
The incident in the parking lot slid into the academy archives and the local court

COPS AND LOVERS

"I don't believe it!" She huffed, after running for the phone dripping we
After the academy skirmish, I did my best making sure our friendship didn't escala
"Come on ... I know somethings wrong Michael. Why don't you come over so
"Occasionally." I answered. In any case; what harm could a drink or two
Time had been her friend I thought as the warmth from my second martini settled in

"No comment!" I replied. Trying to remember if I were three or four mart
After the incident at the academy she had lost confidence in her profession and he
As I turned to leave she suddenly jumped me from behind gently biting my left ear.
As Lesley walked past the Harley, she could smell the heat radiating from the old

"Hi yourself. What u been up to dear?" She asked. I realized she k

THE PROPOSITION

A few minutes after exiting my car in the underground garage at HQ, I sens

"Then talk to me big guy! What are doing down here and what do ya want?"

"Do yourself a favor kid!" The big man's voice crackled firmly focused on

"Are you threatening me Frank?"

"C'mon kid. Give it a fuck'n rest! I'm telling you as a friend that you'
Franks warning got my attention for sure. But, something just didn't seem right.

"Okay Okay you crazy bastard!" Frank bellowed, shielding himself with his

"My first bust? If your referring to the one at the academy, what about i

"You turned it over to that broad in the sheriffs department believing it

"What? How the hell would you know that? That record was sealed!"

"Yeah right! Sealed my ass. That's a fuck'n joke and a half!"

"Besides, what's she got to do with any of this Frank?"

"How about the name Minuto, Mike. Does the name Minuto ring a bell in you

"Stop talking in fucking riddles Frank! I imagine you know it belongs to

"The point is; the shit-head's full name is Arthur Minuto Paladino!"

"He's related to the chief?"

"Bingo! Good on 'ya mate! He's the chiefs nephew. Since he's got a rap

"Their connected? You're telling me the departments being run by organiz

"Well, I don't know how organized they really are smart ass." Frank chuck

"Shit! I... "

"Right! Now you know why your balls were getting busted from the first da
Much of what Frank disclosed was overwhelming, knocking some of the wind out of my

"Lets get something perfectly clear sonny boy. I'm here on my own. I don

As soon as the big man was out of ear shot I uttered. "Fuck you Frank! Fuck you a

DIAMOND IN THE KEYS

As a potpourri of translucent colors reflected off the ocean's surface, co

It had been too many years since our last vacation and I could feel Lesley

"Uh huh. Well, don't forget to check in once you get settled. I like to

"Right chief!" And go fuck yourself while you're at it! I didn't actuall
Lesley had some minor difficulty getting time off on such short notice. But event

Thirty minutes after renting a car at Miami International the following af

We snorkeled at John Pennekamp State Park in Key Largo, got shit faced at the Tiki

A week later, Lesley mentioned something about wishing this fantasy could go on fo

Soon after the Diamondo family started to export olive oil into America, a bantamw

As unfortunate as it was that my mother died while giving birth to my sad ass, it

Lesley Scarpelli lived two streets away in the same neighborhood with her sister a

Janet Scarpelli was two years older than her sister Lesley and lived with her fath

I had been away from the old neighborhood for a couple of years after enli

Lesley had been waiting tables at The Pizza Warehouse owned by a pal of mine when

"In a couple of weeks." I remembered saying. "You said you lost family the

"I know the military isn't supposed to place family members in the same ou

"That's what's doesn't make sense. They weren't in the same branch. Mann

"Or won't admit it!" I chimed in. "There's an awful lot of crap the gene

"Joey, my youngest brother got shipped overseas right out of booth camp a

"I feel silly... foolish. People are staring." She blushed.

"Fuck em! Shit!—Sorry. " That got a chuckle out of her as she wiped her
I had originally dropped in to grab a quick bite, shoot the shit with an old buddy

"Only here to help ma'am." I replied. After persuading my 'ol buddy into

"Hmmm . . You said your father was one of the reason you enlisted. Wanna

"Maybe another time." I answered. "For now, lets just say we didn't agr

THE BROTHERS

Lesley couldn't get much sleep tonight as the faces of her brothers flooded
Manny was two days into his two week furlough waiting to hitch a ride out
"I tried reaching you several times sonny." Joseph Scarpelli interrupted.
"Well thanks for that Pop! He left? . . . Where to? - - - Don't tell me he
" Last I heard the Marines snatched him up. A jar-head ... God'damn! Mat
"Yes, God'damn! Especially since I came back this time purposely to make
That's the second time you mentioned the word war. What war? Nixon says
"Police action my ass! It's a fucking war that won't be over anytime soon,
Apparently, God wasn't listening, since the call to D.C. the next morning was in v
He was twelve, the first snow of winter was fresh on the ground. The brilliant wh
Later that evening, while watching the Ed Sullivan Show, Joseph Scarpelli was summ
After listening to dozens of propaganda adverts boasting; free room and board, a c
As the sweltering jungle heat intensified, Joey heard the whirring from the in-com
"Hard to fuck'n breath!" He gasped, as tears ran down his thin baby face.
Joey suddenly sat upright, mumbled something incomprehensible and gasped. His eye
At the time, the government agency in charge of death records in the war z
Manny had been thinking how inconsequential it was for a superior officer
After receiving word about Joey, Phil Scarpelli was able to get emergency
Even though Phil was older, wiser and bigger, the younger brother, for no apparent
Throughout flight school the aphorism was a constant reminder of his father, the m
It felt like an eternity since he visited the old neighborhood. Beside the increa
As he entered the musty urine scented hallway to the apartment, Phil was thrown ba
J

When we first met, I fell in love with your cute accent. You seemed to have a wo
PS By the way. you can keep them kids . You made them. all I did was carry the li
The letter went on to say that she had left with Alfredo Bonjuvonie. The landlord
"Theodore my boy!" Joseph cried as they left the station house. "You a g

VACATIONS WERE NEVER MEANT TO END

A prism of orange and gold sunlight danced across the cabin walls as the f
As I looked into the empty donut box, stuffing his face with a chocolate filled do
"You enjoy fucking with me, don't you son? You enjoy playing head games w
"That's disgusting! Where's this heading Chief?"
"Where's this heading? Where the fuck have you been? Your Virgin Island
"What do you got to say for yourself mister!"
"Whoa Chief! Settle down and let me explain." I said, transfixed on veins
"There was a maintenance issue with the original plane just before boardin
"Ah ha... so where did your luggage end up?"
"Luggage? Carry-on Chief... we only took carry-on."
"You're so full of shit. You got a major problem officer, that's what you
As I rounded a corner a couple of streets away from HQ later that evening, a blast
"Mike, you bastard! Where the hell have you been? I don't hear from you
"You had me worried sick, you bastard! I left a dozen messages on your an
"Uh ... No not yet. Shit! And I ... I didn't get a chance to explain our
"Vacation. . ? Relationship. . ? Don't flatter yourself buster! You had
"Take a breath will ya'! That kinda talk don't suit you. I'm trying to t
"You think? A bit late to worry about my ass now wouldn't you say?"
What could I say? I knew now that I shouldn't have dragged my friends ass into th
"Would another apology do?"
"Whatever Michael . . ! Now, about that info you needed. Interesting that
"Or something . . they are! And why am I not surprised that there wasn't
"I didn't ask!"
"Well I'll tell ya. Because the whole fucking force is corrupt!"
"Well, if you were so cocksure about this, why did you solicit my help?"

"Right, the money was good. Okay. Lets see where this goes, young lady."
"That's right! Then I wouldn't be here listening to this bullshit, would
"Before you think about jumping through that window young lady, safety gla
"Janet, how did you get involved in ... I mean, how did you choose your cur
"Profession? Is that what you call it? Ha! You're a laugh a minute ain't
"So you hated your father for leaving you alone. Or was it your mother?"
"My mother can go fuck herself, wherever she is. I only pray that she's d
"So you blame and hate Teddy for your fathers actions? Do you think he kn
"Enough already with all this hate crap okay! It's all so fuck'n confusin

After school one day school, him and some guy I hadn't seen around before were hav
I had never seen my old man that drunk before, or that excited about something.
I was introduced to another so called friend on my seventeenth birthday. My easie
But the beast had an enormous dong! And God ... oh my, was it hard! But, I don't

"Sooooo... I meet this really rich good look'n fella at a pub one night.
"Is that when you tried to kill yourself?"
"Hey! We're not going there today, okay! Besides, I think I flapped my g
"You don't give up so easy, do you doc? I might tell you after awhile. N
"I... I'm not involved—"

"Okay then lighten up sweet lips. Relax okay? If you wanna' hear a good
"A fucking story?" The psychiatrist replied red faced, his attempt to be
"Cute! Very good! Now listen up doc! One morning while cruising Central
asks me what I seen. And once again I tell him. An hour later I'm standing in fro
"Okay... Okay! I say." So I tell it to him like this!

"I seen a man with his pants down below his knees, and his balls were swin
The psychiatrist stared into space for several seconds, open mouth, feeling stupid

"A humorous road to recovery huh? Will see about that doctor." Janet rep
"You're look'n swell yourself sweet lips. But how bout doing me a favor s
"You are a persistent little bugger, ain't ya! Listen doc, I told you mor
"I'm... I'm sorry about that Janet. You said lover... you're referring to—
"My father!"

"And how does that make you feel?"
"Makes me feel? You blaming me for the way my life's turned out? I'm not
"Janet, I'm not accusing you of anything. There are issues in your past t
"What the fuck are you talking about doc? I told ya', I ain't upset about
"Important in what way?"

"Well... a few days ago I came across it again. I came home to find the ol
"Your fathers new friend? The one that called you a Madonna?"

"Friend my ass! I did some check'n after I seen his name in the book. Wa
"The Westchester County drug lord?"

"None other! So I doubt he'd appreciate seeing his name recorded in a jou
"I guess I'm starting to understand Jan. But, what I don't understand is

"Maybe. The old bastard also used the journal for booking and recording e
"And... ? Who will care ... ah, the IRS!"

"You are a smart one ain't ya doc? Yes the fucking IRS! The last thing I
"I see. Now I understand your dilemma . Where's the book now?"

"Well, things got a bit loud after I made the discovery. With the journal
"Mailed it to—"

"Lesley! The one married to the pig!T

TEDDY AND THE FAMILY

Weather permitting, Ted Scarpelli would stop whatever he was doing and dri
Bruce Muller was a striving photographer shooting uninteresting tourist photo's on
One afternoon while reminiscing about the unpleasant life he left behind, random

BACK AT THE PARTY

After the big guy stepped in, putting an end to what could have been an em
"Feeling better, dear?"

"Fresh as a daisy, dear!" I groaned.

"Listen Michael, I'm certain we've been followed ever since we left the pa
"We'll... no one there now." I replied. "Are you sure?" That reply didn
"Goddamn it Mike. I'm not paranoid! It was the same black truck that was
"Well its not there now honey! Hurry home will ya. I got a killer of a
When my day started this morning I decided I was going to make a solid effort to t

THOMASVILLE

"C'mon lets get inside! Enough already about being followed. I'm exhaus
"I want to make certain there's no one behind us Michael!" My lovely brid
"You need to take an immediate leave from work and get away from here and
Within forty minutes Lesley called into work, quit her job, tossed a weeks supply
Officer Jimmy Bracket heard the distant exhaust as well, listening to the morning
Not surprised, a massive stainless steel padlock now hung from the cabin door, alo
I stumbled out of the grave, dry-heaved again and took a full mouthful from the fl
By 8:45 that morning, I was standing on Kathy's doorstep. Although her car was pa
"Whoa Kathy... Easy girl!" I chuckled pinching my nose. Her heart pound
"Love fumes, my dear." I covetously replied.
"Hey, screw you buddy! You didn't want any when I offered it. How dare y
"I seen your car parked downstairs and knew you were home. When you didn'
"Go on get!" Kathy smiled, exposing two hard pink nipples. "Get out I sa
"Now, let's see if I understand what you're asking. You've got someone's
"This isn't a joke Kathy. Shit, I know you don't keep any food in there.
"Doll, I love you. But there ain't no fuck'n way in hell you're putting a
"Stop it Kathy, I realize it's a lot to ask! I can't go home. I'm certa
"Your friends a her, I see. And were will you be staying tonight?"
Since I was asking a really big favor here, I figured it best not to tell Kathy th
"Why not stay here and make passionate maddening love to me big boy? I co
"Nice talk! Real lady like. I told you before, why ruin a perfect—"
"I know, I know! Friendship!"

It seems like every friend I have, or had, have been good drinking partners at one
The second attempt didn't go that well. A shotgun welding crazy-man crashed throu
"Before you ask, no! I'm not related to the actress." She chuckled.
"I'll bet you get a lot of ribbing about it." I chuckled, but couldn't he
"My apologies, if I make you feel uncomfortable." She replied raising her
"Uncle Buzzy? Dumbfounded, I couldn't think of a decent comeback as we bo
After spending an uneventful night on the boat with my wife, It was time I
"Michael, is that you out there?"
"Hi honey, I'm home." I replied, under the scrutiny of raised eyebrows.
"Come ahead, Mike. Second door on your left. Just follow the aroma to th
"I don't care who you're here to see buddy." Square badge jeered. "You'r
"Yea, yea, thanks for bringing that to my attention Lieutenant."
Jane's workplace was far from being humble. If she needed funding for a special p
"Damn it stinks in here!" I said cupping my hand over my face.
"Nice to see you too officer." She replied, unamused. "What brings you t
"Uh-oh, didn't mean to offend. You're used to the stink." I answered, gi
"Janie girl, I need a favor." Other then leaving out a few incidentals, l
"You chopped off this poor bastards head with a shovel?" She said grimaci
"Ha ha. Go ahead, bust 'em kid. Seriously Janey, this is serious stuff.
"Christ! You don't ask much do you honey! I'll tell you what.. when I'm d
Lesley had been living aboard Material Things for a week and a half. I c
Working on her off hours, it took Jane a few weeks to complete the reconst
"Did you happen to read any newspapers over the past few weeks Mike?"
"What'd I miss out on?"
"Are you aware that an officer's been missing from your department for qui
"What are you talking about girl? There's a couple guys out on holiday.
"Apparently you weren't that close to this guy, or you would have known he
"Who are you talking... holy shit! Un-fucking believable! Jane honey, you

"Uh huh. What else are you trying to squeeze out of me?" I placed my hand on Michael's shoulder.
"C'mon Michael, that's not fair."

"I mean it Jane! I think I know who did this, especially since this guy's been crying out loud, I'm a county official Mike! Keep something like this a secret. Gosh! I thought you'd be able to handle our secret a little better than I did. And what woods would that be?"

I was hiding in my usual booth in the back of the Village Diner halfway through my lunch.
"I came by to say howdy. Is that all right?"
"Uh huh. What can I do you for?"
"You've been on the job, what ... several years now? Tell me something ..."
"Oh boy ... here it comes!"
"Who do you trust? After this much time on the job, who do you trust in town?"
"You know, you're about as inconsiderate as some of these fucking locals."
"Listen up bubba. There may come a time when you won't be able to handle this. Another warning! Aren't you sweet. So I should trust you with my life."
"What's with the jerk-off attitude? Listen to me! If I didn't give a shit about you, I wouldn't be here."
"Well, since you know so much about my movements, let me ask you; who do you trust?"
"Me . . ? Not a soul kid! Not a fuck'n soul."

SHE NEVER LISTENS

Living aboard the boat was too confining, too peaceful and uneventful for Lesley.
"Janet?" Lesley panted after running for the phone. "Jan? Is it really you?"
"Did you get a package in the mail lately?"
"Janet! I haven't heard from you in ages and the first thing you ask about is a package?"
"Did you read it?"
"Listen sis, I just got in. The package was sitting behind the screen door. Toss it in the trash. Now!"
"Christ-sake Janet, calm down! What's going on?"
"Toss it... Lesley... is it too late... too late to say I'm sorry for being jealous?"
"Christ-sake you're talking in riddles. And no of course not. It's never going to happen."
"Lunch then, okay? Can you do lunch today?"
"I'd love to! Mind coming here? I haven't been home in ages and need to see you."
"How's bout Victors on Madison Avenue instead? Just like the old days."
"Still afraid of Mike I see. Honestly Jan, he would never do anything to me."
"Afraid? I'm not afraid of Mike. I'm more... well... embarrassed, ashamed."
"Alright already! Sounds like fun. See you around noon sis."
"Great! Oh, and Les... if your not going to get rid of it, would you mind taking it to the boat?"
During the sixties, Victors on lower Madison Avenue was the in place to dine at.
"Are you sure this is Victors?" Lesley questioned as the cabby pulled near the boat.
"This is the only Victors anything in this neighborhood lady." The mid-easterner smiled.
She had celebrated her sweet sixteen birthday here. A surprise party given to her by her father.
"My God, you look great!" A familiar voice cried out in the crowded barroom.
"Yeah. Thanks heaps sis. You're looking pretty swell yourself."
After several chardonnays during and after dinner, the sisters shared some of the wine.
"For heavens sake! He's got his ass involved in something bad and you ain't doing anything about it!"
"I was going bug-fuck on the boat Jan. Plus the freak'n clanging from the boat."
"I wouldn't know." Janet frowned.
"I guess your right. I shouldn't have at least checked in with Mike first."
"Listen sis. Why don't you stay at my place for awhile. You'll be safe there."
"That would be great. Honest!" Lesley smiled. But uh, well... what about the boat?
"Shit sister, that's the number one rule I've never broken since moving out. Don't break the rules."
"That's it then! I'd love to see how I'd look in some of your stuff. You know what I mean?"
"Oh, by the way... did you happen to bring that package?"
"Damn it! I knew there was something I forgot. Sorry sis, I left it on the boat."
"No problem. We'll just swing by and pick it up on the way to my place."
I had been waiting for Lesley below deck for quite awhile, agonizing over

Behind the bar overlooking the harbor entrance was a large picture window surrounding the bar. "You're really starting to piss me - - - worry me!" I screamed into the phone. "Jimmy?" I asked, shouting over the obnoxious sound blaring from the jukebox. "Who? Diamond? Oh for Christ sake! I'm just—" "Hope I didn't wake you Jim. Listen up will ya champ. Have you seen my old lady? Lesley? Naw, I ain't seen Les... your ol' lady for awhile. Why? Should I care? Damn! This guys pissed! I thought. "Gee ... I'm sorry Jimmy. I guess I'm a hollow black rock? How will I know which rock is hollow?" "Jimbo, All the rest of the rocks are white!" "Oh! Uh huh. Okay then. Let me check on your ol lady. Give me your number." "What'd you find out Jimmy?" "Have you been drinking?" "James!" "Okay already. Hey, did you know your wife keeps one heck of a tidy house?" "Very funny Jimbo. I guess that means she's not there." "Naw, nobody home. But you had better let some fresh air into your place. Well ... Thanks anyway Parka. If you do happen to see Lesley, would you pass my love to her? Marina? Is that part of your assignment? What marina?" "Lesley will understand. Do me this favor okay?" "Undercover stuff huh? Okay I understand. It's not my problem if you kidnap her. I said I'd consider selling it to you when I was tired of it! Thanks again." "Whoa! Not so fast chum! I'm very interested." "In what?" "In that motor bike of yours sonny." "I didn't know you ride. I hardly ever see you leave the house. Besides, you can't ride! Ride! Me? Shit sonny, I wouldn't get on one of them death traps. I want to see you ride. I didn't have a clue to Lesley's whereabouts. Since I didn't get any news, good or bad, my sober conscience told me to sleep it off and stay aboard. But, my drunken conscience told me to call her. I arrived at the estate with the moon hiding behind cumulus clouds just before midnight. It was just past two in the morning when I came to. Fortunately, the bleeding and

THE SISTERS

As the siblings consumed several cordials once back at Janet's place, she asked me, "I know exactly what you mean!" Lesley frowned, looking down at her set of teeth. "Something else seems to be eating at me lately too. I've no idea why but I'm a little nutty." "Nutty? Not at all Jan. Strange for sure. Especially since Teddy's also a little nutty." "Uh ... Lesley. I'm very selective giving my number out. But, for you ... When Lesley didn't get an answer at home, besides leaving her sisters unlisted numbers, she called me. "Well... Mrs. Diamond! Hello. How have you been?" Paladino queried. His eyes were on the phone. "Uh ... swell John. I'm looking for my husband." "Mike? He phoned in sick at 5:30 this morning according to the roll call." "I've been out of town!" Lesley replied, slamming the receiver down. "F

LOOKING FOR LESLEY

By day break a gray sky accompanied with strong gusty winds loomed over the harbor. Soaked to the bone and hungover, I ran out of patience and left. Beside, my intuition told me I couldn't keep my eyes open any longer and crawled into the back of the CJ drifting down the harbor. "Gad-Zukes son!" The little man wheezed, grabbing his chest. "Phew. Y'all was just passing through." I replied, chuckling at the sight of the anxious man. "Don't mind a bit sonny. Car trouble huh? Sorry ta' hear that. Need a mechanic?" "Thanks a heap mister." I replied, mimicking the barkeep. Although, I see you're a mechanic. "One thing fur sure sonny ... " The little man smiled. Got the best vittles in the county. "Uh... Marconi! I go by Malcolm Marconi. Just on my way back down county." "Uh huh ... I see. You one of them I-Tie fellas?" "I-Ties? You mean Italian? That's not a problem... Is it?" "Nope! Ain't got nothing' against you folk. Y'all seem likable nuff. Juuust a little big." "Big fella?"

"He don't come round much. But when he does ... well ... jus' forget it.
"Live around here all your life?" I asked. Gabby didn't seem to hear my q
"Dew!" The old man shout. Dexter Dew ... Jus like the sign out front says
"Slick alright!" I answered. For Christmas sake, these people did exist!
"Been here all my life sonny. Never been anywhere else, no reason to leav
"You should visit Key West, Florida." I smiled. A real slice of heaven."
"Key West? Sheet sonny, I here they ain't got nothing but steers and que
"Taint true Dexter. No steers there at all. Tell me sir... you must know
"Well, they tell me sometimes I knows things before they even happen." Th
"No one in particular." I answered. "Guess I'm just a nosy 'ol cuss. He
"Hell boy! Is goose shit slick on a linoleum floor?" Gabby chuckled. Lo
"Ready for another round boy?" Since I had no idea how much this old buzz
"Dewey Baby!" I slurred. Where's your head?"
"Ah... a navy man huh? Straight on back the other side of that there pool
"What can I say pops! What can I say." As soon as I reached the John I s
"Hey Dewey!" I shout from the other side of the pool table a room away, t
"Pay up sonny boy!" The old man giggled filling two shot glasses. Or, th
"Why's that Dexter?"
"Nuff said sonny!"
"Come on Dex, loosen up! Have another drink on me." I grinned trying to
"Uh ... tell ya what sonny. You made my days wages so I'll be lock'n up fi
"Whoa, Dexter!" I hollered as I raised my hands over my head What's this
"You one of them ain't ya?" The old man scowled. "You folks been sneak'n
"What the hell are you talking about?"
"You know 'xactly what I'm talk'n bout sonny! You one of them commie bast
"Dexter, Listen to me! I don't know what the hell you're squawking about!
"I don't believe I wanna do that sonny! Now, why don't 'ya just have a se
"Dexter! Please take my wallet out of my back pocket and look in it befor
"I ain't fool enough to fall for that ol trick sonny. You fellas are trai
"For crying out loud Dexter! What in the fuck are you rambling on about?
"Stop trying to bamboozle me sonny boy! I saw it on the TV just how you f
"A quiz? You're giving me a baseball quiz? Well ... I guess you'd better
"I knew it!" the old man raved, suddenly jumping up and down waving his g

THE MONEY DROP

Big Frank Carbone stood at Parade rest, scarcely able to interlock his fi
"Goddamn you Frank! I'm ordering you to think!" The chief persisted. "W
"I've already told you. I don't recall, John. Uh ... chief. Well... not e
"Don't fuck with me mister!" Paladino warned looking up at the towering g
"We all know to much about one another don't we John!" Frank taunted. "M
"I don't even want to think about shit like that Frank. But then again, a
"I'm not certain I agree with you on that John. The boys got too much mon
"The oath?" Paladino coughed. Are you referring to sub-Rosa, the three o
"There were fourteen assholes Frank. But who's counting. Just remember C
"Oh... ? Don't start getting righteous on me after all this time. And don'
"Listen Frank ... We shouldn't be getting at each other like this. What's
"Well neither am I! So lets find Tommy no matter what it takes. As far a
"You mean the three of us don't you? What about Arty your nephew?" Frank
Big Frank left the office cocksure the chief had bought his act. Frank didn't giv
Shortly after Helena's husbands murder, she had approached Paladino with s
Shortly after Joe's murder, for a change of scenery she had taken a train trip int

VANISHING TOM

A bit dimwitted during the best of times, O'Connor had a desire to acquire power a
Greeting O'Connor with her usual smile, she ushered him into the parlor. "So nice
"I'm sure you know why I'm here Mrs. H."
"I understand completely Thomas. Don't you worry your little head over th

"Well... okay, if you say it's alright then. But, I still feel kinda awkward."
"Well, just how much did the chief think I would sell that something for?"
"Please ma'am ... I don't know from nothing." O'Connor blushed. "I'm just
"You drive a hard bargain Thomas. I guess that settles it then. But first
"Yes, I remember, Mrs. H." Tom smiled. Pleased that he didn't have to go
"By the way young Tom." Helena asked, as she placed the imported English
"I ... I don't really know ma'am." O'Connor lied. "Some type of coaxing
"Uh Huh." Helena smiled, knowing the young henchman would be the one to p
Helena emerged from the kitchen a short time later balancing a tray of sugar cooki
"Yum! These cookies are great ma'am." O'Connor smiled. Going on to say
"Young man, don't worry yourself any further. You'll make yourself sick i
"Now that you mentioned it. Tastes a little ... nutty?" Tom replied. Sud

A CONFESSION TO THE BIG GUY

After Helena explained how his biological parents were killed and that he
Just after her husband Joe's murder, having her suspicions who was behind the deed
Relying on a few of Joe's past connections, Frank advanced to sergeant quickly. A
"Did you understand anything I told you son?" Helena asked. "I don't bel
"This is incredible... an unbelievable tail Mom." Frank said. No sure wha
fabricated by the women who raised me and loved me like her son. He thought. For
"How did Joe die Mom?"
"A year after the conspiracy, a package came in the mail. From a top floo
"Do they suspect the Nazi that got away?"
"It looked that way. Naturally, the post office didn't have a record wher
"Charles?" Frank asked. Charles Paladino! The chiefs father?"
"The same." Helena replied, knowing her son would lash-out in retaliation
"Which leads us to poor ol Tommy O'Connor lying on your floor I'll bet."
"John Paladino had substantial evidence linking Joe with the conspiracy th
"Wooden cases?"
"Cases that held weapons that they were bringing upstate. Wooden cases wi
"Does John know about the money?"
"I'm almost sure. Why?"
"I don't believe John's concerned about that journal, or some old photos."
"Now that I think if it. He never let on about the money. You may be righ
"Well... no matter what come out of this Mom. I'll always be your son." F
Apparently Dexter Dew was easily intimidated by authority. After I was finally ab
"Special Investigator." I replied. "On special assignment for the govern
"Like a safety pin sir! Yes sir... like a safety pin!" Dexter replied, s
"Good! At ease soldier." I snickered. "Now... let me have the details ab
"Who's Carbone?"
"The fat I-Tie. Wise ass!" I snapped. "Playtime's over! Don't fuck with
"It's like I told ya already sonny. There was an invasion not far from he
"Funny, but my history teachers never mentioned anything about an invasion
"Dunno bout your history class." Dexter said, scratching his head. "But,
"Army building?"
"Ain't ya listening to what I'm telling ya sonny? The building I jus' tol
"That's a hell of a fairy tail Dexter." I said, knowing there was some tr
"Well, rumor had it that them explosives original came from the fat mans p
"Lady?"
"Yep. I only seen her one time. She was a sweetheart of a thing. Don't
"Would you remember when she arrived Dex?"
"I don't rightly remember son. But, it wasn't too long after all that fow
"Were there any children with the lady? A boy perhaps?"
"By golly, she did have a young'n! A baby boy. Ya know, for a fella that
"You done good and served your country proud today Mr. Dew." I replied, st
"Hold on a minute will ya young fella. Some'tin just came to mind. I plu
"Uh huh. Anything else you may have forgotten to tell me before I leave t

"No Sir! Like I said, didn't need nobody snooping round. I hope I ain't
"No trouble Dexter. Just point the way to town hall will ya."

I spent the better part of ten minutes persuading Melinda Charmers, the town clerk
"Mrs. Charmers, I do apologize for the inconvenience" I smiled, flashing
"It's Melinda... Miss Charmers. You're welcome." She replied blushing.
"Miss Melinda, I'd appreciate anything you can do. You see, my family sp
"Hallelujah!" I shout, wiping away an imaginary tear.
"Amen! Praise the Lord!" Melinda rejoiced.

"Melinda my dear, if you won't get into trouble," I smiled, "I'd be more
The records room was nothing more then an abandoned over-sized bathroom in the ba
"See mister. What'd I tell ya. This place is filthy! I hate coming down
"'Scuse me mister. But, I'm outta here!" She snorted, sprinting the stai
"Shut the light off when you through!" A voice from the top of the stairs
An hour of digging, stacking dusty papers didn't produce anything. I was about to
Beneath the article was a photograph of a young beady eyed pasty faced man, dresse
After another unsuccessful attempt to contact Lesley from the pay phone in Thomasv
Figuring I could dig under the back wall of the cabin to gain entry without rippin

TEDDY... HOME AGAIN

During the month of June, the weather in Southern California may be the re
During almost any day in the week, John F. Kennedy International Airport w
"Ya gotta be kid'n me Mack!" The cabby chuckled. "Can't ya see what's go
"Then just drop me off anywhere in mid-town. I'll take the subway from."
"Harlem! Now 'ya want I should take ya to down to Spanish Harlem!"
"What's the problem? Ain't my money good enough for you?"
"Guess ya been outta touch for awhile huh bub? Not the nicest of neighborh
While waiting at the bar for table to become available, he managed to ingest three
"And how is Juan this evening?" The sultry voice asked.
"Very well! Ms. Scarpelli. Thanks for asking" The maitre'd replied. "As
" Naw ... No, not tonight Juan. Doing my own thing, sorry to say."
"Janet?" Ted asked, as he turned to look at the familiar voice. "Janet!"
"Scarpelli!" Suddenly blared over the intercom. "Scarpelli. Table for o
"Oh? Really? Nothing more?"
"To tell you the truth sis ... I don't know what the hell I'm doing here.
"When's the last time you had something to eat mister?" Janet chuckled.
"So tell me big brother. What really brings you to New York. Business?
"Other then what I told you, there's nothing else to say. Besides, who's
"You were explaining the real reason you came back."
"Oh, right! I'm back because I was ... compelled to come back by an outsid
"Ah ha! Well... alright then. That explains it all! Maybe you'll rememb
"Actually, no. I came directly from the mess at the airport. Me and my o
"What say you hang at my place for a few days? We can chit-chat about old
"Don't really look at that shit, sis. I just hang around wait'n for them
"Well brother. After you see the spread they did about you and your work,
"Well what do you know about that!" He chuckled. "Alright then... Enough
"I ... I can't believe there gone!" Ted wept, after Janet explained what
"Teddy ... Honey. It was a long time ago. Let it go." Janet whispered a

THE CONFRONTATION

"Fuck'n A!" Big Frank roared after discovering tire tracks behind the big
Frank started thinking, maybe his relationship with the young officer should end.
As an approaching storm grew near, the forest became filled with unidentif
"Hello big guy!" I shout over the sound of the rainfall, tossing the shin
"Fuck you wise ass! He grumbled. "I figured it was just a matter of time
"For fuck's sake, knock it off Mike!" Frank demanded, as I reloaded. I'm
"Then throw that fuck'n space gun towards me and show yourself! Just be s
"Easy Michael. Easy. I'm hurt'n! Where are you?"

"Just keep walking fatso. I'll tell you when to stop" I trembled. Knowi
"Come on scumbag!" Frank cried. Give me a fuck'n hand will ya. I don't
"Eat shit Frank! You tried to vaporize me with that ray gun! Climb outta
"C'mon Mike!" Give me a hand before I bleed to death!" The big guy pleade
"First; your gonna tell me what's the fucks been going on; or drop-dead wh
"Okay... okay! Ya beat me kid! Get us back to the cabin and you got my wo
"Oh Lord. I'm dying... dying!" Frank cried, attempting to see the wound
"Ah, stop your bitch'n." I replied in a horse voice, plucking mud out of
"How much do you think know already?" Frank asked, crawling over to the f
"Well I know that Tom O'Connor is buried in a hole out back alongside som
"Ah, you found old Tom then. What'd ya think?"
"Think? I think you whacked Tom then buried him in that hole not to far f
"Headless! You mean faceless."
"No... headless Frank. At the time I made my discovery, I needed to find o
"So you chopped off his head! " Frank heaved. "You're one gruesome mother
"That's a laugh! You blow his face off and you call me gruesome!"
"Listen and learn." The big guy said. I did what I did to hide his ident
"Someone named Thompson." I replied. "At least that's what was engraved
"Jack-shit son! I don't know a thing about your Mr. Thompson. You seem t
"Haven't worked that one out yet Frank. But, with your help, I'm certain
"Fuck off kid! I'm not gonna stand for this shit. I already told you.
"Uh huh. Well Frank, it's apparent you ain't gonna give me the info I'm l
"I wouldn't try that Michael. You're really starting to piss me off!"
"Really? Okay then think of it this way. You got two choices. You eithe
"Goddamn it Mike. I don't deserve this! I really liked you." Frank whim
"Mike, I ain't got the foggiest idea what the hell you're talking about!
"And when was that Frank? When!" I shout.
"Take it easy will ya! I didn't talk to her, John did. He wished her wel
"Okay Frank, conversations over. Gotta go. Thanks for nothing." I said,
"Okay. . Okay. Just hold on one Goddamn minute will ya! I'll go down on
"Yeah, matter of fact! Lesley tells me that all the time. Oh, and just i

THE MARINA

Lesley decided to return to the marina hoping to catch up with her husband
"He left 'bout an hour ago Missy" The bartender replied after Lesley didn
"Hey honey! After ya catch up with him, tell that ol man of yours to stop
"I'll do that Jimmy." She replied, waving goodbye without looking back.
Startled by a faint knock at the front door, thinking it was Mike, she ran to gree
"Oh... Your home. Hi Lesley." The startled Perkins announced.
"It's Mrs. Diamond!"
"Oh... Yes. My apologies. I... I... just wanted to tell you that your husba
"Pardon me? Would you care to start over again." Lesley huffed. " Did h
"Uh, nope! No message. He phoned asking me to check out the place and to
"Uh huh!" ... Well then... Must be going." Lesley replied, shutting the do
"Lesley... are you there?"
"Mike honey! Where are you?"
"I'm right here! Investigating! Where I've always been... But, where the
"That's what I love about you Michael. You're such a romantic. I'm fine
"In Thomasville. Now... would you please listen to me this time and go bac
"I see you're making yourself nuts again. No one's been around or bothere
"Uh huh. So what the hell's it gonna take for you to believe me when I sa
"Listen to me! You forget I got a career too?" Lesley screamed. "With w
"Psst! . . Dex!" I whispered from the darkness. "Put that cannon down w
"Gadzukes!" Dexter replied, holding his breath. Gads, ya stink some-tin
"Yea... just peachy Dexter. Thanks for asking." I frowned, picking dried
"Compliments from Mr. Dexter Dew of the Dew Drop Inn sonny. I know I shou
The glow of the lantern was still bright enough to temporarily blind Frank as he c

"Ah stop your bitch'n! I see you're still alive." I said, handing over D
"It'll warm you up and help cool down your disposition."

"I see you ruined my fuck'n foundation." Frank gestured, pointing to the
"What'd 'ya say we knock off the bullshit Mike. Are you gonna turn me i
"Convince me not to."

"You know kiddo... I could have taken you out at the clearing if I didn't
"Right!" I smirked. "Now your gonna tell me you missed on purpose."

"You got that right pal! I could have set them projectiles to your body h
"You're assuming that Mike. John reports to someone. That much I know.

"Let's go back to the part about O'Connor." I asked. "You said you took
"You're to fuck'n much kid! To fuck'n much. Got any more ideas up your s

"Outta ideas Frank. But, I'm going to give you a couple of choices to pick
Instead of enlisting outside help to find O'Connor, John Paladino decided

Lesley was rarely coerced into doing anything against her will. In this case howe
"Will do sweetie." The neighbor replied sardonically. "By the bye. Do y

"Listen up, Jim! There's nothing wrong going on here, okay! Mikes on spe

"Ah... Well... When you do catch up with mister wonderful, find out when he
John was in his office earlier then usual the next day and the missing men's where

"Know him? Shit... we're practically brothers. Bikers we are. Pretty big

"Uh ... I'm sorry, but I don't quite understand." Realizing he may have sa

"Tell me Mr... ?" John asked, ignoring the question.

"Jim Parka's the name."

"Tell me Mr. uh . . Perkins, did either one of the Diamonds tell you were

"Parka! The names Parka! The marina I believe. That what she said."

"She meaning Mrs. Diamond? How about Mike. Have you seen him lately?"

"Well, lets see. Mike was here. Then left. Then he phoned and a short t

"The Diamonds are going on a cruise? Would you know what ship?"

Parka chuckled replying in a dry tone. "No... no cruise line. They got a boat pa
This guys a raving lunatic! John thought. "Mr. Park—Perkins. Would you be so k

"No problem. Uh ... By the way Governor. I never got your name."

"It's O'Connor. Chief Thomas O' Conner." Less then an hour later, John w

The day's headline flashed across the small on-board TV as Lesley sat back to enjo

THE DEATH OF MATERIAL THINGS

After picking up a few privy supplies at the local pharmacy, Lesley decide
A re-run of ' From Russia with love' was nearing its end when the explosion rocked
Convinced that the nuclear plant was having a melt down, a stampede ensued as ten
By the time she explained what had been going on in her life, her fear turned to a

"Calm down Lesley. Calm down!" Janet said not knowing what else to say.

"For Christ sake Jan, please! Don't patronize me. Boats just don't blow
John was watching TV in his easy chair grinning like a Cheshire cat, listening to

"Uh huh... Yes ma'am. That's right. The doc tells me I got this condition

"Can you tell me who they are sir?" Young Missy asked.

"My old boss. Burt... Burt Jenkins. He says I'll be good as new after a co

"Sir, May I ask. What facility or doctor diagnosed your condition?" The
Clicking-Click... Clicking-Click... Frustrated, John channeled surfed for additional

"Well Tom, at this time there is little speculation as to what actually ha

"No problem Tom. That was the location of the marina pub."

Clicking-Click... Clicking-Click... "And that concludes tonight's broadcast of Eye

FRIENDS AGAIN

Over the last few hours, Big Frank and I consumed the contents of the Bour

"Then I need to see the journal Frank." I replied burping up acidic liqui

"Only a couple of frozen TV dinners. But, I need some home cook'n sonny.

"That there's the fella I been telling ya 'bout sonny. The one that likes

"Hey! Fuck off old man!" Frank grumbled, pushing me aside as he walked t

"What gives Mike?" Frank asked. "You guy's ass-hole buddies or what?" L

"Celebrity huh? Well screw that celebrity crap." Frank scoffed. "Celebrity
After most was explained to Dexter about his neighbor down the road not the monster
"Put that money away sonny. T'aint no good in here. It's been an experience
"Relax Frank." I said before Frank had a chance to reply. "We're leaving
"Stay well sonny. By the way... whereabouts did ya say you were from down
"Lanchester Commons. Why?"
"Ah, pay me no mind then. There was some commotion on the TV 'bout a big
"Hold on a minute Dexter. What about Verplank?"
"Uh... some boat yard blew up or caught fire. Couple folks got themselves
"I wasn't completely honest with you at the cabin Frank. I didn't think I
"Keep flapp'n your gums big guy. Keep flapping them gums and I promise I
"Ever since I realized we were being watched, Lesley had been living on-b
Boat? Frank coiled. Hows about your ol lady? Ain't you concerned about
"Go fuck yourself!" I growled, sliding into the next curve at eighty.
"Aghh... You crazy bastard!" Frank coughed as Dexter's breakfast churned in
"Better swallow it Frank, 'cause I ain't slowing down." Except for the lo
"Rothschild sir, not Rothman. I am not a Jew! And since you both ignore
"Rude? Moi? And you sir, look very familiar!" Frank replied, rubbing hi
"Swiss actually, if it's any of your concern."
"And you call me rude?" Frank replied. Reaching for his his credentials,
"I received a phone call from the local fire chief this morning. Contrary
"Shit, what would two beat cops know about stuff like that?" Frank said.
"Bombs?" I said. "Forget about it! Wouldn't know one end of a fuse from
"Sounded more like a bribe to me bud." Amazingly, not only was the cooke
"Uh, did I wake you Jimmy?" Not waiting for a reply I asked, "I was wond
"Huh, that you Mike?" The sleepy neighbor asked. "Hold on a minute will
"Go easy Jimbo! You ain't seen my bad side yet. I'd advise against being
"Okay. Mike okay. I don't want to piss you off. The bike remember?"
"Goddamn you Jimmy!"
"Alright... alright. Last I knew, she said you two were going off on a much
"What big case?"
"I know. I know. I'm not supposed to know about it. Just like I told yo
"My boss? What the hell are you talking about? How the fuck would you k
"Didn't show me any ID if that's what you mean. Said he was your boss and
"Uh huh, that sounds like him alright." I replied. Wondering why he track
"Funny thing though, he didn't seem to know what big case you where workin
"Didn't tell him much. He just wanted to know where the marina was, that'
"Trouble? Will talk soon Jimmy. I owe you. And uh... sorry about disturbi
"What started?" Frank asked.
"Frank, I really need to see that journal. I just found out that the chie
"What about your ol lady? I mean, you don't seem to upset about her. You
"I'm not upset Frank. I believe ... let's just say I can feel that she's
"What makes you so confidant about this feeling you've got?"
"Lesley's car isn't anywhere around. Come on, let's get going! This pla
"It's Rothschild Mike." Frank chuckled. And the prick knows I'm onto him
"Yea, we sold the shit. But, I never cared to have it around. Reminded m
"Keep talk'n Frank, makes perfect sense to me."
"Man. After all this time to find out... "
"Pure conjecture big boy. You know you can't prove any of it."
"Speculating? You think I'm guessing about this? You got any doubt about
"You lost me."
"Do you believe Paladino is out to kill you and your wife?"
"Yes. I guess so."
"And I'm convinced that he's the killer of the father I never knew. I don
"Will see about that big guy. Right now I've got some calls to make. Righ
"Doctor?"
"Your bleeding again."

Doctor Jane Meadows was furious at me for more than a couple of reasons. I tracked
"What have you gotten me involved in Michael? Good God! If my boss finds
"Hey lady!" Frank shout. Go easy on the lad will ya. We're working a ca
"Right Sarge. We're working a case together."
"Michael, I think you've stretched our friendship as far as it will go."
"Tonight! Are you out of your frigging head? You show up whenever you wa
"Ah Kathy baby ... Come on hon. It ain't that difficult. You've got acce
"Ah ha... Tell me again. What's in it for me?"
"I'll buy you the biggest steak dinner in New York!"
"Dinner! Big deal. Sweetie, if I do this for you, I'll let you know what
"And your pleasure?"
"Oh, I think you know what will please me Michael. I want you my dear kni
"Let's call it what it really is then. Blackmail! I'll sleep on it alrig
"Nope! Not this time sweetie! We're done talking. That's the deal honey
"Will talk about it, I promise! Okay? I promise!" Gritting her teeth, K
"I promise we'll discuss your uh... compensation. Okay? Phone 'ya later...
"Don't know how this will end up Jane honey." I replied. "But, if I do s
"Anyone ever tell you that you're one sick puppy?" She frowned.
"Oh ... many many times my dear doctor." We shared some small talk for a m
"Coming right up sir." she smiled. "But, don't get to comfortable. You
No one seemed to mind Kathy working overtime. Ever since several departme
Kathy persisted on her quest searching the system for any photo of the mystery man

A PARTNERSHIP

It was a unorthodox relationship, feeding off one another to gain power an
The door bell rang just as Arty Paladino was coming out of the shower. Wrapped in
Arthur Paladino was convinced that he was Gods gift to women and men alike. Unlik
"Not over the phone nephew. And not yet!" John snapped. "I need to know
"This is bullshit! Uncle John... Besides, why am I asking your permission?
"Get a grip Arthur! Hasn't life been good to you so far? Come on. We do
"Yeah, right! Like the boat yard huh?"
"At least I warned you nephew. I don't know where the bastard is. Hopefu
"Yeah, yeah. Have it your way uncle! By the way; when am I going to meet
"Listen shit for brains, that's the way he wants it! And I'd watch my mou
"Yeah, yeah, uncle! Have it your way." He barked, slamming the phone dow
I was surprised when Kathy said she wasn't upset with me after I missed ph
The file and dated photo of the mysterious Gerber Lang was stashed under her bedro
I felt guilty about deceiving Kathy. The only purpose for my visit tonight was to
"I... I remember... oh my God Frank, Kathy's dead!" The sight of her bloodie
During my recovery over the next few days I met with Doctor Jane down at the morgu
"Executed? What makes you think it was an execution?"
"Remember when I said, it started back at the marina? Kathy had been work
I was overjoyed at first when Lesley finally made contact, explaining how she was
"Man. You stink!" Frank said, pulling me up the stairway towards the bath
"Are we feeling better now sonny?" Frank chuckled, insisting I finish my
"Ah good then... You're feeling better. That great! Now, feast your blood
"Yep. It's from Kathy alright. It's interesting evidence but I hardly be
"I knew he was no cop!" Frank said, sitting silently for a few minutes. "
"That fucking screwball Arty Paladino!"
"Non other." Frank replied.
"Are you involved in any of this Frank!" I questioned.
"Don't be an jerk! The guys nuts. I should've recognized the M.O. after
"And I thought I was doing her a favor" I said bowing my head. "By the w
"They didn't. You've got a few friends on the force that believe in you k
But now... after the boat yard blast and Kathy... Well... you've got my word I'll do
"I... Deal if that's the way you want to play it!" I replied holding out
"Well, there was Tom O' Conner. But he lost his head over it." Frank chu

Besides the journal and several old photographs showing numbered wooden crates, the
"Indictment?" I replied. "Not if I can help it."

GOOD NEWS TRAVELS SLOW

The door buzzer woke the three siblings simultaneously. Peering through the
"Ah... yes ma'am. I do know what time it is. For that, I do apologize" Ted
Janet opened the front door gazing at a man who she immediately knew she would like.
"My my. I do like a man that takes charge." Janet said blushing.
Red-faced he replied, "If y'all aren't familiar with the Navy Department's procedure
"I can't believe it!" Janet cried, hugging the bearer of good news.
"Unbelievable!" Teddy gleamed pulling Lesley to her feet. Be happy sis.
"I'm gonna fix us some drinks. Join us Lieutenant? Please." Ted beamed,
"Well, it's a tad early for me y'all. But, hey! Don't let me stop y'all
"Oh please John. Just one itty bitsy drinky poo?" Janet purred,
"Well then... why not! I'd be honored to share in your joy."
"Great!" Janet beamed, suddenly kissing the Lieutenant firmly on the lips
"God Bless America and its outstanding servicemen!" The lieutenant shout,
"God Bless Family!" Lesley cried, patting tears of joy with the back of her hand.
"If I can make the proper arrangements. And I'm sure I can. How do you feel?
"No kidding? Wow, for sure." All three beamed. "And I end up with a free
"Outstanding!" The lieutenant said, directing a separate smile towards Janet.
"Recovery? Has he been wounded?" Janet asked.
"He recovered from his crash in the jungle sometime ago ma'am. Then tortured
"Isn't that ironic ma'am." He smiled, pulling her towards him. "I was just
Frank knew Helena was stubborn. It wouldn't be an easy task convincing her to stay.
"Listen you stubborn ... It's the way it's has to be until it's safe for you
"Don't shoot son. It's Frank!"
"Come ahead pops. I knew it was you the minute you walked through the front
"I'm done with that Frank."
"How comes your sit'n down here in the dark?"
"Felt like being alone with my thoughts. That's all."
"Isn't that what got you into trouble in the first place? Thinking to harm
"I guess so ... Besides, now I am alone. Lesley's heading for California to
"She could be right ya know. Your lifestyle right about now ain't worth a
"I... I guess your right. I guess I ain't the safest person to be around right
"Well, I don't know how long anyone might stay healthy standing to close to
"Johnny boy huh?" I chuckled. "Listen man... We need a plan."
"Yep! Already thought one up. All I gotta do is convince John and his nephew
"And what about you? How are you going to keep yourself from getting killed?
"I know he'll be cautious since he doesn't know my intentions. And I'll be
"His nephew?"
"Not likely buddy boy. His nephew's gonna be your problem. Once I tell John
"Well... Good luck with that! As far as Andy; I'll be ready for the fucker
"Don't worry about me holding up my end Frank. You just take care of your
"Ah shucks; you care." Frank smirked. Just before the big guy left, I of
"Open up Mike!" Perkins cried, banging the shotguns rubber butt against the
"Huh... What's up Jimmy?" I asked nonchalantly.
"Who was that holler'n?"
"Ah... Burnt myself on a hot water pipe in the basement. Got it fixed now
"Yeah. Whatever Jimmy." I answered slamming the door.
"Hey Mike! Hold on will ya?" Perkins asked from my porch. "How about my
"Sorry Jimmy" I replied. "Don't seem to know what you're talking about."
"What! Why you... you... Indian giver!" He shout. "What about all them fa
"Easy neighbor!" I frowned swinging the front door open. "All I can say
"You threatened me! Okay sucker!" Perkins jeered. "This ain't over, bel
"Man? Is that what you are? You gotten be kidding." I replied, slamming

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